



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

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**COMMITTEE FOR  
CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE**

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**OFFICIAL REPORT  
(Hansard)**

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**Inquiry into Participation in Sport and  
Physical Activity in Northern Ireland —  
Big Lottery Fund**

4 March 2010

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY**

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**Inquiry into Participation in Sport and Physical Activity in  
Northern Ireland — Big Lottery Fund**

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**Members present for all or part of the proceedings:**

Mr Barry McElduff (Chairperson)  
Mr David McNarry (Deputy Chairperson)  
Mr P J Bradley  
Lord Browne  
Mr Trevor Clarke  
Mr Billy Leonard  
Mr Kieran McCarthy  
Miss Michelle McIlveen  
Mr Ken Robinson

**Witnesses:**

Ms Norrie Breslin       )       Big Lottery Fund  
Ms Joanne McDowell    )

**The Chairperson (Mr McElduff):**

I welcome Joanne McDowell, head of policy development and public affairs, and Norrie Breslin, senior policy and development officer, and I thank them for coming along. I invite Joanne and Norrie to make a 10-minute opening statement. I will then give members the opportunity to ask questions.

**Ms Joanne McDowell (Big Lottery Fund):**

Unfortunately, our director, Walter Rader, is not able to make it today due to a family

bereavement, and I apologise on his behalf. However, he wanted to ensure that Big Lottery Fund was represented, so Norrie and I will make a presentation that is based on the written information that we submitted to the Committee's inquiry into participation in sport and physical activity.

We will start by giving the Committee a bit of background about the organisation. As the largest of the National Lottery good causes distributors, Big Lottery Fund has been giving grants to health, education, environment and charitable purposes causes across the UK since June 2004. Several legacy bodies merged in 2004 to create Big Lottery Fund, and, since then, we have run a series of programmes that work towards our mission of being committed to bringing about real improvements to communities and to the lives of people most in need.

As an outcomes funder, we focus on four specific areas: giving people the opportunity to achieve their full potential; helping people to actively participate in communities to bring about positive change; creating community ownership of better and safer environments; and improving physical and mental health for all people. Since 1994, Big Lottery Fund and its legacy bodies have invested more than £480 million in projects to support some 10,500 activities across Northern Ireland that contribute to communities most in need.

For the remainder of the presentation, we will focus on details of some Big Lottery Fund programmes and activities that specifically relate to the third point in the Committee's terms of reference for the inquiry. We will consider solutions that concentrate on how the main groups of the adult population with lower levels of participation could be supported to think about higher levels of participation, including examples of different projects across Northern Ireland that Big Lottery Fund has funded and the ways in which it has brought those projects together.

Big Lottery Fund activities have focused on different support approaches for particular groups with lower levels of participation. Those can be summarised into three main areas: programmes aimed directly at making a difference to the level of participation through a range of funded activities; programmes aimed at increasing the accessibility of community-based projects and facilities to increase levels of participation; and, more generically, other programmes that fund individual projects with a focus on the promotion of health and well-being, which may indirectly support relevant users to think about how they can increase their participation in physical activity. For the purposes of today's presentation, we thought that it would be useful to consider one example of a project or programme under each of those areas. I will begin that process by

speaking about a specific programme that was aimed directly at making a difference to the level of participation through a range of activities.

We are aware that the Committee received a presentation from Sport NI two weeks ago. Big Lottery Fund jointly funded the Community Sport initiative with Sport NI. Building on the knowledge and learning gained during that collaboration, Big Lottery Fund devised a slightly different programme in Northern Ireland called Active Lifestyles. That programme, which was valued at £2.1 million, aimed to increase grass-roots participation in physical activity by tackling inequalities in the levels of physical activity and by considering how broader health and well-being could be delivered. A number of community groups, district councils and schools were awarded grants under that programme to deliver physical and recreational activities, such as dance, walking, cycling and multi-skills clubs, to specific groups, including older and disabled people.

An independent evaluation of the Active Lifestyles programme reflected on how to encourage participation specifically among those groups of people who do not normally take part in sport or physical activity. It showed that it was important to offer a range of activities that are not considered to be formal sporting activities, to use accessible venues to increase participation, and to involve participants in decision-making on the range and type of activities delivered, which ensures that physical activities include a social contact aspect.

**Ms Norrie Breslin (Big Lottery Fund):**

In the area of specific programmes that are aimed directly at increasing the accessibility of community-based facilities, which have encouraged greater levels of participation, I will speak about the New Opportunities for PE and Sport programme. That programme, which was valued at £33.75 million in Northern Ireland, aimed to bring about a step change in the provision and use of PE and sports facilities by young people and by the community generally.

Except for the smallest projects, wider community benefit and use are an essential part of grant schemes in the PE and sport programme. There were 136 projects funded through that programme, which included the provision of purpose-built early years play areas with equipment, storerooms, changing facilities, large multi-use games areas and larger sports halls. The facilities will support a wide range of games, including soccer, basketball, rugby and Gaelic games. The projects aim to increase the amount of time available for physical activity and the participation of

all pupils before, during and after school. One of those projects is the four-court sports hall with a dance studio in the Creggan area. Derry City Council in partnership with St Cecilia's College and the Old Library Trust Healthy Living and Learning Centre was awarded just over £1.4 million to build that facility. Of the 136 projects that have been funded, 134 have now been completed and are available for use.

There is evidence that the programme has had a dramatic and positive impact on the levels of participation in sport and physical recreation by not just pupils but the wider community in areas where facilities have been built. It is anticipated that the larger facilities will assist with the development of community cohesion. A number of projects have been successful in securing funding from Big Lottery Fund and other funders to provide development officers to maximise the use of the facilities. It is recognised that projects will need further support to develop community use of the facilities.

**Ms McDowell:**

Big Lottery Fund also has a number of other programmes that fund specific projects that have wider health and well-being outcomes. Those projects indirectly promote greater participation in sport and physical activity and are relevant to users' needs because of the huge scale and range of activities offered. We wish to highlight the Awards for All programme, which provides small grants of between £500 and £10,000 to help to make a difference to small local groups by funding a wide range of activities. We can fund across health, education and environment, and we have funded sport and physical recreation within that programme. Those smaller community groups, which are sometimes led by sporting clubs or community associations, deliver projects at a local level. A number of those projects focus on new users who have not been involved in any activity or have been involved in only limited activity previously. Through the funding of new equipment or, perhaps, taster sessions, those projects have engaged with a wider range of users and beneficiaries to increase that participation level.

In summary, we hope that that information gives the Committee an overview of the range of interventions that Big Lottery Fund has funded and the linkages between those programmes and projects and the focus of the Committee's inquiry into increased participation in sport and physical recreation.

Finally, we consider it appropriate to indicate Big Lottery Fund's forthcoming programmes

that we are developing at the moment and that will be open from spring 2010. We have finished consulting on those programmes, which will focus on the following: younger people at risk; older people at risk; an initiative on space and place, which will look at underutilised physical space; and alcohol-related harm. Again, we believe that, through good programme development, Big Lottery Fund may fund individual projects that support the physical activity of particular groups that have lower levels of participation than the average rate.

We thank the Committee for its time and for its interest in our presentation. We are happy to answer any questions.

**The Chairperson:**

I will ask the first question. Your submission gives details of 136 projects funded through the New Opportunities for PE and Sport programme. Norrie spoke about that and said that almost £34 million has been spent in that area. How successful has that been in encouraging communities to make use of facilities in schools? Is that partnership approach — the notion of a community making use of a school's gymnasium and so on — bedding down in society?

**Ms Breslin:**

We have evidence from a number of the projects that we have funded that communities are using the facilities. An independent evaluation conducted by the Loughborough Partnership details the evidence that there is wider community use of some of the facilities in schools. Through the partnership approach, schools, certainly those in which a development officer is employed, are able to examine how they can overcome the challenges that they face in that regard. Many schools are booked out in the evenings and at weekends, and some even have a waiting list for the use of their facilities by the wider community.

**Ms McDowell:**

In the design of that programme, we were very specific that, in all but the smallest projects, there had to be community use of those schools as part of the requirement for the delivery of each of those projects. That was an important way of illustrating the emphasis on making sure that the school estate was open where possible. Some of those projects involved minor modifications to allow access to the school estate for the evening or part of the day. Other interventions were much larger-scale, but some were as simple as, for example, changing the entrance to address access issues or dealing with storage. There was a whole range of interventions. The multi-use

games areas (MUGAs) have also offered an opportunity for outside space to be used, and that has been hugely important at a number of schools across Northern Ireland.

**The Chairperson:**

I know that it is working very well in St John's High School in Dromore, County Tyrone, and I wanted to know if it was widespread.

**Mr K Robinson:**

MUGAs are a new one on me — I knew that we were all mugs around the table. *[Laughter.]*

You are welcome along here, and I thank you very much for your presentation, which has been very concise.

Research for Northern Ireland suggests that we have a lower rate of participation in physical activity and sport generally, especially in economically disadvantaged areas. You have noted that women are under-represented, as are the disabled and the over-60s — I have to declare an interest at this stage. Have you developed specific funding programmes to meet the individual and differing needs of those three groups, or are you trying a blanket approach? Are you looking specifically at why women do not participate in sport, why an older generation does not participate in sport, and why some people may choose not to get involved?

You have majored on social contacts in relation to the Active Lifestyles programme. However, some people do not like to join clubs and societies or to work in groups; they are very much individuals. I am sure that we all passed them this morning out walking; a gentleman or a lady striding out on his or her own. Those are people who are actively engaged in physical activity. How do you keep those people within the bailiwick of what your organisation is aiming to do, without trying to corral them into a club or association that they do not particularly want to join?

**Ms McDowell:**

Most of our programmes to date have been more about taking a blanket approach and people identifying their own specific needs. In our written submission, we used the women into sport and physical activity project in the Shankill area as an example of a project funded through the Health Living Centre programme. Promoting sport and physical activity among girls and women

was identified as the key priority in that area, and those women wanted to look at a range of different activities. Therefore, we have taken a blanket approach in relation to individual programmes. As we move forward, Big Lottery Fund is trying to focus on those people who are most isolated and on transitional issues, and we want our new programmes to focus on funding activities that would meet those needs. Hence, the Older People at Risk programme recognises that there are particular transitional issues that mean that older people become less engaged and involved.

For individuals who may prefer not to get involved in group activity, our environmental programmes have funded a much broader range of physical facilities, such as walking and cycling routes. At the largest scale, the Connswater Community Greenway was a huge investment in east Belfast, and that project will provide bridges and cycle routes. There are major-scale interventions such as that, but we also fund a number of sensory gardens in which the emphasis is more on seating and on lighting in particular areas in order to deal with the safety aspect. That is why Big Lottery Fund offers funding for a range of things.

**Mr K Robinson:**

I am very interested in what you are saying. I am the champion for the Newtownabbey Way, believe it or not. I am sure that that has come as a surprise to most people around this table.

**Mr McNarry:**

Will you repeat that? *[Laughter.]*

**Mr K Robinson:**

I am the champion for the Newtownabbey Way.

**Mr McNarry:**

You are not the Newtownabbey “Flash Harry” are you?

**Mr K Robinson:**

No, I am working on that.

I know that Wallace is engaged in the Connswater scheme. That is what I was trying to tease out from you. Those are the ideal areas for individuals to get out and do their own particular

thing, without being sucked into a social occasion that they do not wish to be at. Do you have other schemes in mind that you are liable to support, in addition to the Connswater Community Greenway and the Newtownabbey Way? Are you involved with the Comber Greenway, for instance?

**Ms McDowell:**

We are not funding the Comber Greenway. However, within individual programmes, we may fund some of the revenue support for development staff to think about how they engage with communities on local planning and local needs. The Awards for All programme supports initial survey-work types of activities. Those are one-off projects to look at the needs of particular users or to consider regeneration activities.

**Mr K Robinson:**

Do you seek those slots, or do people bring them to your attention?

**Ms McDowell:**

On a number of those programmes, we have an open application process through which people bring bids to us. As we move into programme development and think more about resources and changes, such as those that will result from the review of public administration, our next round of programmes is more likely to include indicative allocations to specific geographical areas and to encourage those areas to think about how they can plan and deliver projects that are a priority in their area. It will not be an open and competitive bidding process as such, but particular priorities will be identified in local areas and ideas will be brought forward.

**Mr McCarthy:**

Thank you for your presentation. I thank you for the work that your organisation has done throughout Northern Ireland, including in the area of Ards Borough Council, of which I am a member. You mentioned the fact that schools have benefited, and I can think of St Columba's College in my constituency as being an example of that. The process was slow to start with, but it has gathered momentum, and people are using sports facilities that they would not otherwise have been using. The work that has been done at that school is an excellent example.

Norrie, you mentioned Sport Northern Ireland, which is shortly to launch a strategy for sport and physical recreation. Do your funding programmes dovetail in any way with that strategy?

More generally, how do you work with Sport NI to ensure that the funding of similar programmes is not duplicated?

**Ms Breslin:**

We have worked in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland on a number of programmes. We worked with it on the PE and sport programme for which it provided expert technical advice on the construction of facilities, and we worked with it in partnership on the Community Sport programme. We work closely with Sport Northern Ireland, as we do with other agencies. We consult on what we do, and we communicate on the programmes that we are funding and those that we have funded in the past. We also consult on our future plans, and we ensure that what we do complements existing strategies. We are keen that what we do is complementary and is part of a whole rather than it being funding in a vacuum by itself.

**Mr McCarthy:**

So there is no question of duplication in the funding provision. You are on top of that.

**Ms McDowell:**

We also work with Sport NI on the lottery distributors' forum in Northern Ireland. All the lottery distributors meet regularly on various agenda items to think about how they can ensure that no duplication takes place and to consider where the linkages and opportunities for joint working exist.

**Mr McCarthy:**

I pay tribute to your work with the healthy living partnership. It is valued enormously in my constituency.

**Mr Leonard:**

Good morning, you are welcome. I want to ask about the flexibility of your organisation. Funders are powerful people; they control the chequebook and the credit card. I do not wish to flatter the Committee, but, if our inquiry were to come up with findings that required action that required finances, would your organisation have the flexibility to take our findings into account? I am not suggesting that a specific programme should be drawn up that is geared to our findings, but I am asking whether resources could be allocated under new funded projects. You mentioned programme development. Does flexibility exist within the current arrangements? I mean no

criticism whatsoever, and others have referred to the good work that you have done, but there is the fear that needs are sometimes not met by money. The figures show that there is a need; we are finding that out already. Do you have the management and the programmatic flexibility to contribute to the Committee's findings in the years ahead?

**Ms McDowell:**

We are developing programmes that will run in Northern Ireland between 2010 and 2015. Within those programmes, there is flexibility to think about local needs and local priorities. Within the Older People at Risk programme, for example, there is a clear identification of the needs of older people and how those could be supported. The Space and Place initiative also offers opportunities to think about local prioritisation, and that will involve working with local councils in Northern Ireland to determine the local priorities in the physical environment. Therefore, there is a level of flexibility within existing programmes.

Added value could come from any evidence that the Committee produces that allows us, through future strategies, to focus on forthcoming programmes. We could think about those ideas and initiatives that might link to how Big Lottery Fund could add value by extending or enhancing existing projects or programmes to consider new or different users.

**Mr Leonard:**

I will follow that up with a spin-off from Ken's point about wanting people to participate more. Would you fund an advertisement that encouraged everyone to participate in sport and exercise? Could a body come to you and apply for funding for an advertising campaign that aimed to raise awareness?

**Ms McDowell:**

Potentially, a body could do that through full cost recovery. However, we would look for additional delivery and wider support on the ground rather than a stand-alone advertising campaign. We have funded that type of activity in a limited sense, and the value comes in local seminars, local campaigning, local initiatives and working with partners to build in existing networks and to make their work more focused. We did a Breathing Places programme with BBC Northern Ireland, which looked at how we could support communities in thinking about the better use of physical space. That initiative concerned a range of activities rather than one particular element. I can envisage more initiatives like that happening in the future.

**Mr Leonard:**

If you have buy-in from organisations on the ground, you can take the lead.

**Ms McDowell:**

Big Lottery Fund seeks to build proposed activities into existing networks rather than fund stand-alone activity.

**Lord Browne:**

Thank you for your presentation. I appreciate the huge investment that you have made in the Connswater walkway scheme in east Belfast. That is a marvellous project that will benefit not only the people of east Belfast but all the people of Belfast.

You detailed the amount of funding that you give to sports and fitness programmes and groups. Do you have any figures relating to the impact that that has had on participation levels? Is there evidence that the programmes that you fund are successful? Does increasing funding lead to a proportional increase in participation?

**Ms McDowell:**

Thank you very much for those questions. There are a number of activities that could be further supported, delivered and developed. We have individual programme evaluations that show the impact of those programmes. We are also moving to more generic evaluations that look at the totality of the impact of the funding that we deliver. For example, we have looked at a well-being evaluation that takes on board a number of programmes and thinks about how those can be linked. We also pull together that research in a more user-friendly format for the PE and sport programme that Norrie mentioned.

**Ms Breslin:**

We drafted a document called 'Sporting Chance', which looks at the impact of the building of physical infrastructure through the PE and sport programme on the different users. It examines the area partnerships that were set up to prioritise that funding and the impact on those. It also demonstrates the impact of the PE and sport programme on disabled young people, young women and the wider community.

**Lord Browne:**

Are you confident that that represents value for money?

**Ms McDowell:**

Yes, in terms of the investment. However, in answer to the second part of your question, investment in participation or physical activity alone may not be the best value for money in terms of the wider impact. Big Lottery Fund has evidence that it can fund a range of interrelated activities that focus not only on participation but on aspects of healthy living such as diet. Cook It programmes, for instance, provide people with skills that can be used. We also have to consider the age range for intervention and that early intervention leads to progression through participation and delivery in those areas. Therefore, I suggest that there must be a combination of the two to deliver a more effective and efficient use of resources. The complementarity and linkages between different programmes and the overall change or difference that individual projects aim to make must be considered.

**Mr McNarry:**

I appreciate your openness and the obvious enthusiasm that is reflected in your presentation.

Big Lottery Fund's programmes include Community Sport, Active Lifestyles, Transforming Your Space, Healthy Living Centre, Voluntary and Community Sector, and Green Spaces and Sustainable Communities. Are each of those programmes administrated separately?

**Ms McDowell:**

Yes. However, those programmes have been run over a period of time. Our submission includes programmes that we have run since 1994, but we run only a limited number of programmes at any time. Those programmes do not all run concurrently.

**Mr McNarry:**

What is your average administrative cost to run those types of programmes?

**Ms McDowell:**

Our current operating costs are 8.5% across the UK.

**Mr McNarry:**

Will you translate that into money? How much does each of those programmes cost to administrate?

**Ms McDowell:**

I cannot answer your question directly, because each programme's cost varies slightly around that figure, and I do not have that evidence with me.

**Mr McNarry:**

Will you send it to the Committee?

**Ms McDowell:**

Yes.

**Mr McNarry:**

Given that Sport NI is also a distributor of lottery funds, why is Big Lottery Fund, rather than Sport NI, taking responsibility for distributing money to sport and physical activity-related projects? Why is there that separation?

**Ms McDowell:**

Big Lottery Fund can fund across health, education and environment. Within that, some of our programmes have focused on sport and participation. We have worked jointly with Sport NI on those programmes, particularly Community Sport, and Big Lottery Fund has distributed money with Sport NI. We look at the synergies and learning in those areas, and, as Norrie illustrated, we capitalise on Sport Northern Ireland's huge delivery expertise. We offered support for development officers, and Sport NI worked with those development officers across Northern Ireland.

**Mr McNarry:**

Does Big Lottery Fund accept that it takes up the Government's funding slack? That Big Lottery Fund money would not normally or naturally be available. Do you think that Governments cop out because of the funds that your organisation puts in?

**Ms McDowell:**

Our strategic framework, policies and priorities make it clear that we must add value, and public scrutiny shows that we do. On some of those programmes, as Norrie said, we have considered how we can add value to existing strategies or delivery. As opposed to reinventing the wheel or going back to basics, we have looked at how we can extend, enhance or develop activities. Therefore, in terms of the concept of added value, we are continually scrutinised.

**Mr McNarry:**

I appreciate that, but I also want to take account of the fact that there are people who do not like to accept Big Lottery Fund money. There are people who do not do the lottery, because it is a form of gambling. Nevertheless, the benefits from the lottery are put back into the community that is funding programmes such as those I described. Might we in government, particularly in Northern Ireland, be becoming complacent as funders? That may be particularly true in hard financial times, during which there is a certain reliance on people to gamble and to play the lottery in the hope of winning their dream. Do we start to rely on that money and almost count it as part of what we have to spend?

**Ms McDowell:**

Big Lottery Fund recognises that we are moving into an extremely challenging fiscal scenario in respect of spending reviews. That means that the onus will be on Big Lottery Fund to look at how we fund and how we can add value. There is no doubt that we have to keep that under continual review and to look at where our money goes. We have thought about the programmes that we are going to deliver in the context of the changing financial environment.

Big Lottery Fund is continually oversubscribed in terms of the amount of money that is available to fund projects vis-à-vis the demand for projects on the ground. It is a continual challenge for us to focus on those who are most in need. That is why we have produced a new strategic framework to focus on where we can add value to ensure that we are adding value to what happens on the ground without displacing existing resource.

**Mr McNarry:**

I am not too sure about your answer. I will read very seriously what you have just said.

If you were able to play the lottery and make the one change to government policy that you

think would have the biggest impact on increasing participation in sport and physical activity, what would that be? That is a hell of a question that I am asking.

**Ms Breslin:**

A magic wand.

**Ms McDowell:**

Exactly: a magic wand.

**Mr McNarry:**

It is a difficult question, but it is an important one, because you are involved in policy whether you like it or not. You drive policy. Although you are not saying it, I am bound to think that, somewhere along the line, people from your organisation and from government are putting together these programmes. That is how it is done. In many ways, as is the case with the carers' situation, we get things on the cheap. We get these programmes as a result of gambling. If you could change or improve one thing in government policy, what would that be?

**Ms McDowell:**

We often see that we work best on interdepartmental agendas and in relation to public health and the ways in which the Investing for Health strategy links with participation. In terms of thinking about a change or difference that could be made, that cross-agenda working could be one area that we could work on.

**Mr McNarry:**

That is a good answer.

**Mr P J Bradley:**

I thought that David was going to ask what numbers you would pick if you were doing the lottery.

**Mr McNarry:**

I will ask that after the meeting. I am not going to share that with you lot. *[Laughter.]*

**Mr P J Bradley:**

Thank you for the presentation. I had no questions at the start, but the further that you went into the presentation, the more questions that I had. I ended up with about 30 questions but have reduced them to two.

You mentioned walking routes and bridges. I thought immediately of an exercise that I have been involved in over the past six months. Outside Warrenpoint, there is a little footbridge over a fjord that is in a bad state of repair. My enquiries uncovered that it is not owned by the council, the Rivers Agency or the Roads Service. No one knows who put the bridge there; it is perhaps more than 100 years old. The cost of repair would be about £3,000 or £4,000. Do you require clearly defined custodians before you can enter into a project?

**Ms McDowell:**

Yes, very much so. We expect capital build projects to have identified the statutory duties before making an application to us. We can help with costs in terms of the delivery of those programmes, but we look for the ownership issue and for how long that ownership has been in place.

**Mr P J Bradley:**

It is impossible in that case; all my enquiries drew a blank in respect of ownership. It is a great facility. A lot of parents use it to stay off the main road.

Am I correct in believing that funding from the Awards for All programme does not extend to improving facilities or equipment for the promotion of culture and arts? Will you explain the reason for that? Is there an alternative source within Big Lottery Fund through which such premises can be facilitated or the equipment and facilities in buildings improved?

**Ms McDowell:**

Awards for All extends to cover a number of different project areas that relate to education and charitable purposes. Some of those are arts focused, and Big Lottery Fund works closely with the Arts Council of Northern Ireland, as it has its own small grants programmes for the core arts. There is some synergy between those, and we talk regularly and signpost potential applicants to different sources of funding for arts projects.

In relation to premises, Big Lottery Fund ran a programme called Improving Community Buildings, which considered fit-for-purpose issues. We are working through proposals to deliver a new programme that will look at the physical shape of buildings, the physical resources that they provide, and their energy efficiency for the future. Those proposals are currently in programme development.

**Mr P J Bradley:**

Does Big Lottery Fund have someone who goes out to speak to groups?

**Ms McDowell:**

Within my team in the Belfast office, there is an information team that regularly attends events. Sometimes those events involve working directly with individual groups. We also work a lot with local councils across Northern Ireland. Councils work up funders' forums in which a number of different funders are brought together with groups in council areas. Big Lottery Fund representatives attend those forums regularly to make sure that people have the opportunity to hear, perhaps in one evening, a number of different funders explain various funding sources.

**Mr K Robinson:**

I am a councillor, as are several Committee members. We have difficulties with the endless groups of funders and with the time spent, the effort involved and the frustration caused in trying to get that cocktail of funding together. Is there any way that that process can be streamlined from your end? Each organisation needs its day in the sun, but it is most frustrating for the people on the ground — for councillors who are trying to co-ordinate things — to pursue endless negotiations with endless bodies to get £5,000 here, £10,000 there and £500 somewhere else.

**The Chairperson:**

We have drifted somewhat from the inquiry, but a brief answer would be appreciated.

**Mr K Robinson:**

That streamlining will be helpful in the long term.

**Ms McDowell:**

Big Lottery Fund works regularly with other funding bodies to look at what we can mirror once groups have been successful in their delivery. One potential idea to think about is having a lead

funder, whereby one organisation takes responsibility. Sometimes the nature of other people's funding precludes that, but Big Lottery Fund has done it on lottery-funded projects in which a major lottery funder is working with other lottery funders and a lead funder is appointed to work with an organisation. However, that is specific to those projects in which we work with other lottery distributors.

**The Chairperson:**

I thank Joanne and Norrie very much for their contribution.