



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPORT NI BOARD HELD ON 10<sup>TH</sup> JUNE  
2020 AT 9:10AM – ZOOM MEETING**

<b>Present: Board members:</b> George Lucas Jay Colville Jackie Bryson Richard Bullick Wilma Erskine Kyle Ferguson Catherine O'Mullan	<b>In attendance: Sport NI Officials</b> Antoinette McKeown, CEO John News, Director of Participation and Facilities Peter McCabe, Director of Performance Adrian Doherty, Director of Finance & Governance Ali Campbell, Executive Unit Manager Gillian Gilliland, Board Secretary  Cheryl Robinson, BCS (for Draft Sport NI BER Report)
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Agenda Item	Record of main discussion
<b>Draft Sport NI Board Effectiveness Review Report</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed Cheryl Robinson to the meeting and thanked her for a very comprehensive report which highlights areas of improvement for the Board. The Chair stated that overall the report was very positive; there were some areas for improvement and the Board would focus on these in terms of key areas of an action plan.</p> <p>The Chair advised a Board Workshop was needed to discuss and agree the BER Action Plan and suggested Tuesday 30 June at 5.15pm.</p> <p>Cheryl presented the draft report and highlighted the main areas contained within the SWOT analysis of the report. The Chair asked members for their initial comments on the report.</p> <p>Members asked how BCS would rate Sport NI's Board based on experience of other boards and Cheryl confirmed Sport NI board was doing well; lots of progress has been made.</p> <p>The Chair advised in terms of some of the recommendations the change of Remuneration Chair would be discussed at today's meeting, succession planning for the Board was ongoing with DfC and we are awaiting a response regarding Board members' reappointments. The Chair also reported on previous discussion with Sport Scotland regarding its sub committees (ARAC and Remuneration Committee and previously a Task and Finish Groups for Ethics) for comparison purposes; the Chair stated he was reluctant to introduce numerous sub committees due to size of the Board but this could be discussed further at the Workshop on 30 June.</p>

	<p>Members agreed it was a good report and stated they would like to strengthen the Board to ensure our focus is shifted to strategic context and environmental scanning of the “local sports sector”. Members agreed dates and responsible person(s) needed to be included in the Action Plan.</p> <p><b><i>A Campbell joined the meeting at 9.25am.</i></b></p> <p>The CEO thanked Cheryl and Patricia for their work to date and confirmed they had made the process very straightforward.</p> <p>It was agreed Board comments would be collated by the Board Secretariat and feedback to BCS.</p> <p><b><i>C Robinson left the meeting at 9.30am.</i></b></p>
<b>1. Apologies</b>	<p>The main Board meeting commenced at 9.30am</p> <p>Apologies were noted from Kieran Harding.</p>
<b>2. Register of Member’s Declaration of Interest</b>	<p>The Chair advised Catherine O’Mullan had declared a new interest as Director of Curriculum and Operations at North West Regional College from 1 June 2020.</p> <p>The Chair advised his appointment to the UK Sport Board had been confirmed but formal approval was required by DCMS. Members were asked to treat this in confidence until then.</p>
<b>3. Minutes of meetings on 22 April 2020</b>	<p>Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2020.</p>
<b>3.1. Action Points 11 March 2020</b>	<p>Action points of 22 April 2020 were circulated to members and officers prior to the meeting.</p>
<b>4. Chair’s remarks</b>	<p>The Chair acknowledged the positive work the CEO and ET have put in in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Sports Hardship Fund, Framework for Return to Sport, Health &amp; Wellbeing guidance have seen Sport NI engaging with the sector to share information, perspective, expertise and support. Further, programmes will be discussed today to approve this next phase of £3m investment.</p> <p>The CEO’s Forum on “Good Governance during the pandemic and beyond – reflections by NIAO” was insightful and informative. The Chair advised it was pleasing to see Sport NI represented by Jay Colville, Adrian Doherty, Gillian Gilliland and George Lucas.</p> <p>The external Board Effectiveness Review was discussed with Cheryl from BCS at the start of the meeting enabling questions to be clarified. The review highlights the progress we have made in Sport NI and also suggests areas where we have an opportunity to development in our journey of continuous improvement. The Board meeting workshop will take place on 30 June to fully discuss and agree an Action Plan for improvement.</p>

	<p>The Corporate Plan for 2020/25 was submitted to DfC in February 2020 for approval prior to consultation with stakeholders. The Board is enthusiastic to plan the consultation programme as soon as possible, to enable necessary progress on this fundamental issue in this next phase of our development.</p> <p>The CEO advised the Corporate Plan which was submitted in February was still with Sponsor Branch and this causes concern. The Corporate Plan still needs approved by the Permanent Secretary and Deputy Secretary before going to the Minister for final approval; stakeholder engagement cannot commence until this happens. The Board discussed some of the issues and risks surrounding the Corporate Plan not yet being submitted to the Minister for approval and noted the CEO and Chair would discuss this further at their meeting tomorrow to see how this could be moved forward.</p> <p>The Chair requested members to make use of the Chat facility during the meeting and signal to everyone when there are comments or queries to raise. The Chair thanked everyone who had submitted comments on Board papers, which have been responded to; this will optimise the time on Zoom and improve focus and quality of discussions. It was highlighted some of the members' questions were very detailed and this would be kept under review. Members noted all comments and queries from members had been saved on SharePoint for future reference.</p> <p><b><i>C O'Mullan joined the meeting at 9.55am.</i></b></p>
<p><b>5. CEO Report SNI 20 21</b></p>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 21 for noting.</p> <p>The CEO advised the McBride Judgment had been discussed at the recent Accountability meeting and it was being followed up with DfC's Legal Department. In the meantime Sport NI will continue to operate at risk as previously agreed by the Board.</p> <p>The CEO reported on a briefing to the Committee for Communities which discussed the positive work being undertaken by Sport NI in response to Covid-19. It also involved some political discussion raised by Committee members regarding criticism on equality in respect of the Sports Hardship Fund; Sport NI rejected this as it was based on inaccurate information. Members noted the SHF Dashboard provides good detail. Sport NI will continue to demonstrate commitment to equality and engage with local communities on this issue. Members noted Sport NI had engaged with the department before suspending the fund.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the letter received from Kathryn Hill in respect of the Business Plan and issues regarding this and the Q4 Business Plan Review had been discussed during the Chair's Briefing. The Chair queried whether ET had updated the Q4 Business Plan Review as a result of these discussions.</p> <p>The CEO advised in terms of the Q4 review this is an ET report to the Board based on where the organisation is in terms of performance against objectives, there is a methodology for reporting on this. Members were advised it would be difficult to change the targets at this stage and how they were being</p>

	<p>reported on in terms of sources of data to determine status of red, amber, and green.</p> <p>The Chair noted his view that where Sport NI was not reporting accurately or fully in this report, the Board had a duty to raise this. This was accepted and acknowledged that a better scrutiny by the Executive Team of Business Plan reported in terms of level of detail, presentation, consistency and accuracy and that time had been scheduled this week for the ET to undertake this work. It was discussed that there also needed to be an element of trust on the assurances provided to the Board on progress so that more detail on actions that were green may not be needed. Members noted targets are being met during an extremely difficult time. It was suggested the response to DfC needs to be clear on the Board's effectiveness in approving and scrutinising the ET and business plan, as validated by the recent independent review of effectiveness of the Board.</p> <p>Members noted some of the comments have been within the Business Plan Review on a quarterly basis during the year and have only been picked up at Q4 and therefore it would be difficult to change at this stage.</p> <p>Members discussed the range of issues in terms of targets not met which required more detail but where a target is met, the level of detail required to justify this. Members heard ET plans on reviewing and discussing how reporting is to be undertaken going forward.</p> <p>Members agreed in terms of the detail of the targets there are some points well-made but that there was an undertone in the letter which suggested a lack of confidence and trust in the work and that this needed to be clarified or addressed as we take a collaborative approach about moving forward.</p> <p>Members further agreed when Sport NI excessively meets a target it is good to highlight this. Members noted DfC had previously signed off on the Business Plan and targets. Members agreed there needed to be learning taken from this for future business plans.</p> <p>The CEO highlighted the murder of George Floyd two weeks ago in the US which has sparked a re-invigoration the ongoing debate on racism and discrimination in our society; this most recent re-ignition is unlikely to dissipate given the widespread and justified anger, hurt and fear that has gripped our society. Members heard ET have had a brief discussion on this and further work is required to bring forward an action plan for Board discussion.</p> <p>The CEO advised she had previously written to UK Home Countries colleagues seeking support to update the Equalities Framework which we all work to as Sport NI felt we needed something more robust. A UK wide response to racism in sport will be on the agenda for the Chief Officers meeting in July. Members were advised a Sport England Board member, Chris Grant, as a private citizen, has called for a Commission to be established in the UK to consider racism in sport. The Chairs of Sport England and UK Sport are working together to address this and the CEO has expressed to Sport England an interest in Sport NI being part of that discussion. Members agreed it was appropriate to see this</p>
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	is on the agenda and further agreed a paper would be developed for further Board discussion.
<b>6. Covid-19 Communications Crisis Response Update SNI 20 29</b>	Members received paper SNI 20 29 for noting.
<b>7. Communications Report SNI 20 22</b>	Members received paper SNI 20 22 for noting.
<b>8. Remuneration Committee Review SNI 20 23</b>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 23 for approval.</p> <p>Members noted the Board Effectiveness Review had highlighted it was not good practice for the Chair to also be the Remuneration Committee Chair. The Chair had discussed this with the Remuneration Committee members who were in agreement to the changes; Catherine O'Mullan, Chair, Richard Bullick, Secretary, George Lucas and Wilma Erskine, members.</p> <p>Members approved the recommendations.</p>
<b>9. Multi Facility Fund Assessment Stage 3 SNI 20 24</b>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 24 for noting.</p> <p>Members noted the paper provided the timeline as the process moves into the decision phase which will be presented to the Board in August.</p> <p>Members queried was there a need to revise assumptions and sought reassurance on delivery mode about what we are investing in. It was confirmed there is no fundamental shift, shared spaces and the multi facility fund provide a better return on investment. Members noted there is a need to invest in club infrastructure but there is a need for more multi facilities across NI. There were challenges raised by DfC at the Accountability Meeting in terms of affordability as some district councils will be partners and we will continue to test this. Members noted this would inform the investment stage, not the fundamental of the need for these for a range of sports across NI.</p> <p>Members noted this was one strand of MFF and queried how this incorporated into the whole strategic context of our investment in terms of overall capital investment programme.</p> <p>Members noted the Facilities Framework has three strands of facility fund – single facility, and two larger strands - multi and performance facility funds. The performance fund was paused in 2017 because of affordability and what was agreed at April's Board meeting was a reinvigoration of this.</p> <p>Members queried if it was possible to have a summary of this detail as an appendix to the MFF paper in August and this was agreed. Members noted the SNI Business Plan includes a KPI to bring forward a Sports Infrastructure</p>

	<p>Strategy in 2020-21. The previous Facilities Framework was drafted in 2016 and a new strategy is required to align to SNI's Corporate Plan 2020-25.</p>
<p><b>10. Sports Club Survey SNI 20 25</b></p>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 25 for noting.</p> <p>Members agreed this was a great report and queried how this would be used to inform research over the next few years. Members noted this would assist with the new Corporate Plan in terms of clubs affiliating to GBs and sustained participation in sport. Members noted the current phases of Covid response from surveying sports would also be taken into account along with additional information pertinent for the next year. This will be used to produce an action plan for August and how we target research to shape the Corporate Plan going forward.</p> <p>Members queried the validation of figures coaches and members and it was confirmed the ratios are quite detailed on the breakdown on mathematical models and therefore content with the correlation. Members also noted the department have undertaken research work on volunteers and it confirms as lot of sports coaches and administrators do not view themselves as volunteers, therefore volunteer numbers are higher than presented.</p>
<p><b>11. Sport NI proposed financial response to Covid-19 SNI 20 26</b></p>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 26 for approval.</p> <p>Members queried the exchequer capital element and whether this was coming from Sport NI's funding, and queried whether Sport NI NLDF should be funding health and safety. It was confirmed we are seeking approval from the DfC for additional exchequer funding and if this was not identified Sport NI would not bring forward a programme. Members noted that some health and safety requirements (such as screens referred to in feedback in sports survey) was not capital works and sought further clarification.</p> <p>Members received clarification that the Board was being asked to approve the proposal and, at a later date, approval of a business case with more detailed information on the need for the expenditure.</p> <p>The CEO expressed thanks to staff who distributed a survey to sports to ascertain challenges the sector would be facing to return to sport and to have it closed with around 450 respondees and high level analysis available to inform the business case.</p> <p>Members noted the Board had approved the £3m funding which included preparation for a state of readiness and opportunities for innovation and pilot projects to link to the Corporate Plan. A transition period between getting sports back and our new investment plan is proposed hence the business case may seek to up to £5m NLDF and £1.5m exchequer (DfC) funding.</p> <p>Members queried what they would be approving; CEO confirmed that whilst a business case would consider all elements of the programme, Sport NI Board would approve the NLDF budget and DfC would approve its budget allocation, if one is secured. It was advised two separate business cases would be produced if the Board requested this. It was advised it was hoped to have this detail available for the workshop on 30 June.</p>

	Members approved the recommendations.
<b>12. A Framework to guide progression towards a resumption of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland SNI 20 27</b>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 27 for noting.</p> <p>Members heard this framework aimed to form a bridge between the NI Executive 5 phase pathway and sport returning in the next phases. There has been an enormous response and queries from sports as there was no clear approach for sport, work has been ongoing with department colleagues to create greater clarity for sports. Members agreed this was a great document as it had been very difficult for sports, with a lot of confusion.</p>
<b>13. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report</b>	<p>The ARAC Chair gave a verbal report of the meeting which took place on 1 June 2020 and confirmed business continuity and good governance had been demonstrated by the CEO.</p> <p>ARAC had received a deep dive on procurement and the next stage of this will be testing before audit do this. The Internal Audit annual opinion for the year is satisfactory and they have confirmed the rest of the plan can be met on time.</p> <p>Members noted the Finance Manager had attended the meeting to provide an update on accounts and provided great detail; the pension figure have held up the 18/19 accounts but this is similar to all ALBS. The Board will be asked later in the agenda to approve 18/19 accounts in principle. The 19/20 accounts have been extended due to Covid, however again all ALBs will be affected. The NIAO are happy with the progress on the audit.</p> <p>Members noted the Governance Statement had been adjusted to take into account McBride Judgement.</p> <p>The ARAC Chair queried was there still a need for the 7 July ARAC Contingency meeting and this was confirmed. It was noted the NIAO may not look at the account for many months but Sport NI still need to move ahead. We are still aiming to prepare and submit accounts for the 7 July meeting.</p> <p>Members queried the risk regarding the CEO taking emergency action on Sport NI's financial systems to move to e-banking stating the need to automate to reduce fraud. Members queried whether this needed to be high on the Risk Register. Members were advised that our systems are not fit for purpose hence the work being progressed to transform systems and that this is on the risk register under "failure to modernise" risk.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted the Board Effectiveness Review had demonstrated the ARAC was an effective committee and congratulated members.</p>
<b>14. Finance &amp; Governance Report SNI 20 28</b>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 28 for noting.</p> <p>Members were advised an amended Governance Statement had been approved by ARAC for 19/20 Lottery and Exchequer accounts for submission later this month; members confirmed they were content with the amendments.</p>

	<p>Members noted the decision on e-banking and approved.</p> <p>Members noted discussions had taken place with the NIAO to ask members to reaffirm Sport NI continues as a going concern and accounts to be prepared on this basis in light of covid. The Board approved Sport NI as a going concern.</p>
<b>15. Exchequer 2018-19 Annual Report and Accounts SNI 20 30</b>	<p>Members received paper SNI 20 30 for approval.</p> <p>Members noted the detail provided to ARAC and members were asked to approve the Chair and CEO to sign off accounts, subject to some outstanding queries. Member noted, in addition the Chair asked for a change to the Governance Statement for 18/19 and the NIAO are content with this. Members noted this related to a word change and addition of a paragraph from the elevator speech. The Chair also requested TNOC be included as Tollymore National Outdoor Centre.</p> <p>Members approved the change to the Governance Statement and the sign off of the accounts by the Chair and CEO.</p>
<b>16. AOB</b>	<p>There was no other business to discuss.</p> <p>The Chair asked members if they were in agreement this had been a good meeting and members agreed.</p> <p>A member highlighted Sport England's strategic approach with the sport for development sector, querying whether this was something Sport NI could follow up. Members heard that Sport England led this as a pilot to see how this coalition goes forward; it had been a long process to get the coalition established with hope of future funding by private sources. The Chair agreed this was something we should keep under review with the context of our corporate plan. The CEO suggested that an update could be given at a later meeting.</p>
<b>17. Date of next meeting</b>	<p>Tuesday 30 June @ 5.15pm – Board Workshop to discuss the Board Effectiveness Review.</p> <p>Wednesday 19 August @ 11.30am – Board Meeting.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the ET and CEO, stating it was testament of work being done as shown in the Board Effectiveness Review.</p> <p>The meeting finished at 10.55am.</p>

*George Lucas.*

Approved by:  
Sport NI Chair

Date: 30 June 2020