



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPORT NI BOARD HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 30th JUNE 2021 @ 9.30AM (VIA ZOOM MEETING)**

DRAFT

Present: Board members: George Lucas Jay Colville Richard Bullick Wilma Erskine Kyle Ferguson	In attendance: Sport NI Officials Antoinette McKeown, CEO Adrian Doherty, Chief Operating Officer Richard Archibald, Head of Sports Systems John Hart, Head of Policy & Innovation Gillian Gilliland, Board Secretary
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Agenda Item	Record of main discussion
1. Apologies	Apologies were noted from Kieran Harding and Darryl Petticrew.
2. Register of Member's Declaration of Interest	There were no new declarations of interest to note.
3. Minutes of Previous Meetings 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2021	Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2021.
4. Chair's remarks	The Chair acknowledged the work that everyone has undertaken over past year in terms of covid and developing work. We need to manage risks proportionately, this has not been an easy time for everyone in SNI. We as a Board appreciate the work the team is doing and we will support you while acknowledging the difficulties.
5. CEO Report SNI 21 22	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 22 for information.</p> <p>Members were advised the Corporate Plan would be presented to the August Board meeting which would allow time to get agreement from the department on the Business Plan and hopefully the 10 year strategy will be finalised at that stage also to ensure alignment.</p> <p>The CEO advised there had been considerable work carried out in terms of preparing for the PAC on the SSF; the CEO expressed thanks to John Hart, John News and Ian Weir for working on the brief. Members noted there had been a mock PAC meeting yesterday and there will be a further one next Tuesday. It was advised the Chair had received a letter of invite yesterday from</p>

<p>5.1 Quarter 4 Business Plan Review</p>	<p>William Humphries, Char of PAC to attend the hearing; it was confirmed the Chair would attend to answer queries.</p> <p><i>K Ferguson joined the meeting at 9.37am.</i></p> <p>The Chair thanked all staff involved in the preparations and also members for sending questions to assist. It was advised DfC were standing by the scheme and this was good to have in a difficult time.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed SNI were currently showing business as usual in the midst of some difficult times and this was reflected in today's papers.</p> <p>A member queried the timelines in terms of restructuring and whether there were any difficulties. Members were advised restructuring was currently at the stage of DP level and was creating a lot of anxiety amongst managers. Members heard we are waiting for DfC to approve the DP business case, K Hill is due to go on leave on Friday and we need to have this approved before she goes on leave. Until we work through the restructure staff will not settle.</p> <p>Members queried when the restructure would be finalised and it was advised it was hoped to be by end of quarter two. Members noted this was the most difficult level as the number of DP have decreased, slotting in of SO level and below will follow. Members queried who the DPs were approaching with their concerns, was this HR? Members were advised there have been engagement sessions along with Grant Thornton, Neal Hughes had advised said this was the most engaging restructuring he had been involved in. SNI had not gone through such a comprehensive restructuring before and there were a lot of staff with long service. There have been 172 questions on the consultation and we have drafted responses to each of these and have committed to getting these back to staff. The CEO requested members to advise the Chair of CEO if they are contact directly by staff.</p> <p>The COO advised the timeline he had advised staff was that slotting in should be finished by the end of June and therefore we were behind, as we don't have the business case approved. There is a high level of uncertainty and DPs are causing a lot of uncertainty throughout the organisation, they are under a level of stress and anxiety. We need the approval from DfC to proceed with the slotting in process; we would like the Board to record we haven't had approval yet and we need to move on this. The Board endorsed this, we need to get this moved on.</p> <p>It was agreed the CEO would contact K Hill following today's Board meeting to pass on the Board's comments on the approval of the business case.</p> <p>Members noted the progress on the quarter four Business Plan review.</p>
<p>6. Draft Business Plan 2021-22 SNI 21 23</p>	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 23 for approval.</p>

A member queried the continued engagement with DfC on the Partnership Agreement. It was advised the NI Housing Executive may already have signed their PA with DfC. It was confirmed CEO would follow this up. **(Action)**

A member raised an issue with the appendices attached to the paper, in particular appendix 1 in terms of comments in the document regarding Sport NI not about getting people active and this also created concern regarding the discussions between Sport NI and DfC. The priority was to get quality data going forward, and the member was not clear where this was addressed in the Business Plan.

There followed a lengthy discussion regarding physical activity and physical literacy and it was highlighted that if Sport NI were to lead on physical activity the budget and staff resource would have to increase considerably. It was advised Sport NI recognise we have a role in getting people from sedentary to being active but we can't lead of this. Sport NI are looking to develop the sport system and have committed to community partnerships in terms of funding. If we continue to discuss leading on physical activity the organisation won't be able to look at high performance sport, we don't have the resources.

Members were advised there is an interconnection with work on PE and schools to ensure there is a higher quality provision as a foundation. Sport NI recognise we have limited ability but we can control extra-curricular sport leading to stronger relationships with education. There is also a strong mandate looking at sport and local provision, this should lead to better opportunities for physical activity in council areas. We can't impact more given our resources currently.

Members heard we can influence certain thinking in terms of physical activity, however from sofa to podium is a broad spectrum. To date, we have taken our lead from the Board and the general consensus has been we work on physical activity but lead on sport.

A member suggested Sport NI didn't need to look at all elements of physical activity, the sedentary side is one specific level and looking at leisure time. A member stated the Sporting Systems paper is very good in terms of looking at the leisure aspect of sport, but read in conjunction with appendix 1 of this paper provided a contradictory view and queried whether it was possible to align these. It was agreed we could look at this but the Board need to advise on the way forward and to provide direction. **(Action)**

Members were advised discussions have been ongoing with DfC over the last two years regarding this issue and we need to hold the position that we are not responsible for getting people off their sofas. It is about that nuance, we will lead on the transition of physical activity into sport but not all physical activity, PHA lead on this.

The Chair asked if members could agree that we are not far away in terms of the discussions on physical activity, we recognise this is part of sport and advance on this basis.

It was highlighted, as a Board, we charged the CEO to get alignment with the DfC strategy and this could take place over the next 6-12 months to get

	<p>agreement on the alignment; this is a conversation that can evolve. As a Board, there needs to be agreement to move forward but with more discussions to be had in the future to allow the Business Plan to be approved.</p> <p>K Ferguson did not approve the Business Plan and was content for this to be noted. The remaining Board members approved the Business Plan.</p>
7. Corporate Plan Consultation Report and Recommendations SNI 21 24	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 24 for information.</p> <p>A member queried were there any major issues raised and how these would be worked through for the future. Members heard the CEO had meet with the CEOs of the three big ball sports and they were in broad agreement with the plan, however their specific concerns were around access to funding relating historically to Sporting Winners and Clubs. Members noted the CEO had provided assurance Sport NI were looking at all levels and this was a core element of the new corporate plan. Sport NI have agreed a form of words that will provide them this assurance and this would be brought to the next Board meeting along with the Corporate Plan. (Action)</p> <p>A member queried how we could address issues for the smaller sports and hard to reach groups who felt excluded from funding. Members heard this relates to the heart of the new Corporate Plan, inclusion is the cornerstone in terms of reaching out to these groups. Members noted the CEO has requested a briefing with the Minister to raise this point.</p>
8. Communications	<p>Members had previously received the interactive Comms Report 16 April-16 June 2021, for information.</p> <p>The Chair stated the Communications report was great, in particular the interviews with well-known athletes. The Chair expressed thanks to the Comms Team for producing the report.</p>
9. Rolling Board Business 2020/21 update SNI 21 25	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 25 for information.</p> <p>The Chair agreed that was a great pro-active tool for the Board to actively use in terms of future approvals and this could be further developed.</p> <p>Members noted the paper.</p>
10. Board Governance document reviews SNI 21 26	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 26 for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the Board Terms of Reference contained within the paper.</p> <p><i>The Board took a 10 minute recess at 10.29am.</i></p>
11. Multi Facility Fund – Northern Ireland Civil Service Sports Association Indicative	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 27 for approval.</p> <p><i>The meeting resumed at 10.42am.</i></p> <p>A member advised they were very reassured and content with the decisions within this paper; however in terms of PR, albeit this has been in the pipeline for a long time, given this was the NICSSA could it be viewed as putting</p>

Maximum Award Decision SNI 21 27	<p>additional large sums of money into elite areas of the NICS, particularly in light of recent media attention.</p> <p>Members were advised ET had had a similar discussion, they had looked at the proposal and saw its merits; however it was confirmed we would be prepared for any attention and a PR response would be prepared. (Action)</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
12. Multi Facility Fund – Derry City & Strabane District Council Indicative Maximum Award Decision SNI 21 28	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 28 for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
13. Building Sport: The Cliff Transfer of Asset Request SNI 21 29	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 29 for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
14. Recognition paper – Brazilian Jiu Jitsu SNI 21 30	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 30 for approval.</p> <p>A member advised in terms of process of recognising sport he had received a few queries recently from sports who had been unsuccessful in the recognition process; however he advised he would encourage sports not to be put off applying for recognition as they would have a fair hearing.</p> <p>It was advised there is a process which is used by the four sports councils for bodies applying for recognition. This reinforces the view that it is subject to unanimous support for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
15. Sport NI Covid-19 response – revenue programmes update SNI 21 31	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 31 for information.</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the paper.</p>
16. Sport Systems Update SNI 21 32	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 32 for information.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed this paper had been discussed earlier in the meeting during the Business Plan discussions.</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the paper.</p>

17. Physical Literacy Statement for the Island of Ireland SNI 21 33	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 33 for information.</p> <p>K Ferguson declared a conflict of interest as he had been involved in writing this statement.</p> <p>Members were advised this paper was not for approval but for information in terms of background information to the Business Plan.</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the paper.</p>
18. Going Concern SNI 21 34	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 34 for approval.</p> <p>Members noted this had previously been discussed at the December 2020 Board meeting; however the NIAO ask for this to be discussed by the Board prior to audits being certified.</p> <p>Members discussed Sport NI as a going concern and agreed the following provided evidence the organisation was a going concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial statements of Sport NI have always been produced on the 'Going Concern Basis'. The Executive Team is not aware of any reason to adopt a different basis. • Sport NI is an arm's length body of the Department for Communities. The Minister approved Sport NI's draft Corporate Plan 2020-25 for Consultation, thus implying that Sport NI will continue to exist for at least the next five years. Initial feedback of the ALB review is that there will not be any significant change in the near future. • Sport NI is incorporated by legislation. To change the status of Sport NI would require a legislative change. The Executive Team is unaware of any suggestion that such a change is being considered. • DfC has recently published its five year strategy: Building Inclusive Communities. The strategy acknowledges that ALBs perform many vital and significant functions and it is through them that the Department will deliver much of its work. The work carried out by Sport NI is specifically referenced: "Lead in the development of, and access to, sport in Northern Ireland." <p>Members approved Sport NI as a going concern based on their discussions above.</p>
19. Lottery Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 SNI 21 35	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 35 for approval.</p> <p>Members were advised ARAC recommended the Board approve the Lottery 2020-21 accounts for submission to the NIAO for audit.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed on behalf of the Board they were very pleased for the accounts to be in this position and expressed thanks to all the team involved in preparation of the accounts.</p>

20. Exchequer Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21 SNI 21 36	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 36 for approval.</p> <p>Members were advised ARAC recommended the Board approve the Exchequer 2020-21 accounts for submission to the NIAO for audit.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
21. Finance & Governance Report SNI 21 37	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 27 for decision.</p> <p>Members were advised there had been a recommendation within the NIAO Report for legal and HR costs incurred to be presented to the Board to allow them to monitor them on an ongoing basis.</p> <p>Members heard the legal fees of £20,696 was in terms of grievances raised by staff and industrial tribunals. Some members had requested previous years' legal costs, however these have not been included at the minute as this would involve a lot of analysis. It was advised if members still required this information we could provide this for the next meeting; it was agreed the Board would concentrate on the current year's costs.</p> <p>Members were advised these costs related to this financial year, there were ongoing costs but they hadn't been billed yet. There were also invoices to be received in terms of appeals. Members were advised a report on costs would be presented at each Board meeting going forward.</p> <p>A member queried the drop in the number of days of sickness; it was advised this was probably due to staff not reporting sick because there is more flexibility of working from home. Members agreed this looked very positive and potentially could be used a benchmark going forward, however it was also highlighted this was a pandemic year.</p> <p>The Chair queried was it possible to get the number of grievances recorded to allow the Board to look at this as a rolling number going forward; this was agreed as an action. (Action)</p> <p>Members noted the contents of the paper.</p>
22. Delegated Decisions Paper SNI 21 38	<p>Members received paper number SNI 21 39 for approval.</p> <p>Members approved the paper.</p>
23. Audit and Risk Assurance Committee Report	<p>The ARAC Chair presented the draft 14 June 2021 ARAC minutes which had been circulated to members.</p> <p>The ARAC Chair confirmed RSM had given Sport NI a satisfactory annual level of assurance for internal audit. It was advised RSM's term as internal auditors was complete and the process had begun to appoint new internal auditors.</p> <p>Members were advised ARAC had raised concerns about the number of grievances, however this was not within ARAC's remit to get involved other than any element of risk for the organisation. ARAC would be looking at this in the</p>

	<p>future. The TNOC review was ongoing and would be discussed further at ARAC.</p> <p>Members discussed the ARAC membership in terms of the quorum for meetings being too high in relation to the current membership numbers. It was agreed to decrease the quorum for ARAC to three, the ARAC TOR would be amended and brought to the ARAC September meeting for approval and subsequently the October Board meeting. (Action)</p> <p>The Chair advised it was hoped there would be three new Board members and the ARAC membership would be reviewed to take on additional members. (Action)</p> <p>Members discussed the external focus on SSF and were advised ARAC have this on the radar; ARAC were not currently engaging in anyway but this would be a key area to look at once the PAC session was complete.</p>
24. AOB	<p>The Chair confirmed the appointment of the new Board members was currently with the minister for approval and confirmed that he would advise the position as soon as he heard anything.</p> <p>The Chair confirmed the Board had got through a lot of business today and stated this was not possible without the early receipt of papers, Board members reading these in a timely manner and asking questions in advance to allow the meetings to be effective. The Chair stated we need to continue to work as a team.</p> <p>The Chair expressed thanks to everyone for today's meeting.</p>
25. Date of next meeting	<p>Wednesday 18th August at 9.00am</p> <p>There being no further business to discuss the meeting ended at 11.11am.</p>

George Lucas.

Approved by: _____
Sport NI Chair

Date: 18/08/21