

SPORT MATTERS IMPLEMENTATION GROUP (PLACES) MEETING

The minutes of the 8th meeting of the Places SMIG held on Wednesday 5th November at 1.30pm in the House of Sport.

PRESENT

Richard Bullick, Chair (Sport Northern Ireland)
Aisling Irvine (Disability Sport NI)
Ivor McMullan (Chief Leisure Officers Association)
John Johnston (Department for Social Development)
Paul Campbell (CAFRE/DARD)
Gerry Crossan (Irish Football Association)
Bob Bleakley (Northern Ireland Environment Agency)
Chris Webster (Ulster Rugby)
Ciaran Kearney (Northern Ireland Sports Forum)
Caro-Lynne Ferris (Outdoor Recreation Northern Ireland)
Linda McAllister (Department of Education)
Stephen McGeehan (GAA Ulster Council)

In attendance:

Ciaran McGurk (Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure)
Steven Trainor (Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure)
Stephen McIlveen (Sport Northern Ireland)

1.0 APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies were received from Steven Law (Department of Education), Angela Platt (Northern Ireland Sports Forum), and Patrick Nelson (Irish Football Association).

2.0 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

- 2.1 The Chair welcomed members to the 8th meeting of the Places SMIG and thanked everyone for their attendance. After a short introduction of all members present (including the Chair), the Chair provided information on Sport NI's work over the last six months.
- 2.2 The Chair referenced the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games and noted Sport NI's partnership with the Northern Ireland Commonwealth Games Council to provide an extensive media hub to service all media platforms over the course of the Games.
- 2.3 The Chair also noted the October launch of the Sporting Ambassador initiative, which encourages local high performing and high profile athletes to act as positive role models, to volunteer in communities and to inspire the next generation of athletes and young people to reach their goals in life.

- 2.4 The Chair highlighted Sport NI's work with NI Executive Office in Brussels to launch the 2015 Euro' meet conference, which will be hosted in Newcastle, Co Down. The Chair noted that Sport NI is a key partner for the 2015 Euro' meet and will work in partnership with the Mourne Heritage Trust and Down District Council to deliver the event.
- 2.5 Finally, the Chair noted the Active Awards for Sport programme which opened for applications on 11th September and closed on 20th October 2014. The Chair highlighted that Awards for Sport is a national Lottery Funded small grants programme and is primarily aimed at grassroots community based sport.

3.0 PRESENTATION – UPDATE ON STADIA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.1 Due to work commitments, the Chair invited Ciaran McGurk (DCAL) to present earlier than scheduled on progress with the Stadia Development Programme. Ciaran began his presentation by providing some background to the Stadia programme and confirmed that the NI Executive has protected the £129m ring-fenced to develop Ravenhill, Windsor Park and Casement Park.
- 3.2 Members viewed a 'fly-through' of the new Ravenhill Stadium and were advised of the new 18,000 capacity. Ciaran advised members that the stadium redevelopment was now complete, and the education and heritage centre will open until January 2015.
- 3.3 Members also viewed a 'fly-through' of Windsor Park and were advised of the anticipated 18,000 capacity. Ciaran advised members that the new stadium will be a 'U' shaped venue and will boast two new stands and two refurbished stands. The West Stand will also house sports facility provision of the new Olympia Leisure Centre. The stadia redevelopment is due to be completed in October 2015.
- 3.4 Finally members viewed a 'fly-through' of Casement Park and were advised of the anticipated 38,000 capacity. Members were told that the redevelopment is subject to a Judicial Review with an outcome expected in November 2014. Members were also advised that Casement would be a Rugby World Cup venue, should the IRFU make a successful bid to host the event. Subject to the JD, the stadia redevelopment is due to be completed in November 2016.
- 3.5 Ciaran also advised members of the wider programme benefits, including social benefits, employment/training, regeneration, major events, new sports facility provision, and world class stadia. Members also heard of an additional £4m made available for investing in communities and aimed at tackling poverty and social exclusion.
- 3.6 The Chair thanked Ciaran for his presentation and invited members to ask questions.

*Ciaran McCurk (DCAL) and Steven Trainor (DCAL) left the meeting.
Caro-Lynn Ferris (ORNI) left the meeting.*

4.0 REVIEW OF MINUTES OF THE 7TH PLACES SMIG MEETING HELD ON 15TH OCTOBER 2013

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

5.0 MATTERS ARISING

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

Action 1: *Linda McAllister offered to take forward Ken's queries regarding DE's Community Use of Schools guidance and provide a short response at the next meeting.*

5.2 Linda apologised to the Chair and Members for not preparing a response to the action and agreed that DE would update Members at the next SMIG meeting. Linda highlighted that the matter would be most appropriately addressed by Steven Law (DE), who will hopefully be in attendance at the next meeting.

5.3 Ciaran Kearney suggested that a marketing campaign may be beneficial in order to advertise sports facility provision that is currently available within schools. Ciaran also suggested that education authorities should reconsider the condition that requires users of school sports facilities to pay in advance.

5.4 Ivor McMullan added that current DE design guidelines are prohibitive to Councils working in partnership with schools. Ivor added that school designs do not lend itself to Council management. Ivor also suggested that short-term leases of school facilities for significant Council capital investment are not an attractive proposition for Councils.

5.5 Linda McAllister advised members that DE plan to take forward 49 capital projects, some of which will have sporting/recreational facilities.

5.6 Ivor highlighted that Councils also need to make a move in the right direction with regards to working in partnership with schools. Ivor suggested that there is appetite within schools for partnership working with Councils, but the approach to partnership working is often naïve.

5.7 Gerry Crossan requested access to design standards for schools. Linda advised that the DE Building Handbook is available online. Linda and Gerry exchanged contact information.

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

- 5.8 The Chair advised members that the GUI accepted Sport NI's invitation to present and noted that a GUI representative is currently presenting to the Performance SMIG.

Action 3: *Sport NI to consider contacting the new CEO's of the 11 Councils and the existing CEO's of the 26 Councils with regards to progress reporting.*

- 5.4 The Chair advised members that the new 11 CEO's and existing 26 CEO's have been contacted by Sport NI with regards to progress reporting. The Chair also advised members that the DCAL Minister has written to the 11 new CEO's regarding Sport Matters progress reporting.

6.0 MEMBERS UPDATES

- 6.1 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.

- 6.2 **Disability Sport Northern Ireland** – Aisling advised members of the Inclusive Stadia Advisory Group, established and facilitated by DSNI; and the Inclusive Stadia Design & Management Guidelines, developed to ensure that the 3 stadia meet optimum levels of good practice in terms of inclusive use by people with disabilities. Aisling also advised that the stadia guidelines are currently with DCAL/Sport NI for endorsement. There are 19 sports facilities currently working towards the Inclusive Sports Facility accreditation and 1 awarded; however Aisling advised members that DSNI's accreditation programme is under review due to funding pressures. Aisling outlined that Disability Sport is currently working with Sport NI on a Community Sports Facilities project, whereby 10 facilities will be supported to achieve ISF by end of March 2015. Finally, Aisling advised that DSNI contributed to consultation on the proposed SPPS and specifically relating to PPS8.

Aisling Irvine (DSNI) left the meeting.

- 6.3 **Chief Leisure Officers Association** – Ivor advised members that Councils are in a state of flux at present as a result of RPA. Ivor further advised that the withdrawal of funding for the Active Communities programme was a major set-back for Councils, but noted that Sport NI are working towards a resolution. Ivor asked members to note that Councils are being asked to maintain a zero rate with further cuts expected.
- 6.4 Ivor informed members that 2nd level appointments within the new Councils have not yet been made. Ivor added that Councils are still working on budgets, but suggested that this exercise is a difficult one with many existing directorates moving into one under new Council structures. Ivor also advised that Councils are still progressing with capital investment schemes, some of which are legacy projects, but advised that some of these may slow down as a result of budget pressures.

- 6.5 Finally, Ivor raised serious reservations regarding the £780m figure referenced in 'Cost of Implementation' section of Sport Matters and asked if this could be explained at the next meeting.

Action 1: DCAL/Sport NI to respond to Ivor's query at the next meeting.

- 6.6 **Department of Social Development** – John advised members that DSD's funds and decision making powers are due to transfer to Councils from April 2015. However, John advised that there is still uncertainty as to when the transfer will be fully complete. John noted that DSD were not included in the Progress Report and committed to sending a return by 14th November 2014.

Action 2: DSD to submit a progress return by Friday 14th November 2014.

- 6.7 **DARD/CAFRE** – Paul advised members that over 90 students are currently studying sports turf management at Greenmount College. Paul asked the 'big three' sports if their sports turf maintenance staff are suitably qualified and if not, why not? Paul asked members to note that golf continues to take sports turf training opportunities, whilst other sports do not.
- 6.8 **Irish Football Association** – Gerry advised members that the IFA's update was covered in the earlier presentation by Ciaran McGurk.
- 6.9 **Northern Ireland Environment Agency** – Bob advised members that NIEA's budget has been significantly reduced. Bob added that NIEA now has less than half of its budget from two years previous to manage its properties. Bob asked members to note that a number of NIEA properties may need to limit/restrict public access, but no decisions have been made as to which properties.
- 6.10 Bob informed members that ORNI is currently exploring what additional recreational activities could be facilitated at country parks. Bob also advised that a number of country parks have moved to winter opening hours earlier than normal. NIEA are receiving high volumes of complaints regarding the condition of some parks that simply cannot be addressed due to budget pressures.
- 6.11 **Ulster Rugby** - Chris advised members that the Ulster Rugby's update was covered in the earlier presentation by Ciaran McGurk.
- 6.12 **Northern Ireland Sports Forum** – Ciaran advised members that the NISF would address updates on the next agenda item – Progress Reporting.
- 6.13 **Department of Education** – Linda updated members on DE's progress against a number of 'participation' targets. Linda also advised members of £630k to be spent on minor works in controlled schools and £500k (in partnership with Sustrans) to develop bike parking facilities at schools.

6.14 **Ulster Council** – Stephen advised members that Ciaran McGurk’s presentation covered most of the Ulster Council’s update items. However Stephen referenced the Ulster Council’s Regional Stadia Plan and offered to update members on progress against the targets at a future meeting. Stephen also noted the Ulster Council’s general concern with regards to Sport NI’s forthcoming £17.5m capital investment, which primarily focuses on delivering high performance facilities. Stephen recognised that multi-sport projects would be vitally important, but suggested that the Places SMIG should be used as a forum to feed into future programme development processes.

7.0 PROGRESS REPORTING

7.1 The Chair asked members to advise of any amendments/inclusions they would like articulated in the Progress Report. Members were also asked if they would like to make any comments regarding any of the targets.

7.2 Members approved the report. Ivor McMullan asked if Sport NI could confirm how many Councils submitted a progress return. Stephen advised Ivor that only 3 Councils had returned so far. Ivor asked if a list of Councils that have not submitted a return could be made available. Ivor agreed to contact Councils to reiterate the importance of progress reporting and to advise of the extended deadline of 14th November.

Action 3: Sport NI to forward the list of Councils still to return a Progress Report to Ivor McMullan.

Action 4: Ivor McMullan to contact Councils who have not submitted a return and to advise of the extended deadline.

7.3 Ciaran Kearney highlighted the concerns of NISF relating to how the Progress Reporting process can fully represent the views of all their members.

Action 5: NISF to meet with Sport NI to discuss and agree a method of how all NISF members’ views can be captured in Sport Matters progress reporting.

8.0 SPORT MATTERS ACTION PLAN 2015-19

8.1 The Chair highlighted that members should recall contributing to the Sport Matters Action Plan 2011-2015 which outlined their organisations commitment to informing the Sport Matters targets. The Chair advised members that upon the conclusion of the Sport Matters review, Sport NI will issue members with a new Action Plan template in quarter four covering the period from 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2019. The Chair asked members to complete and return the template within the timeframe as the draft Action Plan will be presented to members for consideration at the next meeting.

9.0 FACILITIES STRATEGY UPDATE – STEPHEN MCILVEEN

- 9.1 Stephen McIlveen (Sport NI) opened his presentation on the Sports Facilities Strategy project by providing some background to the project. Stephen referred members to his presentation at the last SMIG meeting, and outlined why the Facilities Strategy project was needed.
- 9.2 Stephen advised members of Sport NI's partnership with the 11 new District Councils and confirmed that Sport NI has now received confirmation of a proportionate in-year financial contribution from each of the 26 District Councils towards the research and development of a Sports Facilities Strategy for Northern Ireland and 11 District Council Area Reports. Stephen thanked Councils for their contribution.
- 9.2 Stephen further advised members that following the successful completion of the procurement process, supervised by the Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), Sport NI has awarded the tender opportunity for the Sports Facilities Strategy Project to a consortium led by Strategic Leisure Ltd and including V4 Services Ltd and 4 Global.
- 9.3 Stephen informed members that Sport NI has now entered into a legally binding contract with the consortium and will seek to hold a project initiation meeting within the coming days.
- 9.4 Stephen advised members that the project management arrangements will involve the Project Delivery Group (made up of 3 NILGA and 3 SOLACE representatives), which was established prior to the beginning of the procurement process. Stephen informed members that Strategic Leisure Ltd will soon want to make contact with each District Council Area, preferably within the new clusters.
- 9.5 Finally, 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 and Councils are committed to investing funds in this Strategy (and Reports) to build consensus for the prioritisation, provision and development of sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland

10.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- 9.1 No other business was recorded.

11.0 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 December 2014.

