

SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND

CONFIDENTIAL

MINUTES

Fifth Meeting 2008

Held on Tuesday 5 August 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 A Moneypenny M Muldoon B McCargo D O'Connor A Strong P Turnbull
Chief Executive:	E McCartan
Staff in Attendance:	N Harkness S Ogle A Sloan R McCormick E Bailey

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr B Macaulay and Cllr J Rodgers.

2 **CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman informed Council that he had been appointed Chair of Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) and hoped that Members would be comfortable with his appointment and leadership. Several Members sought clarification from the Chairman on his views concerning the skills and competencies of Council and its Executive.

The Chairman responded by saying that his initial views had been contaminated by a small number of unrepresentative people. He subsequently came to the view that their opinions were unrepresentative, unfounded, untrue and unjust; and that while he had relayed some of his earlier views to others he now was of the opinion that the Council and its senior Executive team were the best he had come across in either public or private sector.

The Chairman also advised that he had gone back to those people who had shaped his original views and advised them that their views were unfounded. An in-depth debate took place with all Members and Executives taking part; and it was the unanimous view of all Members that the staff and the Council were to be commended for their professionalism commitment and their excellence.

These qualities were reflected in a vote of confidence for the Chief Executive, the Executive team; and was put forward by Mr A Moneypenny, seconded by Mr Brain McCargo and unanimously agreed by Members and the Chair.

The Council agreed to put this matter behind them and move on to the next business.

3 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Third Meeting held on 3 June 2008, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

The Minutes of the Fourth (Special) Meeting held on 26 June 2008, having been previously circulated, were approved and signed.

Mr P Turnbull referred to the last paragraph on page 2 – resourcing in Northern Ireland - increased capital programme. He said that in discussion that had been broadened to cover the management of facilities that would be grant aided.

4 **MATTERS ARISING**

4.1 Minutes of 3 June - Item 5.3

Members noted that no reply had yet been received from Linfield Football Club following the Irish Cup Semi-Final on 29 March but that the Chief Executive was advised that the board had asked the Secretary to write it and it should be forthcoming soon.

5 **CORRESPONDENCE**

5.1 Special Olympics Ireland

Members noted letter dated 13 June 2008 from the Acting Chief Executive congratulating Sport Northern Ireland (SNI) on the 2008 Coach of the Year Awards and particularly the recognition of coaches of athletes with a disability at the same forum with coaches of able-bodied athletes.

5.2 The Countryside Access and Activities Network

Members noted letter dated 3 July 2008 thanking Council for attending the official launch of the Countryside Access and Activities Network.

5.3 Councillor Tom Hartley

Members noted letter dated 8 July 2008 from the Lord Mayor thanking

SNI for the good wishes extended to him on his election.

5.4 Institute of Sport.ie

Members noted letter dated 8 July 2008 from the Executive Chairman thanking SNI for its contribution to the Carding Scheme.

5.5 Northern Ireland Assembly

Members noted letter dated 30 July 2008 from the Chair of the Committee for Culture, Arts and Leisure thanking SNI for hosting his recent visit to Sports Institute Northern Ireland (SINI). He thought the layout, service provision and management of SINI was most impressive and he saw the visit as an exercise in raising the Committee's awareness of SINI's contribution to developing high performance sport.

6 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

The Chairman asked everyone individually if they had any interest to declare.

The Chairman referred to the last meeting when discussion of Paper SNI/08/100 had sought approval for proposed grants. There had been a grant for the PSNI Football Club. He had missed seeing it and he declared that he was currently a board member of the RUC Athletic Association.

Mr B McCargo expressed an interest in item 7.5 – Rugby.

Ms M Muldoon expressed an interest in item 7.9 - Soccer Strategy Revenue.

7 **PARTICIPATION UNIT**

7.1 Appointment of External Members to Participation and Places Committees

Members received an update on the appointment of external members to the Participation Committee and Places Committee with effect from July 2008 (Paper SNI/08/111).

Members noted that the attached Appendix 1 had been inadvertently attached to the paper and should be ignored.

Members heard that the two external members in attendance at the Participation Committee had made a most useful and challenging contribution; and that the two external members in attendance at the Places Committee had also made an excellent contribution. Members also noted that no response regarding their representation had yet been received from the Department of Education.

7.2 Play Sport – Request for Award Adjustment

Members considered Paper SNI/08/112 which considered a request for an increase in award in line with SNI policy on award adjustments for

capital projects.

Members raised questions regarding sustainability and involvement of Education and Library Boards in a community role.

After discussion Members approved the recommendations to increase the award to Rathenraw Primary School to £43,000 at the rate of 100% of eligible expenditure of £43,000; and to increase the award to St Eugene's Primary School to £33,326 at the rate of 100% of eligible expenditure of £33,326.

7.3 Building Sport Stage II Project Assessment Reports

Members considered Paper SNI/08/113 and the attached project assessment reports. Members noted that due to time constraints the paper had not been considered by the Places Committee in advance of posting to Members for today's Board meeting. Consideration by Places Committee took place on the morning of 5 August.

Members noted the recommendations of the Places Committee which were to reject the Business Case for Knocks Grattan Hurling Club and return the project to the Lottery Reserve List and to reject the application from Eastside Boxing Club. However the Places Committee did recommend working with the leadership of the County Board in respect of Knocks Grattan Hurling Club to seek to move the project further. With regard to the Eastside Boxing Club Members expressed some concerns but recommended that this club, which is in an area of social need, be supported through other agencies such as East Belfast Development Agency, Belfast City Council or NICVA to develop their capacity for future opportunities.

Members approved the recommendations of the Places Committee.

7.4 Report of Delegated Decisions - Places

Members noted delegated decisions taken in accordance with Council policy (Paper SNI/08/114).

Members made comment on some of the projects contained in the paper and noted the apparent uneven spread of funding between different sports and different areas.

The Chief Executive reminded Members of the conditions and criteria set by the Department for Culture Media and Sport regarding Lottery funding. Members noted that the issue for SNI should be to grow capacity in all sports to ensure their eligibility.

Members also raised the issue of motor sport and ring-fenced monies (Point 5) and the fact that DCAL had said there would be no more ring-fenced money. Members noted that the Minister had the power to ring-fence monies to motorsport.

7.5 Stadia Safety IRFU Ulster Branch

There was no conflict of interest regarding this Deed of Dedication and therefore no member left the room.

Members considered Paper SNI/08/115 which sought approval to execute the Deed of Dedication obtained by SNI from the IRFU in respect of the development of Ravenhill Rugby Ground; and approval for a new policy that delegated authority to the SNI Accounting Officer to enter into future security restrictions for the purposes of securing awards on all future capital projects.

Members approved the recommendations.

7.6 Stadia Safety Programme Stage II

Members considered Paper SNI/08/126 which sought approval in respect of a proposed award to Down GAA County Board made under the Stadia Safety Programme. The Paper had been discussed at the meeting of Places Committee prior to the Board meeting.

Members noted that this was a Stage II application which represented further development at Parc Esler in Newry.

Full DCAL and DFP approval would be required for the business case which is due to be submitted to DCAL; and any SNI approval would be subject to DCAL/DFP approval of the business cases.

Members noted the assessment report at Appendix A to the paper and, taking into account the proposed recommendation to the Places Committee, agreed an award of up to £800,000.

The Chief Executive suggested that at some time in the future it might be worthwhile for Members to visit various facilities.

7.7 Future Sport Northern Ireland Small Grants Programmes

Members considered Paper SNI/08/116 which updated them on the recent developments in respect of SNI's current small grants programme (Awards For All) and sought approval to develop proposals to ensure the continued availability of a small grants programme for sport beyond 31 March 2009.

Members agreed that it was important to maintain a small grants programme and approved the recommendations that a 'light touch' small grants programme is an effective approach to enabling the delivery of grassroots sporting and physical activity projects. They approved officers conducting an options appraisal on a future small grants programme.

7.8 Active Communities – Programme Development Update

Members considered Paper SNI/08/117 which provided an update on the implementation of "Active Communities: Increasing Participation through Investment in District Councils"; and sought approval for the investment rationale and methodology.

Members expressed the view that working through communities was an important issue. They congratulated officers on the Paper and agreed with its contents.

Members raised a number of questions relating to transfer of money and its guaranteed use by sport; priorities and a focus and greater weighting being given to under-represented groups such as women and girls and people with disabilities; conditions of grant re salaries; and capacity building to enable groups to work collaboratively.

Members approved the recommendations to note the progress made and endorsed the proposals made within the paper in paragraphs 4.5, 5.5, 5.9 and 6.5.

Ms M Muldoon left the room

7.9 Soccer Strategy Revenue – Funding Recommendations

Members considered Paper SNI/08/118 which provided an update and sought approval to issue the 2008/09 revenue letter of offer to the IFA.

Members noted the background to the original planned expenditure for Soccer Strategy and the update on programme categories. They noted the outstanding issue regarding clearly defined roles of the President and Chair of the Executive Committee in the IFA and proposed funding for 2008/09 financial year.

After discussion Members approved the recommendation to give approval for SNI to issue the 2008/09 revenue letter of offer to the IFA subject to the outstanding issues being fully addressed by the Chief Executive and Chair of the Soccer Implementation Committee.

Ms M Muldoon returned to the room

7.10 Report of Delegated Decisions – Participation

Members noted delegated decisions taken in accordance with Council policy (Paper SNI/08/119).

8 **PERFORMANCE UNIT**

8.1 Report of Delegated Decisions - Performance

Members noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy (Paper SNI/08/120).

8.2 Coaching Ireland Strategy

Members considered Paper SNI/08/121 which provided a background to the production of the Coaching Strategy for Ireland; outlined the implications for Sport Northern Ireland of endorsing the Strategy; and recommended endorsement of the Coaching Strategy for Ireland.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Michael McGeehan, Director of National Coaching

and Training Centre and Mr Ronnie Smyth.

Mr Smyth introduced Mr McGeehan with whom SNI had worked closely for some time to develop a Coaching Strategy for Ireland. Mr McGeehan's presentation described the current situation with the Draft Strategy for Coaching.

Members raised a number of issues highlighting the need to ensure congruence between the Irish Sports Coaching Strategy and Sports Coach UK Strategy. Mr McGeehan confirmed that they had begun the process of ensuring that that would be the case.

Regarding the issue of Northern Ireland coaches having to go through two courses - in Limerick and Belfast, Mr McGeehan confirmed that office accommodation would be made available in Belfast and in Dublin by SNI/ISC. It was important there was a close convergence.

Members referred to training/player pathways/coaching pathways and agreed it was important to get commonality of language, levels of award. Members agreed the importance of promoting high performance coaches and athletes.

Members felt that a name change to Coaching Ireland would be beneficial.

Mr McGeehan informed Members that SNI had been approached about having a place on the Coaching Ireland Board. When Coaching Ireland's new board is in place there will be representation from SNI on the board. The implementation plan will contain targets which both ISC and SNI can work on to achieve.

SNI will get a regular update through our implementation plan and that implementation will reflect the UK elements of coaching and coaching Ireland elements and how they relate to the Strategy for Sport.

Members commended Mr McGeehan for the work he was doing and his efforts to build a positive relationship with Sports Coach UK. The Chairman thanked Mr McGeehan for his input and he left the meeting.

Members endorsed the Coaching Strategy for Ireland and supported the proposed approach to taking forward coaching development in Northern Ireland as outlined in the Paper.

9 **CORPORATE SERVICES**

9.1 **Management Accounts**

Members considered the Management Accounts for the three-month period to 30 June 2008 (Paper SNI/08/122) and approved their submission to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure.

9.2 Delegated Decisions - Corporate Services

Members noted decisions taken in accordance with Council policy (Paper SNI/08/123).

9.3 Exchequer Annual Report and Accounts

Members received the Exchequer Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2006 (Paper SNI/08/124).

Members noted that they had received an unqualified approval and commended the Director of Corporate Services Unit and his staff.

The Chairman congratulated Dr Brown and staff for their efforts in ensuring that the accounts were not qualified.

9.4 Marketing

9.4.1 Press and Media Report

Members received an update on recent activities in the Marketing and Communications Department (Paper SNI/08/125).

Members were asked to notify the Council Secretary if they wished to attend the Investment Conference on 2 October.

10 **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR ADOPTION**

10.1 Performance Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Fifth Meeting held on 18 March 2008.

10.2 Participation Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 May 2008.

10.3 Places Committee

Members adopted the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 May 2008.

10.4 Audit Committee

Dr O Brown reported on the Audit Committee meeting of 5 August. Members noted that training had been arranged for Audit Committee members on Tuesday 9 September from 9.30 am – 12.30 pm. All members would be welcome to attend.

10.5 Staffing Committee

Mr A Sloan reported on the meeting that took place on 5 August.

11 **COMMITTEE REPORTS – FOR INFORMATION**

There were no Committee Reports for information.

12 **PUBLICATIONS**

Members received the following publications.

12.1 Irish Gymnastics Official Magazine July 2008

12.2 World Blind Golf Championships 10-12 August 2008

13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 7 October 2008. Members agreed to have a meeting at Tollymore Mountain Centre as soon as practically possible.

14 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

14.1 Strategy for Sport

Members were interested to know when the Strategy for Sport would be available and noted that it had been held up on three fronts:

- because the Department of Education did not reply
- because the OFMDFM did not reply
- because the Executive did not meet

It cannot be released until it is cleared with the Executive.

14.2 Blind Golf Championship

Mr A Moneypenny recorded his grateful thanks to the Chief Executive and the team for the considerable help he had received for the recent Blind Golf Championships held at Belvoir Golf Club.

14.3 Vice-Chair

Mrs Duncan queried the appointment of a Vice-Chair. The Chairman said that the Chief Executive and he would be discussing this with the Minister and Permanent Secretary.

14.4 Corporate Plan and Business Plan

Members asked about tracking SNI's progress against key performance indicators and noted the monitoring procedure. It was agreed that a Paper would be put to the next Council meeting outlining that process. When the new Strategy for Sport was launched there would be a new structure for monitoring, evaluation and reporting. There would be two levels of committee established, the first one to be chaired by the Minister and the second one chaired by SNI.

There being no further business the Chairman thanked Members for their attendance. He commended Mr McCargo on the very valuable and important role he played in Sport Northern Ireland and enjoyed working with him. He hoped he would be able to continue to do so.

The Meeting closed at 3.55 pm and was followed immediately by a meeting of the Sports Council for Northern Ireland Trust.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

House of Sport
Upper Malone Road
Belfast
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