



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPORT NI BOARD HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2021 @ 8.30AM & 12.00PM (VIA ZOOM MEETING)**

**DRAFT**

<b>Present: Board members:</b> George Lucas Jay Colville Richard Bullick Wilma Erskine Kyle Ferguson Kieran Harding Darryl Petticrew	<b>In attendance: Sport NI Officials</b> Antoinette McKeown, CEO Adrian Doherty, Chief Operating Officer Michael Boyd, Director of Sport Richard Archibald, Head of Sports Systems Peter McCabe, Interim Director of Performance John News, Interim Director of Participation Gillian Gilliland, Board Secretary
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<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Record of main discussion</b>
<b>1. Apologies</b>	There were no apologies to note.
<b>2. Register of Member's Declaration of Interest</b>	There were no new declarations of interest to note.
<b>3. Minutes of Previous Meetings</b>  3.1 Minutes of meetings held on 10 February, 26 February, 19 March and 22 March 2021	Members approved the minutes of the meetings held on 10 February, 26 February, 19 March and 22 March 2021.  <i><b>D Petticrew joined the meeting at 8.37am.</b></i>
<b>4. Chair's remarks</b>	<p>The Chair welcomed Michael Boyd as the new Director of Sport to Sport NI and to his first Board meeting. The Chair also thanked John News and Peter McCabe for their major contribution to leading the organisation and supporting the Board in its role in recent times.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the achievement of the NI Women's Football Team qualifying for the Euros. This is a significant step forward for female sport.</p> <p>Members are aware of the recent media attention in relation to the Sports Sustainability Fund (SSF), which resulted in evidence giving to the Committee for Communities and notification from C&amp;AG of his intention to review. The Chair acknowledged the work of Kathryn Hill and Tony Murphy, DfC, the CEO and the Project Team led by John News in providing assurances to the Committee to gain its support and in the management and governance of the SSF. The Board welcome any suggestions for improvements that come from the NIAO report.</p>

	<p>The Chair acknowledged the timely report on the recent health check, which proved incredibly useful in providing an independent view of the transformation journey; a Project Plan is being drawn up for discussion at the next Board meeting. The Amber status reflects the impact that Covid has had on prompt progress and given that the new Executive Team is in place, much needed additional capacity is now available to move on restructuring. The Chair advised the CEO will be meeting with Kathryn Hill, DfC to complete discussions and get clarity in relation to DfC's views on sport and PA. The CEO will give more details on the PAR report later in the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair referred to the meeting later this morning when members will join colleagues from Sports Councils' Boards across the UK to get a briefing on work commissioned on transgender issues in sport to enable a shared consensus on the councils' position. A paper on this will be provided at a future Board meeting.</p> <p>The Chair advised Katherine Grainger, Chair UK Sport would be attending a Board meeting in the near future, as an observer.</p>
<p><b>5. CEO Report</b> <b>SNI 21 11</b></p>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 11 for information.</p> <p>Members noted this was a whole team report and were asked for queries on the report.</p> <p>A member asked whether restructuring was on track and going to plan. It was advised further clarification had been provided to the Union on the protocol and the slotting in process at DP level including internal selection. Once the next stage commenced it was hoped this would demonstrate fairness and transparency within the process.</p> <p>A member asked whether there were plans to conduct a staff survey. It was advised due to restructure this was the wrong time for a staff survey. Members were advised staff are continually surveyed on a range of issues through survey monkey and menti-meter; staff engagement is constant. Fortnightly CEO briefings are held and restructuring is on the agenda every time. The PAR Team were provided access to staff who have raised issues to allow further opportunity to state these concerns and this assessment of staffing issues formed part of the PAR report. With the formation of the new ET restructure can move at a much quicker pace.</p>
<p>5.1 Findings from Race &amp; Racism in Sport Project</p>	<p>Members heard a final feedback meeting to the sector is being hosted by all CEOs to advise on the next steps, however it was advised we need to manage this work with sensitivity. Members were advised the report has not been published yet so were asked to treat this confidentially. Members noted SNI have asked departmental officials to brief the Minister on the findings.</p> <p>A member queried when we talk about racism in NI is the whole range of ethnicity being looked at and this was confirmed. A member referred to the uniqueness of NI in terms of our own policies for sectarianism in sport and queried whether this would be revised in relation to this report. Members were advised it was hoped the Diversity Panel would bring lived experiences to life</p>

<p>5.2 Presentation on formal consultation on Corporate Plan</p>	<p>and there would be further work to consider sectarianism in sport. Members noted this model would be worked through over the period of the corporate plan and further detail would be brought back to the Board.</p> <p>Members received a presentation on the Corporate Plan consultation which provided an overview of the feedback received. Members noted the consultation closed on 26 February and an extensive amount of material had been gathered from the consultation and Citizen Space written views, with the report being finalised currently. Members were advised the full report and final Corporate Plan would be available for the June Board meeting. Members heard the presentation would be shared with members following today's meeting. The CEO advised this work has been developed and produced by Ali Campbell and expressed thanks to her.</p> <p>Members discussed the feedback and agreed this was very positive. Members queried the timeline and how this would be integrated into the Strategy for Sport. Members also queried the need for a Board Workshop to discuss this further, potentially with DfC input. Members noted the CEO was due to have a one to one with Kathryn Hill, DfC to discuss the feedback and get approval before coming back to the Board. The CEO advised members she was more than happy to give the Board assurance there would be alignment with the Strategy for Sport.</p> <p>Members were advised the ET were having a Planning Day this Friday to work through the next six months of work; it was agreed following this the Board would be contacted with a suggested date for a Board Workshop.</p>
<p><b>6. Peer Assessment review Health Check SNI 21 12</b></p>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 12 for information.</p> <p>Members noted there were no surprises within the summary of recommendations and SNI have the capacity to deliver on these. It was noted the amber status was a fair reflection. Members were advised a plan would be put in place to deliver the recommendations and this would be brought back to the Board.</p> <p><b><i>Michael Boyd joined the meeting at 9.19am.</i></b></p> <p>The Chair welcomed Michael to his first Board meeting and expressed good wishes in his new role.</p> <p>Members queried how often a PAR report would be carried out and it was confirmed this would normally be done at the start and end of a change process. The PAR report was requested in September 2017 and the assessment was carried out in October 2017; there was due to be a further assessment upon completion of the restructure however given the circumstances around Covid it was agreed an external assessment was required at this time to take stock of the organisation.</p> <p>A member queried the concern around physical activity within the report and it was advised this was due to ongoing discussions; SNI have consistently sought clarification from the department on PA and part of the one to one meeting with Kathryn Hill will be to discuss the PAR report and to ascertain the department's</p>

	expectations on PA. The PAR report has made it clear we need to get this nuance resolved.
<b>7. Communications</b>	<p>Members had previously received the interactive Comms Report for information.</p> <p>Members noted the report and expressed thanks to the Comms Team.</p> <p>A member confirmed the Comms Report was good and it was great to see the positive events happening but queried was there a way in which the Board would be notified of any negative press; previously major contentious or controversial issues were highlighted to the Board to provide a bigger picture.</p> <p>Members were advised the Comms Team monitor negative press and issues on an ongoing basis and that currently we do not have the resources to continually alert Board members on negative media but would continue to alert Members on major issues such as SSF attention (which staff did).</p>
<b>8. Rolling Board Business 2020/21 update SNI 21 14</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 14 for information.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>
<b>9. Board Governance document reviews SNI 21 15</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 15 for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the Board Operating Framework, Board Standing Orders, ARAC TOR (previously approved at March ARAC meeting) and the Gifts &amp; Hospitality Policy as per the recommendations within the paper.</p>
<b>10. Multi Facility Fund – Mid Ulster District Council Indicative Maximum Award Decision SNI 21 16</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 16 for approval.</p> <p>Members noted this was the second investment approval for MFF with a recommendation of up to £1m in Mid Ulster Sports Areas through Mid Ulster District Council for the development of a floodlit 8-lane athletics track and 3G pitch. Members noted the Mid Ulster Sports Arena is already developed with indoor, outdoor pitches, changing facilities etc.; this was an enhancement to an existing site.</p> <p>A member sought clarity on the element of contingency built in and OB and it was confirmed this was pre-tender and OB was included, when costs go out to tender OB will be removed and there will be a fixed price agreed between Mid Ulster and the contractor.</p> <p>A member queried the justification of an 8-lane track for elite competition when a lot of rational is for participation and club development. Members heard the driver was for having a range of facilities; previously the draft facility framework highlighted a deficit of facilities as well as increasing participation and delivering against facility need, the MFF addresses this. Sub regional level facilities are not available in every single council area, there are a network of facilities we need across NI. This will provide a hub for school competition in the area and progression of athletes into clubs and onward to high performance in the long run.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>

	<p>The Chair requested an update on the Sports Sustainability Fund; it was advised this was contained within the CEO Report. Members noted letters of offer totalling £23m have been issued with just under £18.5m already paid out to the sector and the remaining balance is being worked through. It was advised the big focus now was post payment vouching and due diligence. The SSF had attracted unprecedented scrutiny and media attention and SNI had highlighted many positive good news impact stories from sports. Members noted the amount of funding this year was over double the annual budget we normally manage, with no additional human resources.</p> <p>A members queried the additional £6m for SSF and whether this would be the same type of application. Members heard work has been ongoing with DfC on a £6m Covid relief. We are aware of clubs and sports that have fallen through the gaps and the focus was also on unmet need to be addressed. The early evaluation of SSF will ascertain the gaps of unmet needs and this will be addressed.</p>
<b>11. Delegated Decisions SNI 21 18</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 18 for information.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p> <p>The Chair expressed thanks to ET for the updated position.</p>
<b>12. Finance &amp; Governance Report SNI 21 19</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 19 for decision.</p> <p>Members were advised the paper had been reviewed at the March ARAC meeting and noted its contents. A member queried whether the amount of funding paid out in this particular year would be demonstrated in our accounts and this was confirmed.</p> <p>As requested at the Chair's pre-brief members were updated that there were two current grievances.</p> <p><b><i>The meeting paused at 9.47am to allow Board Members to attend the Carbmill training session - Transgender in Sport Research and Review of the Guidance.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>The meeting reconvened at 12.00pm.</i></b></p>
<b>13. Budget 2021-22 SNI 21 20</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 20 for approval.</p> <p>Members heard the Chair had requested further clarity on the budget at the Chair's pre-brief and members discussed Appendix 2 by way of explanation.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
<b>14. Update of Bank Mandate SNI 21 21</b>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 21 for approval.</p> <p>Member approved the paper.</p>

<b>15. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report</b>	<p>The Vice-Chair presented the draft 22 March 2021 ARAC minutes which had been circulated to members.</p> <p>The Vice-Chair advised DfC's risk appetite as a result of learning from Covid would be less cautious which was very encouraging. Members noted SNI's Risk Register has been updated several times recently. The Vice-Chair reported it was great news to have the accounts signed off and advised ARAC had received a presentation from John News on capital funding.</p> <p>Members were advised Tollymore had received a limited audit assurance with 21 issues and once remedial action was taken ARAC would review this.</p> <p>Members received an update on Tollymore's limited assurance – all but 2 of the recommendations were now complete; the other 2 recommendations may not be accepted in full and we may go back to IA. The Vice-Chair confirmed this was excellent progress. It was also noted IA may be requested to review this to validate the progress and remove the limited assurance.</p> <p>Members were advised DfC confirmed yesterday their budget has not been approved yet, subject to confirmation of the block grant being finalised. Members noted this was contained within the recommendation of the Budget paper.</p>
<b>16. AOB</b>	<p>The CEO expressed thanks to John News for coming off annual leave this morning to attend and present at the earlier Board meeting.</p> <p>Members were advised the Bi-annual Assurance Statement contained a comment in the Financial Planning section which related to 2019/20, this hadn't been updated for the current year. Members noted there would be an underspend of around 5%; this is included as an exception and the comment will be updated. In addition the standard template for the Chair to sign as content with the statement and the Board have discussed referred to 2019/20 therefore this would be amended.</p> <p>Members heard the underspend was due to covid funding as well as a blend of reasons for Brexit, covid, a drain on resource to deliver the covid programmes and focus being lost on routine areas which had contributed to a slippage. Members queried was there an issue with staffing levels; members were advised that at each Board meeting, they have been advised of work pressures on staff and that many staff have been operating above and beyond normal duties and work hours to deliver this additional funding. Going forward, restructuring provides the route to meeting future need. Members agreed they didn't want to see any repercussions on the underspend as a result of the good work being done.</p> <p>The Chair asked were the Board content to note the BIASS report with the caveats set out on BIASS and the statement was noted.</p> <p>The Chair asked did everyone feel this has been a good meeting and this was confirmed. The Chair asked if anyone had ideas for improvement to advise the Chair or Board Secretariat; we are working on a programme of continuous improvement.</p>

<b>17. Date of next meeting</b>	<p>Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 @ 9.00am</p> <p>The Chair confirmed there would be a few additional meetings arranged including a workshop. The Chair thanked everyone for their contribution today in terms of papers and discussions.</p> <p>There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 12.17pm.</p>

*George Lucas.*

Approved by: \_\_\_\_\_  
Sport NI Chair

Date: 30/06/21