



BOARD MEETING
Wednesday 19th October 2022

MINUTE

Present:

George Lucas
Jay Colville
Gavin Boyd
Denise Burns
Richard Bullick
Wendy Elliott
Kieran Harding
Alison Nicholl

In Attendance:

Antoinette McKeown, Chief Executive
Rebecca Morgan, Chief Operating Officer
Richard Archibald, Director of Sport
John Hart, Head of Policy & Innovation
Orlagh Watters, Head of Sports Systems
Laura Carland, Board Secretariat

	ITEM	STATUS
1	Apologies	
	Apologies were noted from Kyle Ferguson.	
2	Declaration of Conflicts of Interest	
	The CEO declared a potential Conflict with Paper No: SNI 22 43 within the funding list for the record.	
3	Minutes of the Previous Meeting 10 August 2022	
3.1	<p>The minutes of the previous meeting (10th August 2022) were approved.</p> <p>In addition, the Board noted that there were no outstanding Board actions to note.</p> <p>Approved: The minutes of the previous meeting (10th August 2022) were approved.</p>	Approved: The minutes of the previous meeting (10 th August 2022) were approved.
4	Matters Arising	
	There were no matters arising.	
5	Chair's Agenda	
5.1	<p>The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.</p> <p>The Chair advised Members that as the organisation moves towards the latter part of the year, significant work has been undertaken internally to improve efficiency and governance and externally to re-engage with the wider sporting sector. Members were advised that significant engagement has been undertaken by the ELT and staff, through meetings with governing bodies, which will be crucial in helping to progress the Corporate Plan and determine and shape priorities moving forward.</p> <p>Members were advised that during a recent CEO/Chair Meeting (13/10/2022), discussions were held in respect of key priorities for both the Board and ELT. It was agreed that 'Health and Safety' would be the key priority of the Board moving forward and for the ELT, the CEO indicated that their priority will be 'Staff Welfare'. However, it was agreed that these priorities are intrinsically linked.</p> <p>Members were advised that Sport Ireland and Sport NI had a soft launch of the All Ireland Physical Literacy Statement on 03/10/2022. Members noted that Ministerial consensus was received and that this could be considered to be a fantastic achievement by all. Members noted that a formal launch for the statement will be planned for later in the year.</p>	

	<p>On behalf of the Board, the Chair congratulated KMcC, Finance Manager, as KMCC embarks on maternity leave and formally welcomed, SB, replacement Finance Manager to the organisation.</p> <p>The Chair advised Members that the organisation continues to confront leadership and governance challenges in respect of the receipt of a 'limited assurance' audit opinion, outstanding Lottery Accounts, staff sickness absence, the Staff Engagement Survey and Health and Safety Management. The Chair stated that plans are in place to address any existing issues but that there needs to be collective recognition that the organisation is on the 'path to green', through cohesive leadership to enable progress.</p>	
6	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>The CEO Report was tabled as read.</p> <p>The CEO confirmed for clarification purposes that the CEO Report indicates that Allwyn have not been appointed to the fourth licence of National Lottery but advised that this sentence should read that Allwyn are now appointed.</p> <p>Members noted that a query had been raised by a Member in respect of vouching exercises conducted by the organisation. The CEO clarified that the language used in the CEO report came directly from DfC and that all vouching exercises will be subject to the direction of DfC and will always meet governance requirements.</p> <p>Members referred to the Cost of Living Crisis and queried what actions the organisation are currently undertaking to address the impact of this issue in the sporting sector. Members were advised that during the Governing Bodies engagement sessions, feedback has been sought to date in order to gather evidence and better ascertain the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis in the sporting sector in a bid to shape the direction and priorities of the work of the organisation in this area moving forward. Members were advised that work is ongoing to recruit a designated member of staff to manage the organisation's response to the Cost of Living Crisis and that this resource will collate information and research, in order to better understand this area.</p> <p>In addition, following a brief overview of the feedback received during sporting sector engagement to date, Members and ELT discussed the positive feedback in respect of the impact of the organisation on the sporting sector received anecdotally to date.</p>	
7	<p>Recognition of Governing Bodies</p> <p>The Reversal of the De-Recognition of NIJJA was tabled as read.</p> <p>The Director of Sport spoke to the paper and provided an overview of the proposed for the information of Members. Members noted that this proposal follows the result of receiving further information from the NIJJA Governing Body and reviews of the recognition of NIJJA being undertaken in response.</p> <p>Members reviewed the information and were content to approve the paper Approval: Members approved the Reversal of the De-Recognition of NIJJA.</p>	<p>Approval: Members approved the Reversal of the De-Recognition of NIJJA.</p>
8	<p>Sport NI Report on COVID Response Programmes</p> <p>The Sport NI Report on COVID Response Programmes was tabled as read. RA, Director of Sport, spoke to the paper.</p> <p>Members were advised that to date £4.5m in COVID recovery funding (approx. 252 awards) was reduced to 245 awards (totalling approx. £4.2m) in funding following vouching exercises and payments would be made on that basis. Members noted that the difference of approx. £264K was caused by numerous organisations indicating that they were recipients of the OHPS and therefore a clawback period was initiated.</p> <p>Members noted that of 6 remaining outstanding, to date 3 organisations have not responded to the clawback communication from the organisation. Members noted that following consultation with DfC no further action will be towards recovery or write off until the policy is developed and approved by the Principal Accounting Officer. It was agreed, until formal direction is provided from DfC that the remaining organisations would have a 'flag' placed on their records which would be referred to should further funding be sought from said organisations in future.</p> <p>Members and ELT discussed the risks of the scheme and the recommendations made and after a brief discussion, it was agreed that the paper would be approved and the recommendation that</p>	<p>Approval: Members approved the Sport NI Report on COVID Response Programmes and the associated recommendation contain within the paper</p>

	<p>no further action be taken on the remaining funds and that a flag be placed on the 3 organisations for future applications.</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the Sport NI Report on COVID Response Programmes and the associated recommendation contain within the paper</p>	
9.	<p>ARAC Chair Report to Board Verbal Update</p> <p>JC, Chair of ARAC, provided an overview of the last ARAC Meeting held on 17/10/2022 in House of Sport. Members noted that ARAC papers have been included with the Board Papers for their information.</p> <p>In addition, Members noted that the following papers have been included with Board Papers for the 19th October Board Meeting for Board approval, following review by ARAC Members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) The Data Protection Policy (ii) The Data Loss Handling Policy (iii) The Procurement Policy (iv) 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts <p>Members were advised that since the previous Board Meeting, the Chair of ARAC and AN, Member, met with AP, Operations Manager, and the ELT to review the Corporate Risk Register. Members noted that discussions were held in respect of including the Lottery Accounts backlog as an individual stand-alone risk, but that this inclusion has been left with the ELT to determine the most appropriate place to include this issue.</p> <p>Members noted that NIAO presented on the Annual Accounts and Report for 2021-22 and that a confirmation letter is anticipated within the next month.</p> <p>Members reviewed the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts and were content to approve subject to any NIAO queries.</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts subject to any NIAO queries</p> <p>Members were referred to the outstanding Lottery accounts and noted that the continuing delay in certification is impacted by resourcing pressures at NIAO. Members discussed methods of addressing this issue and the actions taken by the organisation to date. It was agreed that the CEO would write to NIAO with the Chair of ARAC to address this continuing delay and the resulting impact upon the organisation.</p> <p>Action: CEO and Chair of ARAC to write to NIAO in respect of the delay to the outstanding Lottery accounts.</p> <p>Members were advised that work is ongoing in respect of the response to internal audit, the Draft Bi-Annual Assurance was reviewed and presented as accurate, the Governance action plan was updated and that ARAC agreed to that the organisation remains a 'Going Concern' until further notice. There were no additional issues or concerns to raise from the ARAC meeting.</p>	<p>Approval: Members approved the 2021-22 Annual Report and Accounts subject to any NIAO queries</p> <p>Action: CEO and Chair of ARAC to write to NIAO in respect of the delay to the outstanding Lottery accounts.</p>
10	<p>Operations Report</p> <p>The Operations Report was tabled as read.</p> <p>RM, COO, spoke to the paper for the information of Members, providing a brief overview of the contents within. Members noted that the Exchequer Accounts for 2021-22 have been included with the Board papers for approval.</p> <p>Approval: Members were content to approve the Exchequer Accounts for 2021-22 pending any amendments from NIAO.</p> <p>Members noted that following the verbal update from the ARAC Chair, the Data Protection Policy, Data Loss Handling Policy and Procurement Policy were presented to Board for approval.</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the Data Protection Policy Approval: Members approved the Data Loss Handling Policy Approval: Members approved the Procurement Policy</p> <p>Members were advised the Management Accounts and Year End Spend to Date, have been reviewed and updated and that intensive meetings with each budget holder are ongoing to ensure appropriate budget control.</p>	<p>Approval: Members were content to approve the Exchequer Accounts for 2021-22 pending any amendments from NIAO.</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the Data Protection Policy</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the</p>

<p>Members were advised that no complaints have been received since the previous Board Meeting.</p> <p>In addition, the COO spoke to the ongoing work of the organisation in respect of Health and Safety mitigation which included an exercise to identify and collate the 'top ten' risks for each Sport NI site.</p> <p>Members were advised that DfC have agreed to consider a Business Case to consider approval for IT Support for the organisation at Grade 7 level which will aid the Digital Transformation requirements for Sport NI.</p> <p>Members noted that the CIVICA financial system went live on 01/04/2022 and were advised that further training for staff will be made available to address any implementation issues experienced to date.</p> <p>Members were advised that the Staff Engagement Group continues to meet and provide insight and feedback on the priorities of the organisation going forward.</p> <p>Members discussed the delay in accessing OHS for staff. Members were advised that the number of appointments outstanding is not material and were advised that Sport NI staff can currently avail of the Inspire platform for mental health and wellbeing and additional advisory support. Members queried the current sickness absence levels of staff and were advised that current levels are due to circumstances beyond the control of the organisation. Members asked if the HR Manager could provide more context and detail on sickness absence levels in the next quarterly Operational update. It was noted that in a small organisation such as Sport NI two employees being off can impact and skew statistics and that confidentiality needs to be protected also.</p> <p>Action: More detail and context to be provided on sickness absence in the next quarterly operations update.</p> <p>Members thanked the COO for the Operations Report.</p> <p>The Chair invited the CEO to present on the Staff Engagement process to date. The CEO highlighted current influences on Staff Engagement including disengagement, the impact of the staff restructuring, staff changes, the impact of the COVID pandemic and perceived lack of leadership from new priorities being introduced in addition to transformation programme and Business Plan actions. Members noted that staff have indicated that 'Learning and Development' is a key priority for staff moving forward yet it has not been progressed due to other priorities.</p> <p>The COO commented that given competing pressures, often the ELT is unable to get space to respond to staff priorities (e.g., work travel policy), resulting in staff feeling that the ELT do not care about their needs, when that is not the case.</p> <p>The CEO indicated that time and space is required to implement major and significant change needed within the organisation which would be aided by the Board indicating fewer main priorities to the ELT moving forward so as to allow for appropriate resource management.</p> <p>The CEO raised concerns that additional to more (and often conflicting priorities) and coupled with the implementation of the Business Plan, this has made current workloads unsustainable. Members were advised that the ELT are keen to manage expectations and requested that the Board to indicate their key areas of focus moving forward.</p> <p>Members and ELT held an extensive discussion on individual and collective areas of interest and focus. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of leadership below ELT level including culture work • Performance management, • Staff engagement, • Health and Safety, • Outstanding lottery accounts, • Improved communication and detail included in Board reports, • Board engagement with staff, • Addressing internal audit limited assurance, 	<p>Data Loss Handling Policy</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the Procurement Policy</p> <p>Action: CEO Presentation on Staff Engagement to be uploaded to DecisionTime.</p> <p>Action: More detail and context to be provided on sickness absence in the next quarterly operations update.</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff training on governance, • Delivery of the Business Plan, • Digital transformation • Web site development • Executive Leadership to stop working so hard(with discussion on roles and tasks) • Reducing the NLF balance • Improvement in PPE processes • Staff Welfare <p>Members collectively agreed that focus should be centred on the areas previously indicated by letter to MD, DfC. Members asked that the Business Plan, and associated objectives, be added to this list.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the priorities identified by Members meant that the leadership development programme that the CEO believes will make the most impact on organisational performance is getting consistently de-prioritised. The CEO confirmed a genuine commitment from ELT and asked that the Board understand the implications of competing priorities on the ability to deliver business plan and change whilst prioritising staff welfare. The Chair advised the Board's expectations that these priorities will be met and that organisations are subject to priority changes and provided an example of private sector expectations.</p> <p>Members stated that if staff are working extended hours for extended periods it impacts upon productively and that this should be managed by prioritising workloads. Members discussed the staffing restructure and were advised that whilst the structure is in place and bedding down, the organisation does not currently have all of resources required in place for this structure to function appropriately and efficiently as designed e.g., the lack of IT Manager and team in post. In addition, Members noted that the organisation is limited in terms of recruitment flexibility.</p> <p>Members thanked the CEO for the presentation and requested that this information be uploaded to DecisionTime.</p> <p>Action: CEO Presentation on Staff Engagement to be uploaded to DecisionTime.</p>	
11	Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022	
	Members were referred to the Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022 update paper. OW, Interim Head of Sports Systems spoke to the paper which offered a post-games summary report.	
12	Sports Systems Governing Body Investment Programme	
	<p>The Sports Systems Governing Body Investment Programme paper was tabled as read. RA, Director of Sport and OW, Interim Head of Sports Systems, spoke to the paper for the information of Members.</p> <p>Members reviewed the information and were content to approve the recommendation of the direction of travel and continued engagement with the sporting sector.</p> <p>Approval: Members approved the Sports Systems Governing Body Investment Programme paper and the recommendation of the direction of travel within and the continued engagement with the sporting sector.</p>	<p>Approval: Members approved the Sports Systems Governing Body Investment Programme paper and the recommendation of the direction of travel within and the continued engagement with the sporting sector.</p>
13	Draft Board Schedule	

	<p>Members were referred to the inclusion of a Draft Board Schedule within the Board Papers. Members noted that this timetable is structured around a monthly timetable with quarterly ARAC Meetings. Members were advised that this information would be subject to further additions to the diary.</p> <p>The CEO advised Members that moving towards a monthly schedule would have implications on both resources, staff welfare and the distribution of papers. The CEO advised that the draft schedule leaves little flexibility for 'business as usual' work and the time being proposed may impact upon existing resources pressures and the ability for staff to take annual leave.</p> <p>The COO advised that a practical approach to the Board Schedule would be to schedule meetings around the financial timetable and quarterly reporting. The Chair proposed that meeting dates could follow this timetable but with a monthly Board Meeting held to discuss items by exception or workshops.</p> <p>Members reviewed the information and requested that they receive an amended list of Board and ARAC Meeting dates and times for the monthly schedule.</p> <p>Action: Members to be provided with an amended list of Board and ARAC Meeting dates and times for the monthly schedule for 2023.</p>	Action: Members to be provided with an amended list of Board and ARAC Meeting dates and times for the monthly schedule for 2023.
14	Draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement	
	<p>Members referred to the Draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement, which had been referred by ARAC on 17/10/2022. Following ARAC approval, Members were content to approve the Bi-Annual Assurance Statement which would be signed by the CEO and Chair on behalf of the organisation.</p> <p>Approval: Following ARAC approval, Members approved the Draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement.</p>	Approval: Following ARAC approval, Members approved the Draft Bi-Annual Assurance Statement.
15	McBride Approvals October 2022	
	<p>Members noted the inclusion of McBride Approvals for October 2022 as approved at the McBride Sub-Committee on 14/10/2022 for the information of Members. There were no queries or concerns raised in respect of this information.</p> <p>In addition, Members noted that an updated business case for Your School Your Club had been submitted to the Chair and Vice Chair from the Director of Sport and that this information would be circulated to Members for their information.</p>	
16	Response to Board Queries	
	Members noted the inclusion of responses to Board Queries which had been included with the Board papers. There were no additional queries to raise.	
17	AOB	
	<p>Members referred to the inclusion of the Communications and Stakeholder Plan within the Board Papers and noted appreciated this information for Board oversight.</p> <p>Members queried the current information available on the Sport NI website and were advised that historical information is currently being subjected to ongoing updates, which would include all Board information.</p>	
18	Date of the Next Meeting(s)	
	<p>Members noted that the next Board Meeting will take the form of a SPRINT meeting and will be held on 16th November from 9.30am to 11.30am in House of Sport</p> <p>Members noted that the next full Board Meeting is scheduled to take place on 13th December 2022 in TNOC at 9.30am to 12.30pm followed by lunch</p> <p>The Chair thanked the ELT and Board Members for their contribution and commitment</p>	

Signed by Sport NI Chair:

George Lucas

Date: 16th November 2022