

FROM THE MINISTER

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Department of

**Culture, Arts
and Leisure**

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DATE: 15 APRIL 2015

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MID-TERM REVIEW OF SPORT MATTERS STRATEGY FOR SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION 2009-2019

In 2009 the Executive endorsed the Sport Matters Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019. During 2014-15 the Monitoring Group which I Chair, has taken the opportunity to review the performance of the Strategy and to ensure that the Strategy remains relevant through to 2019. The Review process was inclusive of all key stakeholders, including the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee, Executive departments, local authorities, sports governing bodies and representative groups from the voluntary and community sectors.

I wish to thank you for the support your respective departmental officials gave to the review.

I am content that the Review Team has conducted a thorough and wide ranging review of the Strategy at this mid-term point. The identification of the successes of the Strategy is encouraging and the recommendations for the period through to 2019 present significant challenges for all stakeholders as we seek to consolidate and build upon the success of the Strategy.

The outcome of the review has been very well received and accordingly, I am pleased to endorse the outcome of the Mid-term Review of the 'Sport Matters' inclusive of its key findings and recommendations for the future term, that will ensure it continues to deliver over the next 4 years. My Department will arrange to place a copy of the Review Report in the Assembly Library.

The findings of the Review clearly demonstrate the benefits to Sport of the Sport Matters Strategy over the last number of years and its role in helping to unify our community, through its promotion of equality, its contribution to tackling poverty and social exclusion and its role within health, education and the economy.

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CARÁL NÍ CHUILÍN

**CARÁL NÍ CHUILÍN MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure**



INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE



'Sport Matters'

The Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009 - 2019

'The First 5 Years'

a

Mid-term Review

March 2015

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Executive Summary

1. In 2009 the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure published **'Sport Matters': The Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019**, a new 10 year Strategy for Sport with a clear Vision that reflects the Government's policy and priorities for sport and with which stakeholders could identify.

That Vision is:

"...a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport..."

2. To underpin this vision, **'Sport Matters'** identified 26 high level targets, set the key strategic priorities and key steps to success for sport and physical recreation from 2009 to 2019. These targets would be the key driver to inform future investment by all stakeholders across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. Importantly it defined what success would look like over the ten year period.

3. The Strategy has now reached its mid-term point of the 10 year implementation period. In addition, in the post London 2012 scenario and given that 2014 is also a year in which the Commonwealth Games has been held, it has been considered timely to conduct a review of the policy, its implementation and effectiveness going forward.

4. The Terms of Reference for the Mid-term Review of Sport Matters are:

- i. To establish current performance against the implementation plan and identify barriers to progress. (**Achievements, targets &, measurement.**) Chapter 3 of this report responds to this term of reference.
- ii To review implementation arrangements to determine whether these have been effective. (**Delivery structures, Sport Matters Monitoring Group/Sport Matters Implementation Groups, Sport NI**) Chapter 4 of this report responds to this term of reference.
- iii To determine whether the strategy remains fit for purpose as the strategic framework through which the Department's priorities can be most effectively achieved. (**Strategy Profile, DCAL priority on promoting equality, tackling poverty and social exclusion, Health Interface, Identification of Target Gaps**) Chapter 5 of this report responds to this term of reference.

5. The central method of review was a stakeholder consultation where the wide range of representatives to the implementation groups, District Councils, Government Departments, and social interest groups, were sent a digital questionnaire asking for a range of views relevant to the terms of reference for the review and on existing issues on the strategy both in terms of its implementation and its fitness for the period through to 2019.

6. The review also examined a range of documentation inclusive of monitoring reports, sports related surveys, project implementation reports, post project evaluations and sports development plans. Departmental Strategy's that attract sports input through inter-departmental ministerial and senior officials groups, were also examined for relevant sports interfaces. Finally, the Review Team has collated and analysed the evidence and findings to form the basis of this report, to be considered and approved by the Minister and recommended to the Sport Matters Monitoring Group (SMMG) for action.

7. A key objective for the Mid-term Review was to establish the current performance of **'Sport Matters'** against its implementation plan and identify barriers to progress. **A key feature of the review was a commitment to engage with stakeholders.** This was achieved by issuing an on line consultation targeted at all representative groups connected to the Sport Matters Implementation Groups (SMIGs), to District, Borough and City Councils and to all Government Departments.

8. In terms of the specific subjects and issues covered by the review and generated by respondents to the consultation, the Report provides comment on the following areas: -

Targets and achievements;

Targets measurement;

Sport Matters Monitoring Group;

Sport Matters Implementation Groups;

Sport Northern Ireland;

Sport Matters Vision Values and core Principles;

Sport Matters Policy Pillars, participation, places and performance;

Government commitment and the promotion of equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion (PETPSE);

Sport Matters Funding;

Sport and Health;

Sport and Disability;

Women in Sport;

Volunteering in Sport;

The sports Facilities deficit;

Funding the wide range of sports;

Sport and Tourism Events; and

Sport within a Super Council's structure and the community planning model.

9. In terms of the conclusions emanating from the Report, the headline findings are:-

Sport Matters has had a significant level of achievement over its first 5 years;

Sport Matters monitoring and delivery structures are effective;

Sport Matters is fit for purpose going forward to 2019;

Only 5 of 26 targets require adjustment to enable measurement;

Several key areas have been identified for priority through to 2019;

Sport Matters status and priorities need embedded within the new Council structure; and

Uncertainty around future funding levels could present significant barriers to the continued success in the period 2015-2019.

10. To give a sense of the direction that is suggested for the Strategy in the 2015-2019 period, the following are the proposals and recommendations made in the report: -

That the Department and Sport NI celebrate the success and achievements of Sport Matters through a Sport for the Future Conference in Autumn of 2015;

That a measurement annex is developed for the Sport Matters targets to capture, monitor and report on new and revised targets and baselines in the next Sport Matters Action Plan through to 2019;

That the value of the NI Sport and Physical Activity Survey (SAPAS) 2010 to Sport Matters outcomes is not discarded due to solely financial constraints, but that its financial requirements be regularly reassessed by SMMG and funding options sourced by Sport NI, with a view to running the survey in the post 2018 period;

That SMMG under its Ministerial lead, encourages a re-commitment to the Sport Matters foundation 'partnership principle' and extends its membership to other identified stakeholders with key strategies relating to sport and physical recreation;

SMMGs to consider Chair rotation on an annual basis and bring any proposal in that regard to SMMG;

To embed and retain PETPSE as a key Sport Matters priority and implementation drive, and through Sport NI's Facilities Strategy for future facilities developments including those through new super Councils and community plans;

That the outcome of this Report, the benefits of the PETPSE agenda, the outcome of Sport NI's revision of its Facilities Strategy and the potential that EU and Lottery funding presents, be factored into the considerations of future bids for sports capital and resource funding;

That the positive effects of the 'Sport Interface with Health' and the provision of participation opportunities and quality of life experiences be factored into CSR considerations, given the economic savings that can be realised;

That 'Sport and Disability' is recognised as one of Sport Matters key priorities throughout the next 5 years, to achieve greater levels of participation; to meet emerging requirements in areas such as Autism and Post 19 Transitions and to extend the capacity of groups such as Disability Sport NI to expand their programmes;

That 'Women in Sport' is recognised as a Sport Matters key priority throughout the next 5 years to secure an increase in funding to increase women and young girls participation for the future and secure a greater proportion for female participation of funding aimed at sports for both men and women;

That stakeholders consider how additional opportunities for volunteering might be provided and co-ordinated, such as accessing lists of experienced volunteers held by Volunteer Now;

That the Sports Facilities Gap as an anticipated output of the Sport NI revised Facilities Strategy is recognised as a strategic priority in the next CSR period and that the endorsement by the Executive of a sub-regional stadiums programme be extended to the wider range of sports as a means of addressing the indentified gap;

That SMIGs recognise the breadth of sports investment and that Regional Stadiums Development has not hindered wider investment in sports development generally;

That funding for sports at regional, sub-regional and local levels achieves as wide an application as practicable to the broader range of recognised sports;

That the Executive and relevant Departments, actively pursue international sporting events for the future as a benefit to both the economy of the North and the promotion of sports participation and active lifestyles;

That the Department considers an emerging potential need to separate out another policy and fund that concentrates on local events or others that will have only local sporting benefits to offer; and

That the Department engage with DOE/Councils to ensure that the benefits of the PETPSE priority and the benefits of sport are communicated to the centre of considerations of future local level funding and community planning.

11. A summary of the findings, the 17 key recommendations and the 58 supporting actions, categorised under each term of reference, is provided at **Appendix A**.

A MID-TERM REVIEW OF SPORT MATTERS

1. INTRODUCTION

Where we were.....

1.1 'Sport Matters': The Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation 2009-2019' articulated the vision expressed and endorsed by respondents during the development of, and consultation on, the Strategy for Sport & Physical Recreation 2008-2018.

1.2 DCAL's central purpose in developing '*Sport Matters*' was to build further on the strategic approach originally adopted in the mid-1990s. In so doing, the Department took account of the foundation set by the '**Strategy for the Development of Sport, 1997-2005**', as well as identifying areas for improvement and new development. It was necessary also to address broader issues in relation to the previous Strategy, particularly that it pre-dated change in Northern Ireland and the establishment of the political institutions in the north including the inception of DCAL; and a community that was emerging into a post-conflict era. The former Strategy was not owned by central Government having been drawn up Sports Council NI to represent the views of the main sports' stakeholders and partners as defined in the 1990s. It was deemed as the sector's Strategy therefore, as it existed in 1997, and was not necessarily reflective of the wider sector or, indeed, Government's policies or priorities for sport in the devolution scenario.

1.3 The sector itself was changing in response to the new political situation in the north and the formation of DCAL which brought a welcome, concentrated focus on culture, arts and leisure, was enabled at that time by an attendant rise in the profile of sport in central Government in the North, the development of the UK Sports Institute and linkage to the newly created Irish Sports Council.

1.4 Therefore, by leading the development of the new '*Sport Matters*' Strategy, DCAL sought to produce a vision and rationale for sport and establish key priorities and actions for the future that, in turn, would be owned and shared by everyone in the north of Ireland, including government departments, Sport NI, District Councils, Lottery providers, Sports Governing Bodies, Sports Clubs, Youth organisations, participants and spectators. The new Strategy would build on successes that did emerge from the '1997-2005' version and would be a strategy for the development of sport and physical recreation which will provide a lasting and sustainable legacy for future generations. The aim was to produce a new 10 year Strategy for Sport with a clear Vision that reflects the Executive's policy and priorities for sport and with which stakeholders could identify.

That Vision is:

“...a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport...”

1.5 To underpin this vision, **‘Sport Matters’** identified 26 high level targets, set the key strategic priorities and key steps to success for sport and physical recreation from 2009 to 2019 and would be the key driver to inform future investment by all stakeholders across the public, private and community/voluntary sectors. Importantly it defined what success would look like over the ten year period.

1.6 The Strategy has now reached its mid-term point of the 10 year implementation period. In addition, in the post London 2012 scenario and given that 2014 is also a year in which the Commonwealth Games has been held, it was considered timely to conduct a review of the policy, its implementation and effectiveness going forward.

Need to Review

1.7 As the Department’s priorities have been revised since **‘Sport Matters’** was published, this review considered how effective the strategy is in supporting the Department’s current priorities in respect of promoting equality, tackling poverty and social exclusion. The review also considered the flexibility of the Strategy to facilitate delivery of the Programme for Government commitments and under Together: Building a United Community and assessed how lessons have been learned from the implementation of the strategy.

1.8 The Review as a Mid –term tool, was designed to be a light touch, focused exercise covering the broad range of issues in Sport covered by the Strategy, such as participation, places and performance related issues, including facilities and sporting legacy from the Olympics/Paralympics. In addition, the review addressed specific areas of interest, such as barriers to participation of the disabled and women in sport, and the expanding brief on the benefits of sport in promoting good mental health, tackling learning disability and providing quality of life experiences for people with conditions such as ASD including those making transition from special needs education to day opportunities care.

Methodology

1.9 The central method of review was a stakeholder consultation where the wide range of representatives to the implementation groups, District Councils, government departments, and social interest groups, were sent a digital survey questionnaire. The survey asked for a range of views relevant to the terms of reference for the review and on existing issues on the strategy both in terms of its implementation and its fitness for the period through to 2019. The review also examined a range of documentation inclusive of monitoring reports, sports related surveys, project implementation reports, post project evaluations and sports development plans. Departmental Strategy’s that attract sports input through inter-departmental ministerial and senior officials groups were also examined for relevant sports interfaces. The consultation exercise was supplemented by bi-

lateral meetings with respondents who requested meetings with the review team. The Review Team also met with the Executive Team at Sport NI, the Sport NI Board members and the Sport Matters Implementation Groups. Finally, the Review Team has collated and analysed the evidence and findings to form the basis of this report, to be considered and approved by the Sport Matters Ministerial Monitoring Group.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND THE REVIEW PROCESS

2.1 The Terms of Reference for the Mid-term Review of Sport Matters were:

1. To establish current performance against the implementation plan and identify barriers to progress. ([Achievements](#), [targets &](#) [measurement](#).) Chapter 3 of this report responds to this term of reference.
2. To review implementation arrangements to determine whether these have been effective. ([Delivery structures](#), [Sport Matters Monitoring Group/Sport Matters Implementation Groups](#), [Sport NI](#)) Chapter 4 of this report responds to this term of reference.
3. To determine whether the strategy remains fit for purpose as the strategic framework through which the Department's priorities can be most effectively achieved. ([Strategy Profile](#), [DCAL priority](#), [Health Interface](#), [Identification of Target Gaps](#)) Chapter 5 of this report responds to this term of reference.

2.2 A Steering Group was established comprising:

Mick Cory/	Director of Museums, Libraries and Recreation, DCAL (Chair to 29 August 2014)
Fergus Devitt	Director of Museums, Libraries and Recreation, DCAL (Chair from 1 October 2014)
Andrew Sloan	Director of Sport Management Services, Sport NI
Paul Donnelly	Policy, Planning and Research Manager, Sport NI
Orla Bateson	Head of Research and Statistics Branch, DCAL
Sinead McCartan	Head of Sport, DCAL (to end June 2014)
Clare Doyle	Head of Sport, DCAL (to end Oct 2014)
Tony Murphy	Head of Sport, DCAL (from Nov 2014)

Administrative support was provided by Robert Heyburn and Mark Crockard, DCAL.

2.3 Project Documents;

- Early Issues paper, drawing on indications received from stakeholders of their expectations from a review;
- Project Initiation Document (**Appendix B**);
- A timeline detailing stages in the review from approval of the Terms of Reference by the Minister through to submission of the final report including recommendations to the Minister;
- A Risk Register highlighting the likelihood of the project risks, their potential impact and recommended counter measures.

3. Performance and Achievement

Where we are.....

3.1 A key objective for the Mid-term Review was to establish the current performance of **'Sport Matters'** against its implementation plan and identify barriers to progress. **A key feature of the review was a commitment to engage with stakeholders.** This was achieved by issuing an on line consultation targeted at all representative groups connected to the Sport Matters Implementation Groups, to District, Borough and City Councils and to all Government Departments. There were eighteen organisations that responded to the consultation although one response did not state the name of the organisation. Four of the responses were from other government departments, four were from organisations that work with Sport NI or DCAL and four were from a local authorities. Three responses were from Sport governing bodies. The full report of the consultation exercise outputs are detailed at **Appendix C.**

3.2 This element of the review would entail a focus on the strategy's achievements, a specific look at its current targets together with a view on the measurement aspect of target setting and achievement. Review activity on this element would centre on information available from maintained records, but would also draw conclusions from the views of stakeholders as respondents to the consultation exercise. In particular the Review Team considered the **'Sport Matters'** targets both in terms of their achievement status and importantly the measurement aspect.

ACHIEVEMENT OF TARGETS

3.3 The review considered the most up to date Sport Matters Implementation Group (SMIG) Progress Report 5 (Oct 13- Sept 2014) in conjunction with those that preceded it, in terms of mapping the progression of achievement. These reports demonstrate that of the 26 targets, 8 targets have been met; 13 are on track for achievement while 5 are on track for achievement but with some delay or uncertainty.

3.4 The eight targets achieved are:

- **PA1 - By 2009**, to have agreed and commenced implementation of a revised research framework for participation rates that is cognisant of the recommendations of the Chief Medical Officers in the UK;
- **PA2 - By 2010** to have reviewed the economic impact of sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland;
- **PA4 - By 2013**, to have stopped the decline in adult participation in sport and physical recreation;
- **PE12 - By 2010** to have a fully operational Sports Institute that supports 100 athletes per annum to achieve 70% of their agreed annual performance targets;
- **PE13 - By 2010** to win at least five medals at the Delhi Commonwealth Games;
- **PL21 - By 2010** to initiate a Northern Ireland certification process that will improve safety management and the fabric of the major stadia in Northern Ireland, to comply with the Safety of Sports Grounds (Northern Ireland) Order (2006) and associated technical guidance;
- **PL23 - By 2014** to have a minimum of 10 new or upgraded facilities that will support Northern Ireland player/athlete development in Olympic and Paralympic sports; and
- **PL26 - By 2019** to ensure that all planning decisions follow Planning Policy Statement 8: Open Space, Sport and Outdoor Recreation in relation to the provision of spaces for sport and physical recreation.

3.5 The Strategy has delivered a wide range of sports facilities, playing surfaces and competitive performance achievements that underpin the above achievement of targets. In terms of DCAL investments through Sport NI and also Sport NI Lottery investment, significant developments over the past 5 years include an Olympic standard 50 metre swimming pool as part of the Aurora Leisure Complex in North Down, equestrian facilities for the disabled at Coleraine, an international standard Hockey playing surface at Cookstown, a competitive 25m full bore shooting range at Omagh, and an athletics and other multi-sport facility in Newry. Significant investments by Local Authorities have included an international standard basket ball playing surface at Antrim, a 6 lane 50 metre swimming pool at Magherafelt and an upgrade to an 8 lane competitive

standard for the Mary Peters athletics facility at Belfast. Added to this, in terms of providing support to the Outdoor Recreation realm, the redevelopment of the Tollymore National Outdoor Centre providing leadership and skills training courses for Mountaineering and Canoeing, has sustained services for the outdoor sector in the North as well as providing training coverage to the Search and Rescue services. It is a unique facility with extending potential for operation on an all-Island basis, given that similar provision in the south (Tiglin Centre) has ceased to exist.

3.6 As far as competitive successes are concerned, in September 2010 at Delhi in India, the NI Commonwealth Games Team won 10 medals (3 Gold, 3 Silver and 4 bronze) across 5 sports. At the Glasgow games in 2014 the haul of medals was increased to 12 (2 Gold, 3 Silver and 7 bronze) across 3 sports with Boxing leading the way with a total of 9 medals including both Gold medals. This was the best result in terms of medals since the games of 1986 in Edinburgh, Scotland.

3.7 Individual performances have proved to be inspirational and motivational for young sports participants and the achievements of so many have underpinned the Vision of Sport Matters and include jump jockey AP McCoy, Ulster Rugby, Ulster representatives to the Ireland Rugby Team, the Northern Ireland International Football Team, Cliftonville Football Club team, motorbike stars Michael and William Dunlop, GAA coaching legend Micky Harte, GAA Seamus Quigley GAA (Current Top Ulster Scorer, Fermanagh); top cyclist Martyn Irvine and champion boxer Carl Frampton. Honours were also achieved by sports competitors such as archery champion Patrick Huston, Lurgan College 1st XI Girls Hockey Team and the Ulster players from the Ireland Women's Rugby Team. Headline winners such as Golf Majors winner Rory McIlroy, record breaker Tony McCoy, Winter Paralympic gold medallist Kelly Gallagher, and IPC European Championship gold medallists Michael McKillop and Jason Smith, have all demonstrated what success looks like and provide in a sustained manner the motivation for so many to become involved in their chosen sports.

3.8 Other key achievements of the strategy as a policy driver include:

- Setting a framework within which success can be pursued ;
- Arguing the case for critical funding
- Raising awareness of the key issues;
- Encouraging agencies to work together;
- Driving the meeting of targets;
- Providing continuing momentum; and
- Establishment of the Sport Institute NI.

In short the examples of the wider range of achievements in the early life time of this strategy prove that the Strategy itself is delivering on what success looks like.

Targets on track for achievement: - (with existing issues)

3.9 The Review Team noted that five of the targets, despite having issues, are on track for achievement. The associated delay or uncertainty on the targets are addressed at paragraph 3.8 et seq below, which comments on a separate piece of work on the targets relating to measurability. The five targets are:

- **PA3 - By 2011**, to have established a baseline for the number of children of compulsory school age participating in a minimum of two hours quality physical education per week.
- **PA6 - By 2014** to provide every child in Northern Ireland over the age of 8 years with the opportunity to participate in at least two hours per week of extra-curricular sport and physical recreation.
- **PA10 - By 2019** to deliver at least a 6 percentage point increase in participation rates in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability (from the 2011 baseline).
- **PE14** - By 2011 to ensure that all Sport Northern Ireland funded governing bodies are 'fit for purpose' organisations.
- **PL22** - By 2014, and subject to Executive approval, to have developed major sports stadiums to meet the strategic needs of Football, GAA and Rugby on an operationally viable and commercially sustainable basis in Northern Ireland.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON 5 YEARS ACHIEVEMENT

Sport Matters is delivering Success;

Sport Matters is on target to realise its projected outcomes;

The Strategy has delivered a wide range of sports facilities, playing surfaces and competitive performance achievements that underpin the achievement of targets;

Sport Matters has achieved 9 of 26 targets, (inclusive of one as a recommendation at paragraph 3.17 below);

Sport Matters has 13 further targets that are on track for achievement;

Sport Matters has 5 targets on track for achievement but with some delay or uncertainty (addressed in paragraph 3.14 below with recommendations to resolve, paragraph 3.18);

Under Sport Matters, Sport NI has reviewed the economic impact of sport;

Under Sport Matters, stakeholders have acted successfully to halt the decline in adult participation;

Under Sport Matters stakeholders have delivered for example:-

*a fully operational Sports Institute;
an Olympic Sized (50 Metre) swimming pool;
a redeveloped Tollymore National Outdoor
Centre; and
The Kingspan Stadium at Ravenhill*

*Sport Matters has contributed to successful medal hauls in 2
Commonwealth Games Delhi 2010 & Glasgow 2014.*

Recommendation on Achievements

*That the Department and Sport NI celebrate the success and
achievements of Sport Matters through a 'Sport for the Future'
Conference in Autumn of 2015.*

TARGETS MEASUREMENT

3.10 As stated, the Review Team gave attention to the 26 targets in terms of a review of their measurement. A range of sources have been used to measure performance against the targets in Sport Matters. These included surveys; administrative data; research publications; and bespoke surveys, research and data collections.

3.11 The Review Team has assessed the measurement of each target and recommendations have been made on the suitability of the target moving forward. When assessing the measurement of the data, the review framework has considered the source, reliability of the data, timeliness of the data and financial issues. The usefulness of each target within the strategy has also been considered.

3.12 The review framework rated each target as follows:

- Target measureable;
- Target measureable but amendment made to measurement annex;
- On track for measurement but with some delay or uncertainty;
- Unable to measure target – target to be amended; and
- Target removed – no longer relevant.

Appendix D provides the detailed results of this part of the review.

Survey data

3.13 DCAL funds a sports module in the Continuous Household Survey (CHS) on an annual basis and results for a specific survey year (ending 31 March) are usually available by May. Sport NI commissioned the Northern Ireland Sport and Physical Activity Survey (SAPAS) in 2010. Both surveys have a large, representative sample of adults aged 16 and over living in Northern Ireland and have enhanced understanding of sport in Northern Ireland.

3.14 Both surveys provide statistically robust data on seven of the participation targets in Sport Matters. The 'Targets: Rationale and Measurement Appendix' states that both surveys measure a number of targets. For ease of monitoring, it is recommended that one survey is used to monitor the seven participation targets. In the course of the Review some uncertainty became apparent over future funding of SAPAS and consequently whilst recognising the significant quality of that survey base, the Review Team will recommend that CHS is used to monitor the seven Participation targets for the next 5 years as it is an annual survey (PA4, PA5, PA7, PA8, PA9, PA10 and PA11). The Review Team will also recommend that targets PA3, PA6, PE18, PE19 and PL25 be adjusted as necessary to enable achievement and measurement through to 2019.

3.15 The Young Persons Behaviour and Attitudes Survey (YPBAS) is a school-based survey conducted among 11-16 year-olds. The survey runs every three years and the research covers a range of topics, relevant to the lives of young people today. DCAL fund a sports module in the survey. The survey is a valuable tool in enhancing our understanding of sport and young people and can be explored further for measuring sport participation targets.

3.16 In terms of measurement specifically, **Sport Matters** contains a section called the 'Targets: Rationale and Measurement Appendix' which sets out how each target will be measured. The review framework has highlighted a need for a more detailed measurement annex. The Review Team will therefore recommend that a detailed measurement annex is developed for the Sport Matters targets.

3.17 The outcome of the review of the measurement targets produced very encouraging outcomes in that 8 of the 26 targets are achieved with a majority of the remaining targets on track for achievement as defined. It is also very significant that only 5 targets will require some work to enhance the potential for their eventual achievement be that through adjustment of wording and/or figures, measurement source or indeed replacement. One additional target can be deemed as achieved as outside Strategy activity in that the Forest Service and NI Water have put in place policy framework to ensure access to publicly owned land, (PL24).

The necessary conclusions are summarised below:

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON TARGETS MEASUREMENT

Sixteen targets are measurable and do not need to change;

Two targets are on track for measurement but with some delay due to financial constraints on when they will next be measured;

Three targets are measurable but slight changes need to be made to the wording of the target to reflect what is being measured; and

Only five targets are unable to be measured and will be revised via

recommendations in following paragraphs (See recommendations at paragraph 3.18 below); and

Uncertainty is apparent over future funding of SAPAS and the impact this may have on future measurement of target outputs.

3.18 From these overall findings the Review Team makes the following recommendations on targets measurement:-

Recommendations on Targets Measurement

That a measurement annex is developed for the Sport Matters targets to capture, monitor and report on new and revised targets and baselines in the next Sport Matters Action Plan through to 2019; and

That the value of SAPAS to Sport Matters outcomes is not discarded due to solely financial constraints, but that its financial requirements be regularly reassessed by SMMG and funding options sourced by Sport NI, with a view to running the survey in the post 2018 period.

Supporting actions:-

That any revised or additional targets be captured/monitored in the next Sport Matters Action Plan 2015-2019 and measurement reflected through the proposed annex;

That Continuous Household Survey (CHS) monitors the seven Participation targets for the next 5 years as it is an annual survey (PA4, PA5, PA7, PA8, PA9, PA10 and PA11);

That the measurement annex is developed to reflect new timeframes for the three targets where there is uncertainty in funding for measuring PA2 and PE20.

That the measurement annex reflects that PA9 measures sport participation based on the 20% most deprived areas.

That the wording of PE12 changes from 70% to 66% in line of the measurement.

That PE14 is amended to reflect a new timeframe for meeting the target and to include a specific focus on safeguarding.

That the wording/ measurements are amended to enable PA3, PA6, PE18, PE19 and PL25 to be monitored and achieved.

That further targets are developed for monitoring through a revised action plan 2015-2019, for children and young people and youth club participation and competitive sports events (e.g. Commonwealth Games 2018) and PEPSE.

That work commences to establish baseline data on recreation participation rates and to monitor CMO guidelines.

That target PL24 is deemed as achieved extraneously from the Strategy effort.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 A further objective of the review was to examine the implementation arrangements that had been deliberately set within the Strategy at its outset and to determine whether, over these first five years, they have been effective. The focus for the team would be on the delivery structures for monitoring and delivery namely the **Sport Matters** Ministerial Monitoring Group (SMMG), the **Sport Matters** Implementation Groups (SMIGs) and the role of Sport Northern Ireland.

4.2 When '**Sports Matters**' was under production, it was recognised through the lessons learned from the preceding Strategy, (*'The Development of Sport in Northern Ireland 1997-2005*) that successful implementation, particularly in the context of partnership working, depends on effective leadership and clear lines of accountability. This leadership would be provided by an SMMG and a number of other groups, SMIGs, which would draw significantly on the experiences of those involved in local delivery. The Strategy's implementation structure, as outlined at **Appendix E**, includes a Monitoring Group, which the Minister chairs and three Implementation Groups, all of which meet twice per year. These groups include representatives of all the main stakeholders involved and as part of this, an associated Action Plan and annual Progress Reports, which are published on the DCAL & Sport NI websites, provide detail on the actions being taken forward.

4.3 The Review Team found that this structure provides the Minister with the opportunity to monitor and encourage ongoing investment in sport by all stakeholders. In addition, the Department and Sport NI seek to work in partnership with local councils and other stakeholders, where possible, to ensure provision of sporting programmes and facilities. Examples of activities carried out include the Active Communities programme, Active Clubs, Disability Sport NI's Disability 5 Star Challenge and the Boxing Investment Programme. In addition, Sport NI is also working in partnership with Councils to deliver a Sports Facilities Strategy and 11 District Council Area Reports. As the strategy continues to roll forward and the delivery structure provides direction, this work will provide a framework for the strategic delivery of sports facilities throughout the north.

Strategy Ministerial Monitoring Group (SMMG)

4.4 As detailed within '**Sport Matters**', the purpose of the **SMMG** is to:

- *Bring together senior representatives of the Departments, agencies and organisations responsible for sport and recreation, health, education, employment, the natural and built environments and social development;*
- *Agree mechanisms to secure the buy-in and delivery commitment of key partners and stakeholders including those in the community, voluntary and private sectors;*
- *Monitor delivery of the commitments to sport and physical recreation set out within this Strategy;*
- *Approve, monitor and evaluate detailed action plans developed by each SMIG;*
- *Commission, or seek to have commissioned, periodic reviews of the Strategy; and*
- *Publish periodic progress reports.*

4.5 An examination of the minutes of the regular SMMG meetings demonstrates that the Group led by the Minister provides a thorough and enquiring oversight of the activity required to successfully implement the Strategy. The degree of challenge indicated is appropriate and the degree of communication and linkage to issues at the SMIG level is more than adequate in terms of providing any steer required, resolution of issues or the provision of instruction when necessary.

4.6 The view of respondents to the consultation exercise broadly supports this conclusion. It is accepted that the effectiveness of the SMMG reflects its role in bringing together senior representatives, agreeing mechanisms to secure commitment of key partners and stakeholders and the monitoring of the delivery of **Sport Matters** commitments. SMMG has also considered, approved and monitored the action plans produced by each SMIG, as well as publishing periodic progress reports.

4.7 The structure of the SMMG is balanced and appropriate. There are Departments however, not represented on the SMMG that should now be invited to do so. Firstly, the Department of Regional Development on the basis of the Bicycle Strategy and secondly the Department of Trade and Investment on the basis of the Tourism angle of major sports events.

4.8 Overall, the positive view that emerges here is tempered a number of areas for concern raised by comments from the consultation exercise, which presented perceptions on:-

- Inter Departmental rivalries (conflict of priorities);
- Lack of joined up government;
- Lack of resources;
- Changing priorities;
- Lack of commitment by attendees;
- Lack of clear targets and ownership (measureability/definitions); and

- Accuracy of information.

These are matters on which the Review Team has commented on in the Report, in terms of seeking to alleviate and/or resolve the perceptions expressed.

SPORT MATTERS IMPLEMENTATION GROUPS (SMIGs)

4.9 The purpose of the three SMIGs is to engage key partners and stakeholders in a process that will:

- Create, publish and advocate detailed action plans;
- Underpin and support their detailed action plans with a programme of research;
- Gain commitment to implementation through Strategy Agreements;
- Secure resources for the long-term; and
- Monitor and report on achievements.

4.10 The Review Team recognises that each SMIG has a broad based membership, reflective of all relevant stakeholder groups required to ensure that detailed Implementation Plans are appropriate to the targets, are inclusive, equitable and financially robust. The SMIGs, and associated sub-committees/working groups provide a valuable mechanism to ensure that all stakeholders have embedded the targets and priorities of this Strategy within their own development and business-planning processes. The Groups collectively produce the critical evidence that demonstrates that the Strategy is on track to achieve its commitments and to date has delivered 5 annual targets review papers and associated implementation progress reports. The reports are compiled by the Sport NI on the basis of information submitted by each member organisation represented on the SMIGs. These reports are considered in detail and approved by the SMMG and made available on the Sport NI website.

4.11 Respondents to the consultation exercise thought that SMIG had been effective in exercising its role of creating, publishing and advocating detailed action plans together with underpinning and supporting those plans with a programme of research. SMIGS were seen as efficient in gaining commitment to implementation, highlighting the need to secure resources for the long term and primarily in monitoring and reporting on achievements. The overall view on SMIGs was qualified however with comments around apparent barriers to SMIGs in their implementation role, for example: -

- Lack of foresight i.e. anticipation of barriers and action to divert or resolve ;
- Lack of joined up government i.e. failure by some to fully engage ;
- Lack of resources;
- Need to consider the benefits of Chair rotation;
- Abandonment of the elite facilities programme;
- Lack of clarity of roles (discussion, reporting only); and
- Collection of valid and reliable information.

These are matters on which the Review Team has commented on in the following Chapters in terms of seeking to alleviate and/or resolve the perceptions expressed.

Sport Northern Ireland

4.12 It is not an objective of this Mid-term Review of a strategy to also bring any major review comment on Sport Northern Ireland. The Department in 2012 completed a detailed review of the organisation in terms of its functions and governance arrangements concluding that Sport NI should be retained as an arm's length body of the Department to deliver both the Exchequer and Lottery functions. Moreover, Sport NI should continue to develop its relationship with Local Government and take account of the Community Planning role of the new Councils.

4.13 As a consequence of the Departmental examination, Sport NI has recently concluded a Value for Money Review. The findings from this review highlighted that the functions of Sport NI are required to support the successful delivery of the Executive's and Minister's objectives; and that the functions of Sport NI are aligned to the Programme for Government and Ministerial objectives. Sport NI has also sought and retained a responsibility to lead and coordinate the wide range of partners and stakeholders responsible for the delivery of the **Sport Matters** Strategy. This has provided the ALB with a distinct challenge as it works with the wide range of stakeholders including relevant Departments and Agencies whilst at the same time having no direct authoritative influence over them.

4.14 Where, for many years, government has viewed the ALB delivery mechanism as an ideal method of facilitating government interventions in sport and physical recreation, the same approach is therefore vital to the successful delivery of '**Sport Matters**' particularly as Sport NI possesses the sector specific skills required to deliver success in an evolving sporting environment. Sport NI has demonstrated its effectiveness at delivering on the targets under its direct control, but also in rising to its responsibility for coordinating the work of others under the **Sports Matters** Strategy.

4.15 The Review Team therefore recognises that Sport NI as the Department's key delivery body for sport and as a leading body for the development of sport, is fundamental to the successful delivery of the **Sport Matters** vision and the need to positively influence others on the importance of sport. It is a priority for Sport NI to develop Departmental priorities such as the promoting equality, tackling poverty and social exclusion agenda as well as seeking to expand through its activities the growing interface on health and well being considerations. It is also a key role for Sport NI that it promotes the links between stakeholder activity levels and the achievement of individual organisational objectives and throughout the implementation process to ensure that delivery partners are continually motivated to deliver on their roles.

4.16 The Review Team is content to align its view with the Value for Money Review outcome however, where it recognised that Sport NI whilst having a role in providing leadership and influencing others, cannot be held accountable if other organisations do not deliver, this would suggest therefore that the targets set for Sport NI need to qualify its role as the central driver for the Strategy.

4.17 The Review Team notes that the Value For Money Review has concluded that Sport NI should adopt a greater leadership role in the delivery of **Sport Matters** in order to ensure external bodies include Key Performance Indicators as targets in their individual corporate plans. Providing leadership to **Sport Matters** delivery partners for the successful delivery of **Sport Matters** and Corporate Plan targets is a matter that Sport NI is demonstrably successful in. It is the Review Team's view that Sport NI is the cohesive factor that has enabled the successes of the SMIG's to emerge and going forward the Department is content for Sport NI to maintain the leading role it has assumed and to drive forward to even greater success within the strategy.

4.18 It is recognised however, that Sport NI can only go so far with its influence and skills and it is for the external bodies' to be fully engaged and to also deliver their responsibilities within **Sport Matters**. As a means of treating this Review as an opportunity for change and to offer a degree of refreshment to the structure and opportunities for others partners to exercise their skills and influence, it has been suggested that the Chair positions of the SMIGs could be rotated on an annual basis.

4.19 The Review Team is not resistant to the suggestion however it should be noted that there is no evidence from the consultation exercise or within the documentary evidence considered by the Review Team that there is any degree of concern at Sport NI's leadership role in this regard. If the idea were to be adopted however and to ensure absolute consistency in SMIG operation, Sport NI should retain organisational responsibility for the coordination of SMIG meetings, the associated documentation and updates to the SMMG and also overall responsibility for delivery in terms of its duty to the Department. It would be imperative also that any proposed candidates for the Chair roles, emanating from the SMIG representatives, would have the skills sets necessary to fulfil the roles, on a par with those demonstrated by the current Chairs.

4.20 Sport NI itself recognizes it has a leadership role in delivering on **Sports Matters** but also maintains that alone it cannot be expected to ensure KPIs are contained within Corporate Plans of other partners, which include Government Departments. Sport NI is keen to ensure that other partners play a full role in the implementation of **Sports Matters**, recognizing that it alone cannot deliver the strategy.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURES

Leadership under SMMG and Implementation drive and co-ordination by SMIGS has been critical to success with this Strategy so far;

SMMG provides Ministerial interface with the delivery process;

Consultation respondents recognised SMMG effectiveness;

SMMG effectiveness slightly undermined by common concerns with SMIGs;

SMIGs performing an effective role;

SMIGs co-ordination of delivery is impressive;

SMIGs collation of delivery successes vital;

Consultation respondents recognised SMIGs' effectiveness;

Sport NI has retained a responsibility to lead and coordinate the delivery of the Sport Matters Strategy;

Sport NI as a leading body for the development of sport, is fundamental to the successful delivery of the Sport Matters vision ;

Sport NI is the cohesive factor that has enabled the successes of the SMIG's to emerge; and

Sport NI cannot be expected to deliver alone and be ultimately responsible for other bodies' lack of delivery or engagement.

4.21 Before moving to express recommendations under this section it is necessary for the Review Team to encourage a focus on the foundation placed for the strategy's implementation and to re-state the commitment the Strategy makes for its implementation:-

4.22 *The Strategy clearly states that **no single individual or organisation can deliver the vision and a genuine partnership approach to implementation is essential.** Various components of the Strategy should be lead and delivered by a number of different partner organisations. Ensuring effective partnership working is a challenging process; **it requires organisations to buy-in to high level targets and to invest resources, skills and knowledge.** The Minister with responsibility for sport and physical recreation **will champion the aspirations of this Strategy across Government** through regular engagement with Ministerial colleagues in other Departments and has the lead responsibility for its implementation and evaluation. **Sport Matters** makes it clear that successful implementation, particularly in the context of partnership working, **depends on effective leadership and clear lines of accountability.***

4.23 *While this Strategy is published by DCAL and SNI, **its ownership extends within and across Government.** Each of the other ten Government Departments made significant contributions to various stages of the development process of this*

Strategy. The Strategy has been formally endorsed by these Departments and their respective Ministers via the Northern Ireland Executive.

4.24 *To deliver on the above commitments, the Government of Northern Ireland will work through Sport Northern Ireland, as the lead body for the development of sport and physical recreation, and in partnership with a variety of public, private, sporting and community organisations.”*

4.25 The Review Team concludes that participation in the SMMG by Departments demonstrates ongoing commitment to the above strategic declaration. Similarly, where other delivery partners at District Council level, sports governing bodies and the voluntary and community sector, participate in and support the operation of the SMIGs, the above principle is accepted and is to be pursued.

Recommendations on Implementation Structures

That SMMG under its Ministerial Lead, encourages a re-commitment to the Sport Matters foundation partnership principle and extends its membership to other identified stakeholders with key strategies relating to sport and physical recreation; and.

SMIGs to consider Chair rotation on annual basis and bring any proposal in that regard to SMMG.

Supporting Actions:-

That SMMG encourages a re-commitment to a Sport Matters foundation principle that “no single individual or organisation can deliver the vision and a genuine partnership approach to implementation is essential; and that it requires organisations to buy-in to high level targets and to invest resources, skills and knowledge.”

Assure SMMG status as a Ministerial Lead;

That representatives from DETI and DRD are invited to join SMMG;

That clarity on SMMG role distinct from SMIGs is re-stated for all members;

Promote and maintain partnership status across SMIGs and equality of responsibility; and

SMIGs to consider Chair rotation on annual basis and bring any proposal in that regard to SMMG.

5. Looking towards 2019, where we need to get to:-

5.1 The third and final objective of the review was to determine whether the strategy remains fit for purpose as the strategic framework through which the Department's priorities can be most effectively achieved. The focus within this TOR element would be Strategy Profile, PETSSE, Health Interface, Costs and Resources and the Super Council Structure. This section also addresses several issues raised specifically within consultee responses (denoted by ** at each title below).

5.2 The Review Team is content that the available evidence on the performance of **Sport Matters** clearly demonstrates not only a significant swathe of achievement but also that the Strategy is broadly fit for purpose. It is the appropriate driver for setting the high level parameter within which all investment and planning for sport through to 2019 will be delivered.

Vision, values and principles

5.3 When Sport Matters was under development it sought to encapsulate and affirm the aspirations of people in the north of Ireland for sport. Through consultation at the time it was clear what was important:

- a world class start and lifelong involvement in sport and physical recreation for all people;
- world class performances by teams and individuals; and
- a sustainable sporting and physical recreation culture that contributes to broader Government objectives.

Sport Matters embraced these aspirations, reflecting the sporting context for the north of Ireland and expressed those desires in a 10 year vision:

"a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport"

5.4 **Sport Matters** maintains that the community in the north of Ireland values sport and physical recreation as an important dimension of their cultures. Interest in sport and physical recreation continues to span the entire community. People value the chance to play, compete, spectate and volunteer and Sport Matters was positioned to be an enabler of opportunities and a force for the elimination of barriers.

5.5 The environment in which people seek to enjoy sport has not changed. Sport is pursued and enjoyed at home, in schools and colleges, universities, the work place and in community facilities. The increase in facilities for and participants in sports such as mountain biking and walking activities demonstrates the growing value placed in the rich and varied outdoor natural environment.

5.6 The Review Team also recognises an emerging need for modernised multi sports facilities within a reasonable travelling distance, facilities that provide access and participation for communities but which will also showcase the north of Ireland's high performance athletes. In the modern communication age, sport provides saturated access to heroes, heroines and moments of inspiration which are increasingly collectively celebrated. Community sport practised beside elite achievers will promote important cultural values in society, including sharing, honesty, fair play, respect, tolerance and teamwork.

Values – Our beliefs:

- Equity
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Respect

Principles – The standards that guide our actions:

- Empowering individuals, groups & communities
- Responding to need
- Partnership working based on consultation and stakeholder buy-in
- Promoting good relations and working towards 'A Shared Future'
- Focussing on outcomes

5.7 These values and principles not only underpinned the development of this strategy but their importance became evident in the development of actions arising from the strategy and its implementation through to 2014.

5.8 The Review Team therefore, specifically tested the relevance of the Vision, Values and Principles of the strategy within the consultation. From the spectrum of achievements across the first 5 years the Review Team is content to conclude that the vision, values and principles of **Sport Matters** are still relevant. This view is underpinned by the majority of respondents to the consultation who similarly concluded that these high level terms remain valid and important to the future success of strategy delivery.

5.9 The Strategy is founded on 3 core pillars, participation, performance and places. These pillars signalled the delivery pathways for the strategy and as such were even proliferated into the management structures within delivery bodies. The Review Team has considered these pillars applying appropriate questions within the consultation.

Participation

5.10 All the responses in this area felt that 'Participation' was still relevant and should be included in Sport Matters. The seven comments indicated that it was felt that this was the most important area of the strategy.

5.11 Almost all the responses felt that the targets in this area were appropriate. Some comments included in this area were:

- Some targets were hard to measure; and
- Strategy should include more children targets.

Performance

5.12 All the responses in this area felt that 'Performance' was still relevant and should be included in Sport Matters. Some of the comments indicated that it was felt that, while important, 'Performance' was not as important as 'Participation'.

5.13 Nearly all the responses felt that the targets in this area were appropriate. Some comments included in this area were:

- Targets should be reviewed in light of investment;
- All sports should be treated equally; and
- Concern that whilst Commonwealth Games success was good, the representative range of sports was poor.

Places

5.14 Again, almost all of the responses in this area felt that 'Places' was still relevant and should be included in Sport Matters. Comments in this area included:

- The impact of the focus on the three main venues on other sports;
- Outdoor recreation facilities;
- Emphasis on elite venues; and
- Funding.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE FUTURE

Sport Matters clearly demonstrates a significant swathe of achievement;

The Strategy, with some refinement, is fit for purpose going forward;

Sport Matters is the high level parameter within which all investment and planning for sport through to 2019 will be delivered;

Sport Matters Vision, Values and Strategic Core Principles are still relevant and inspirational; and

The Sport Matters 3 core pillars (Participation, Places and Performance) were all found to be still relevant.

Government's commitments to sport and physical recreation

5.15 DCAL's key priority is to utilise the potential of the culture, arts and leisure sector, including sport and physical activity, *to promote equality and tackle poverty and social exclusion (PETPSE)*. This priority underpins Departmental consideration of all programme and budget proposals and subsequent allocation of funding to organisations and initiatives, including sport. The Plan has a focus on delivery and builds on the excellent progress made over the past year. It places particular emphasis on the following:

- Making culture, arts and leisure more accessible;
- Promoting and supporting our cultural identity;
- Lifelong learning; and
- Excellence in service delivery.

5.16 This strategic approach that will carry forward into the 2015- 2019 period is based around thematic interventions in the areas of education, the economy, health and wellbeing, and social inclusion and brings a tangible sense of cohesion and connectivity across the work of the entire DCAL sector. It enables DCAL to stimulate and develop collaborative opportunities between ALBs and with wider social partners and stakeholders. Our strategic approach also guides and supports DCAL's bids for additional funds and in reallocating internal budgets towards projects, initiatives and collaborative opportunities which can have a genuine and positive impact on promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion. The PETPSE priority will still be a key focus as we strive to carry through on the delivery of Sport Matters through to 2019.

5.17 The consultation exercised asked if Government's commitments to sport and physical recreation was still relevant. While most of the responses indicated that they thought they were still relevant, there were a number of comments that indicated concern in relation to:

- The persistence of facilities deficit;
- A need to improve partnership working and co-operation;
- The need to maintain focus on the key objective;
- The need to support delivery through local Government; and
- Future funding of sport.

Promoting Equality and Tackling Poverty and Social Exclusion (PETPSE)

5.18 Respondents were asked if they felt that Sport Matters met DCAL's commitment of promoting equality and tackling poverty and social exclusion. Ten out of fifteen responses said yes to this question. The main points arising from the comments were:

- While sport can contribute in this area, there are other factors;
- The strategy promotes equality but may not be succeeding in delivering this;
- Participation is more relevant to social need than Performance; and
- More funding needed in rural areas for equality and social need.

5.19 Eight responses out of thirteen said that there were specific targets relating to PETPSE that should be monitored in Sport Matters. Comments in this area included:

- Including new PETPSE targets with the transfer of powers to the 11 Super Councils;
- Consideration given to how the organisations delivering these targets will be funded;
- PETPSE targets are more relevant to participation than performance; and
- Use of inspiring stories and case studies on PETPSE achievements so far.

5.20 The Review Team notes the positive response to the Department's PETPSE priority and will recommend that rather than set new **Sport Matters** targets on the priority, the 2015 -2019 Action Plan will include actions and performance indicators. Subsequent progress and achievements will be monitored through the annual reports.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

Positive response to the Department's PETPSE priority;

PETPSE seen as key enabler for future delivery for local community needs;

Need to address facilities deficit in PETPSE context;

Need to measure success in delivering equality;

Need to engage the PETPSE priority within the Super Council Structure and specifically community planning model;

PETPSE links to 'Participation' and social need, better than 'Performance;'

Need to showcase PETPSE delivery successes; and

Emerging concerns on how extended new priority will be funded going forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENTS TO SPORT AND PHYSICAL RECREATION

Embed and retain PETPSE as a key Sport Matters priority and implementation drive; and through Sport NI's Facilities Strategy for future facilities developments including those through new super councils and community plans;

Supporting actions:-

Embed and retain PETPSE as a key Sport Matters priority and implementation driver;

Influence Sport NIs pending Facilities Strategy as a vehicle to communicate the PETPSE priority in future facilities developments;

Introduce measures to gauge delivery success on equality;

Engage with Council Leisure Officers Association and Councils to promote PETPSE in community planning model; and

Identify a means of highlighting the delivery successes of PETPSE as part of the Sport Matters implementation programme.

**** Funding of Sport Matters Cost and Resources**

5.21 When making an assessment of the cost of delivery over a ten year period the Sport Matters Strategy clarified that no one organisation would have the capacity to single-handedly meet the cost of delivery and therefore a genuine partnership approach to funding the implementation of the Strategy would be essential. The approach taken in the strategy to assessing the delivery cost was to summarise existing public investment in sport and physical recreation; to project an anticipated cost of implementation and using this information to calculate an indicative shortfall over ten years.

5.22 The total additional funding requirement over the ten years (2009-2019) to deliver the Vision of 'a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport' was estimated to be £134m. In relation to the 3 pillars of the Strategy it was stated that investments under 'Participation' and 'Performance' are largely revenue, while investments required under 'Places for Sport' are largely capital.

5.23 On this basis, it was anticipated that the total additional revenue expenditure required over the ten years would be approximately £103m, with a further £31m required for capital improvements. The levels of funding to implement the Strategy would be subject to the normal budgetary processes, economic appraisals and difficult choices about public expenditure priorities.

5.24 The following table summarises the early estimation for the cost of delivery:-

	PARTICIPATION (PL)	PARTICIPATION (LLPA)	PERFORMANCE (PS)	PLACES	TOTAL
COST OF IMPLEMENTATION	116.83	135.54	112.23	415.86	780.46
EXISTING INVESTMENT	78.40	91.90	91.65	384.84	646.79
NET 10 YEAR FUNDING SHORTFALL	38.43	43.64	20.58	31.02	133.67

All figures quoted in £/m

Figures based on Programme for Government 2008-2011 and Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2008-2018

5.25 From the privileged position of hindsight and in view of variable factors such as the emergence of major exchequer capital funding for signature projects such as the Kingspan Stadium at Ravenhill and the fluctuations in Lottery funding due to Olympic funding over the period 2009-2012, the Review Team is content to take the view that the estimations made at the outset of the Strategy were fairly conservative. This view is underpinned by a range of comments indicated within the consultation exercise. Respondents made it clear that there was a relative lack of funding that would provide for the needs for new capital build and to sustain replacement capital builds within sport. Concern was also expressed on the need to provide continuous funding for programmes that promote participation at community level and that will also support the wide range of sports beyond those that are well skilled at accessing financial support from the public purse.

5.26 From the consultation exercise it was clear that the successful delivery of the Strategy's targets still has the potential to result in an acceptance that sport and physical recreation impacts upon the life of every person in the north of Ireland whether it is in terms of lifestyle and health issues or within the realm of competition, enjoyment and achievements at the elite level. Change on this scale however can only be maintained if it is possible to secure significant additional financial and human resources. None of the fourteen responses thought that there was sufficient funding for Sport Matters and the most common statements repeated by respondents included the following comments:-

- A lack of funding targeted and secured for a long term strategy;
- A lack of resources for the facilities needed to deliver sport/lack of capital investments across the wide range of sports;
- Funding programmes are always well over-subscribed;
- Lack of resource funding impacts on volunteers;
- Difficulty in maintaining funding for programmes to maximise participation and performance benefits;

- The need to develop closer partnerships to maximise resources; and
- Funding the big 3 sports means other sports suffer.

5.27 To provide an broad indication of investment for the Strategy so far, the Review Team assumed 3 main sources of funding, exchequer resource and capital from the NI block grant, Lottery Funding from the 4 NI distributors and lastly City and District Council investment from the local rates. Through enquiries to Departments and other 'investors' a figure has been calculated for the period 2009 to 2014 (31 March) and compared to the total 2009 projected requirement of £780m. This exercise suggests that to date a total of c. **£762m** has been invested to sport and physical activity, a figure which does not include planned capital expenditure for Kingspan Stadium at Ravenhill (**£16.5**)Casement Park(**£62.5m**) and Windsor Park (**£31m**).

5.28 The Review Team cannot absolutely assure that the spend figure is bereft of any element of double counting, but taking the figure as a broad indication of investment, it appears to suggest that, firstly, investment commitment by stakeholders and partners has been significant and secondly, the initial estimates at the time of drafting Sport Matters were conservative. Indeed the under-estimates could not have foreseen a range of variables that would have an impact such as the circumstances where a 3 stadiums programme would have replaced a one multi-sport stadium option at Maze/Long Kesh, that major events such as the Olympics/Paralympics of 2012, the World Police and Fire Games and Commonwealth of Nations activities would skew resources and efforts away from core business, or that an anticipated £53m investment in elite facilities would not feature in the eventual outcome over 5 years of spend. However such have been examples of how shifting priorities alter the outlook of a Strategy developed and published at a given point in time.

5.29 In terms of the benefits of investment in the Strategy's vision and targets and objectives, sport in itself is seen as an essential element of leisure and recreation in the north of Ireland with significant potential impacts relating to health, community wellbeing and cohesion. Encouraging people to participate in sport and physical recreation has been calculated as having a potential to provide a £0.62m per year to the Health Service with a 5% reduction in the sedentary population, while providing a potential £131m net economic benefit for the North.

5.30 As a Mid-term Review only, it has not been possible to resource an in depth repeat of a Economic Study however the Review Team considers that whilst the Sheffield Hallam University Report on Economic Benefits from Investing in Sport was a 2008 production on behalf of Sport NI in relation to Sport Matters target PA2 , its findings still provide an supportive indicator in focussing on the economic importance of sport to the north of Ireland. The report estimated that: -

c. £638m was spent by customers on sports related goods and services in Northern Ireland in 2008 (up 54% on 2004 figures);

Consumer spending on sport has remained unchanged despite the 2008 recession;

17,900 people were employed in 2008 in a sport related employment context (2.3% of population compared to national average rate of 1.8%); and

Gross value added to the Northern Ireland economy by Sport was calculated as 2.3% of the total economic output for 2008 (compared to 1.5% for England).

5.31 The Review Team sees merit in repeating this type of economic study in about 2 years time so that findings can take account of the extent of any recovery from the 2008 private sector financial collapse and as a consequence the current phase of public sector austerity measures.

Lottery Funding

5.32 Lottery funding has made a significant contribution to the aims of Sport Matters. Whilst this funding source is distinctly separate from Central Government Funding from the Exchequer, Sport Matters has influenced Lottery spend. The application of Lottery funding to meet distinct priorities, permits the accessing of funding for activities which would otherwise be unavailable to Sport. The overall intention of Lottery funding is to provide grants through independent lottery distributors to a range of good causes one of which is sport. Sport NI as a Lottery distributor in its own right under the Lottery Act 1993, develops funding programmes having regard to broad policy direction given to it by the Department. Lottery funding is therefore distinct from Government funding and adds value. Although it does not act as a substitute for Exchequer expenditure, where appropriate, it complements Government and other programmes, policies and funding.

5.33 Over the period of **Sport Matters** so far Sport NI has distributed c. £40m through 6 programmes; Active Communities, Athlete Support Programme, Building Sport Programme, Boxing Investment Programme, Performance Focus and Awards for Sport Programmes. This funding was singularly instrumental in establishing the Sports Institute NI at Jordanstown. In terms of demonstrating the wide application of this funding and the diligence apparent in meeting key priorities, the Review Team highlights firstly the **Active Communities Programme**. This programme seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full-time and part-time sports coaches and leaders to deliver activities within the community and club settings across the North of Ireland, with a view of increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among under-represented groups. Sport NI is investing in 11 consortia of District Councils (based on Model 11b of the RPA Consultation) and a range of delivery partners to create over 100 new coaching posts and 100,000 participants will benefit from the activities delivered throughout the North of Ireland. The programme is currently being extended into 2015-16.

5.34 Secondly the **Building Sport Capital Programme** aimed to provide partnership funding for major capital projects that will increase access to opportunities for sport development and participation for as many people as possible. Successful projects were required to demonstrate their potential to increase participation in sport; be sustainable; address the factors of social need; tackle social exclusion; promote equality of opportunity and good community relations; promote sporting excellence; address health inequalities; and provide the structures for long-term athlete development. While some investments remain on-going, the Building Sport Programme is currently closed.

5.35 The current projections for distribution funds through to 2019, based on current lottery ticket sales are for a 1.6% decline year on year. This does not take account of monies due to be re-distributed from funds generated by land and property sales at the Olympic Park in London. Despite this, Sport NI is currently developing new programmes to be funded from Lottery, aiming to invest £17.5million in sporting facilities. This investment which is still in planning is a response to Sport NI research that indicates a further £300million requirement for investment in sporting facilities in the north of Ireland.

****Cuts**

5.36 A repeated concern amongst respondents to the consultation was the pressure on budgets and the impact this may have on the ability of partners to achieve outcomes within the 2019 timescale. Indeed four out of twelve responses that referenced budgets in relation to Sport Matters felt that the strategy may need to be replaced due to financial pressures creating a significantly altered ability to respond to sporting needs. The current budget environment as a consequence of Treasury austerity measures presents an overt challenge to the future success of the Strategy.

5.37 The picture for next year looks particularly difficult and based on the information currently available the Department has set as a planning assumption a reduction in the DCAL budget of 11.2% from the opening figure in 2014-15. Planning is now starting on that basis to enable protection of frontline service delivery. It is clear that cuts of that scale will have a significant impact across the culture, arts and leisure sector and difficult decisions will be required. Despite the challenges, it is important we remain focussed on delivery with the money we do have, to look fundamentally at what we are seeking to deliver and how and think flexibly and innovatively about the scope to find new ways of doing things and alternative funding sources to deliver the best possible outcomes. EU Funding is a hugely untapped resource and is a factor that should be investigated and scoped for its potential to support sports projects going forward.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON FUNDING TO SPORT MATTERS

Cost of Implementation estimate £780m inclusive of known planned spend and an estimation of an additional requirement of £133.67m was likely an under-estimation at the 2009 point in time;

Approximately £762m has been invested in sport, physical recreation and physical activity related activities by central Government Departments, District Councils and NI Distribution Lottery Funds;

The persistence of a Facilities Gap argues the point of considerable underspend of capital monies;

Lottery Investment on an additionality principle has been a major boost to Sport in the North, at community and regional levels (SINI);

Investment in sport and physical activity brings a value added investment to Health related issues, education, employment and social/community cohesion;

Sport generates a strong positive economic benefit to the North;

EU Funding is a hugely untapped resource in terms of sports programmes;

The current period of austerity, consequent budget constraints, financial penalties by Treasury and a bleak outlook for CSR 2016, present a serious threat to the successful implementation of the Sport Matters Strategy for the next 5 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUNDING TO SPORT MATTERS

That the outcome of this Report, the benefits of the PETPSE agenda, the outcome of Sport NI's revision of its Facilities Strategy and the potential that EU and Lottery funding presents, be factored into the considerations of future bids for sports capital and resource funding.

Supportive actions:-

That the outcome of this Report be factored into the considerations of future bids for sports capital and resource funding;

That the PETPSE agenda be championed as a value added factor of sport in terms of securing future capital and resource for the sports sector;

That proactive engagement with new 'super' Councils and the community planning process, takes place as early as possible to ensure that sport maintains its status as a priority funding area;

That Sport NI continues with its planned revision and update of the Facilities Strategy as a tool to support future bidding to CSR rounds;

That a repeat of the study into the Economic benefits of sport is actioned around two years from now;

That the Department reviews the current Lottery Direction for sport to ensure that it aligns with the broad priorities of Sport Matters and enables Lottery support through to 2019;and

EU Funding should be investigated and scoped by all stakeholders for

its potential to support sports projects going forward.

Health Benefits from Investing in Sport Matters

5.38 Since the **Sport Matters** Strategy was launched and in the period 2009-2014, Government's response to key health issues has markedly increased and a range of health related strategies have emerged. Government Departments and delivery partners have been encouraged to work together and to enter into partnership delivery similar to that deployed in the implementation of Sport Matters. The Review Team has identified that significant Strategies such as the Fitter Futures for All (relating to Obesity) and the Bamford Mental Health Action Plan have benefitted in terms of quality delivery at community level through linkages with Sport Matters. The potential exists for further success in the future and emerging strategies and action plans in areas such as learning disability, the Autism Strategy, Regional Day Opportunities Model and the Post 19 year old transitions initiatives. In terms of the potential for sport to provide quality of life experiences these are matters which cannot be ignored for the 2015-2019 period and beyond. This will be a growth area in terms of community needs.

5.39 The imperatives being created for sport are a by-product of the realisation of the huge health and social benefits that physical activity and recreational and competitive sport interweaves into the fabric of society. Research completed by the Sport and Recreation Alliance shows that there are benefits that can be delivered through sport and physical recreation to those who are socially deprived. The key findings from the report include: -

Physical activity reduces the rates of cardiovascular diseases and the mortality rates from breast and colon cancers;

Exercise can increase the capacity for learning, generate more energy and better concentration;

As a result, keeping active can facilitate increased educational potential and productivity;

Anecdotal evidence shows that increased sport and physical activity decreases crime and antisocial behaviour; and

Sport and recreation positively contribute to many factors that build social cohesion, reducing crime and antisocial behaviour, and ensuring a fit and healthy workforce; and

Sport and recreation provides personal benefits such as better physical and mental health, high educational attainment, creating better employment opportunities and earning potential.

5.40 A DCAL study into '*The Impact of Sporting Activity on Emotional Well-Being*' concluded that whereas it is widely accepted that taking part in sport or physical activity can have a positive effect on an individual's health generally, there is an

expanding area of concern in terms of mental well being for which sport can also have a restorative and preventative effect. This report which was completed in May 2014, proved through its methodology that there is strong evidence of a correlation between sporting activity and emotional well being and that where there is an increase in sporting and recreational activity there is a consequent improvement in emotional health. Moreover, the report concludes that there is a strong link between levels of sporting activity and the extent to which individuals report that they either have self confidence self belief, value or esteem, thus opening up a pathway to recover with sport as an underlying support. Strikingly, the report also concluded that the positive effects were to be realised more in males than females, leading the Review Team to reflect that this may be relevant to the overall attitude and perceptions that women may have towards sport and/or the barriers that exist or are perceived for greater participation in and experimentation with the benefits to be derived and enjoyed.

5.41 A 2010 report by FKB Consulting, commissioned by Sport NI, carried out an assessment into the value of sport and physical recreation in the north of Ireland. The report makes reference to a model utilised by the report which calculates the cost benefits of implementing the '*Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland*', published by DHSSPS in 2002. The model states that 2,062 people die prematurely each year as a result of a sedentary lifestyle with the cost to society of an individual death estimated around £1.08m, It estimates a five per cent reduction in the sedentary population has the potential to provide a net economic benefit to Northern Ireland of approximately £131 m. The average cost to the health service of treatment for conditions resulting from sedentary lifestyles was estimated at an average of £1,256.00 for each treatment and with a five per cent reduction in the sedentary population, this would provide a net annual economic benefit to the Health Service in the North of £0.62m for each year.

5.42 The emphasis given to health within Sport Matters has enabled a range of activities, programmes and policies to be delivered in the first 5 years of the Strategy. Activities stated to have a direct health impact are listed as:

- FRESH,
- Activ8 Eatwell;
- Interdepartmental Investment in Special Olympics Ireland;
- Mental Health and Well Being Programme; and
- Anti-doping Education Programme.

5.43 While other Sport NI delivered activities stated to have an indirect health impact are:

- Implementation of the Disability Mainstreaming Policy;
- Sport Matters Community Capital Programme;
- Building Sport Programme;
- Places for Sport; and
- Active Communities.

5.44 The Review Team can only but conclude that Sport is a major contributor to delivering positive impacts on community health through the targeting and promotion

of participation and through the prioritisation of activities aimed at underrepresented groups and areas of social deprivation. The strong indication going forward is that there exists a clear direction to be taken in terms of realising success for the strategy in this area and much more needs to be done. Potentially, greater success will be realised if successful programmes such as those noted above can be funded in a sustainable manner to allow repetition of those programmes that have produced successful results, such as Active8, the suicide awareness and prevention programme and the Inter-Departmental support package for Special Olympics. Linkage to health and the benefits it brings to public health is a critical factor in maintaining the profile of sport for the future in terms of attracting sustained resources in future spending rounds through central government and priority of consideration in local-level rates funding.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON SPORT INTERFACE WITH HEALTH

Sport interface with Health and the provision of participation opportunities and quality of life experiences will be a growth area in terms of community needs;

The imperatives being created for sport are a by-product of the realisation of the huge health and social benefits that physical activity and recreational and competitive sport interweaves into the fabric of society;

Sport and its benefits to good physical and mental health produces a wide range of positive social and economic impacts;

The realisation of the benefits of sport on mental health and well being is an expanding area; and

There is a need to capture sport interventions on health in terms of additional targets for the 2015- 2019 period.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SPORT INTERFACE WITH HEALTH

That the positive effects of the Sport interface with Health and the provision of participation opportunities and quality of life experiences be factored into CSR considerations, given the economic savings that can be realised.

Supportive Actions:-

Produce additional targets on Health related matters for Sport Matters Action Plan 2015-19 and monitor in the proposed new measurement annex (see paragraph 3.18);

The positive affect of Sport on reducing the sedentary population should be factored into CSR considerations, given the economic savings that can be realised; and

Take proactive measures to ensure that successful programmes such as Active8, the Inter-departmental Investment in Special Olympics Ireland and the Mental Health and Well Being Programme are sustained for the future.

Disability, A Sport Matters priority area.

5.45 Whether the context is physical or mental, whether it is learning, visual or other sensory impairment, the existence of the range of disabilities should no longer be a constraint on individual members of society participating in sport and physical recreation. In the post Olympic-Paralympic Games years, it is of concern to note that the vast majority of people with disabilities in the north of Ireland simply do not realise enough opportunities to participate in sport or engage in physical recreational activity.

5.46 This is a matter that is a feature of Assembly business reflecting public concern and interest in the issue with several private member or no day named debates being proposed in recent times. This focus at the political level has transposed into several major strategic efforts to effect positive change and developments, with policy development and delivery being affected by strategies such as the Bamford Action Plan, the Autism Strategy, Fitter Futures for All and the recent and ongoing focus on post 19 Transitions and Regional Day Opportunities all making as significant impact on delivery thinking. DCAL is currently working with other Departments to scope the potential to extend the current 4 year programme for financial support for Special Olympics.

5.47 The **Sport Matters** Strategy has not ignored the need to promote greater participation by disabled persons and the need for greater provision designed to meet specific needs for disabled persons from the sports sector. Formalising this signal of direction, the Strategy has set the target of delivering a 6% increase in the participation rate in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability. Achieving this target needs to be a genuine partnership approach with elements of work being taken forward by those best placed to contribute together with the pooling of resources and expertise. Measurement of set targets is critical so that true deficits can be met with true investment and activities designed to deliver measurable positive and real change to disabled persons lives.

5.48 The Review Team also takes the view that **Sport Matters** has the potential to contribute and complement the significant and determined efforts of groups such as DSNI and Special Olympics Ireland. Whilst newly developed services, facilities, events and programmes can deliver much to those in need and raise the profile of Disability as an integral and valued element of society, yet the drive for access to existing provisions and participation in activities can deliver so much to provide life enhancing and improving experiences to those with disabilities in whatever context.

5.49 Recent high profile events where those with disability have participated such as the Paralympics and the Commonwealth Games, whilst they are significant encouragements to so many, can sometimes mask the fact that there remains a significant gap in terms of the levels of participation. The most recent research through the SAPAS report, found that disabled people were half as likely to participate in sport

with 19% of disabled adults participating compared to 37% of all adults. By default the measurement method will change to CHS but the critical imperative remains that in this issue the gap is probably the most significant in terms of under-represented groups.

5.50 The challenge moving forward therefore is to create a genuine legacy following high profile events, by increasing the number of sports and physical recreation opportunities available to people with disabilities at all levels of sport. This includes the promotion of participation, not just as opportunities to be involved, to compete, to succeed, but also to achieve a greater degree of equality and parity and to have and to enjoy life enhancing experiences through sport.

5.51 This goal will require a commitment at this point and determination through to the end of this Strategic period and beyond to set challenging targets and priorities for provision to the Disabled in community and other action plans so that delivery occurs in the next period at a greater rate and frequency and profile. The Department, Sport NI and SMIG stakeholders will also need to look for opportunities going forward to expand provision across the wider disability sector so that groups such as DSNI can realise increased capacity to develop their operations.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON SPORT AND DISABILITY

It is of concern to note that the vast majority of people with disabilities do not realise enough opportunities to participate in sport or engage in physical recreational activity;

Delivery thinking now impacted by several recent major strategic efforts such as Bamford Mental Health Action Plan, Autism Strategy, Fitter Futures for All and post 19 Transitions and Regional Day Opportunities;

Sport Matters Target PA10 (“By 2019 to deliver at least a 6 percentage point increase in participation rates in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability”), will be measured solely by the Continuous Household Survey to aid consistency of achievement;

19% of disabled adults participate in sport and physical activity compared to 37% of all adults, a gap that is probably the most significant in terms of under-represented groups; and

There is a need to create a genuine legacy, following high profile events, by increasing the number of sports and physical recreation opportunities available to people with disabilities at all levels of sport.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SPORT AND DISABILITY

That Sport and Disability is recognised as a Sport Matters key priority throughout the next 5 years, to achieve greater levels of

participation; to meet emerging requirements in areas such as Autism and Post 19 Transitions and to extend the capacity of groups such as DSNI to expand their programmes.

Supportive actions:-

That Sport and Disability is recognised as a Sport Matters key priority throughout the next 5 years;

That SMIGS respond to the priority by agreeing actions and targets for the 2015-19 action plan to achieve greater levels of participation;

That SMIGS develop forward actions to meet requirements of specific Strategies, for example the Autism Strategy and Post 19 Transitions;

That CHS is confirmed by SMMG as the primary available measurement method for PA10;

That proactive support is co-ordinated across Departments to ensure an extension the funding programme for Special Olympics through to at least 2019;

Stakeholders to look for opportunities going forward to expand provision across the wider disability sector so that groups such as DSNI can realise increased capacity to develop their operations;

That sporting participation and achievement by those with disabilities is accorded priority in terms of partner recognition and PR.

****Women in sport. A Sport Matters priority area.**

5.52 Since the launch of Sport Matters the extent of women's participation in sport has accelerated beyond expectation, but not beyond necessity. The growth of participation and success at competitive levels has been particularly marked in recent years. Even sports that have had a profile of being an exclusively male preserve, now find that the determination of females to give all sports a try have resulted in increasing numbers participating and also significant success on the field of international competition.

5.53 Taking Women's Rugby as an example, this is a rapidly growing sector within Rugby as a whole and the success of the Irish women's team in the World Cup this year in Paris is sending positive signals throughout the game with female rugby across the North enjoying a huge growth in profile and participation numbers. This is largely due to the recent success of the Ireland squad, which features many Ulster players including Ashleigh Baxter (Belfast harlequins and Ulster) and Grace Davitt (Cooke RFC and Ulster). As a result of DCAL funding, Ulster Rugby has three designated Female Rugby

Officers who can act as a point of contact for all enquiries relating to female rugby within the North. This is one example, but other sports are making similar levels of progress as the IFA's Girl's and Women's Football Plan 2014-18 Strategy demonstrates. This strategy concludes amongst other thoughts, that although there is rapid growth in women's football, still too few girls are making the transition from involvement at school to joining a football club.

5.54 The emergence of the Female Sports Forum (FsF) supported through Sport NI is a significant factor in maintaining the momentum for change and development of women's sport. Members of the Forum have suggested that the limiting factor to progress is not necessarily funding but rather the need for a strategic priority to be afforded to female sport within the wider sporting community. The Forum has also re-ignited a desire to develop a project focusing on the development of Young Leaders and FsF is currently exploring partnership options to deliver a pilot 'Leadership Development' initiative for at least 10 young girls aged 16-18 yrs to develop leadership and coaching skills in five sports. Members of the FsF will act as mentors for the young leaders during the pilot initiative. The IFA, Ulster Branch IRFU, Ulster Branch Irish Hockey Association, Ulster Council Gaelic Games Association and Ulster Camogie, are all major attendees and supporters of the Forum and its aims.

5.55 There is a danger of presenting a narrow scope of women and girls involvement by highlighting the obvious larger sports. The three major groups experience significant growth in participation but the wider range of sports have attracted varying degrees of female participants, indeed many have been strong custodians of accessible sport for girls and women for decades, without the benefit of huge levels of public funding support. That said, the total investment over the first period of this strategy in terms of increasing solely female participation was c. £ 2.6m across all sports. In addition, during 2012-13 Sport NI provided funding of £1,500 to the Women's Sports and Fitness Foundation to facilitate an information session to provide guidance and support for Forum on increasing participation. In April 2012, Sport NI facilitated the organisation of a 'Try 5' taster session for 5 secondary schools at Queens University Playing fields. Hosted by the 5 governing bodies involved in the forum, over 125 year 8 girls received the opportunity to try all five sports during the day. Sport NI contributed £300 to the delivery of the day. In terms of the total investment across all sports available to both males and females, the total investment reaches almost £115m through 28 Sport NI Programmes.

5.56 Such positive activity resonates with views that emerged through the Review consultation exercise. Proactive engagement with women on sporting issues was highlighted and the need to maintain a focus on affecting the overall attitude and perceptions which women may have towards sport. This relates to barriers that exist or are perceived which may mitigate against greater participation in and experimentation with sports and the benefits to be derived and enjoyed.

5.57 The current Sport Matters target PA8 states *"by 2019, to deliver at least a 6% increase in women's participation rates in sport and physical recreation"*. This target is deemed to be on track for achievement as the baseline figure of 24% in 2008/09 has risen to 41% in 2012/13. The Review Team recognises that almost £2.6m investment in

to specifically increase female participation and also a wide range of activity underpins the effort behind this growth and the following are examples :-

- District Councils are involved in the delivery of the Active Communities Programme which aims to increase participation in under-represented groups especially older people, women and girls and people with disabilities
- Ulster Council GAA is delivering a number of programmes such as Gaelic for Mothers, Recreational Games for Adults, Have a Go Games and Coach Development Workshops.
- The IFA has worked on the expansion of junior girls' leagues and the growth of women's senior leagues. It has held open days to introduce girls to soccer and delivered a SCORE pilot project that provides clubs with the tools to enable them to encourage more girls into the sport.
- Ulster Rugby, through its Women's Development officer, has delivered a number of programmes including the 'Play Rugby Girls' initiative and the Girls Schools Cup which tie in with the IRFU Give it a Try Programme .
- Sport NI is also working with a number of governing bodies of sport to support the work of the Female Sports Forum.

5.58 The Review Team acknowledges an obvious danger against this positive background, complacency. Despite the obvious progress made, it remains that in almost every sporting activity, whether grassroots or high performance, coaching or management, women are still less involved than men. In a recent report to the Culture, Arts and Leisure Committee, Sport NI pointed out that women exercise significantly less than men in Northern Ireland [46% of women have participated in sport in the previous 12 months, as opposed to 61% of men] and around 78% of coaches in Northern Ireland are male. Many women are therefore missing out on many of the benefits an active lifestyle can bring. Sport is also missing out on the talent, knowledge and fresh insights that women could generate.

5.59 Clearly, future action will be required to encourage women and girls to take part in sport as participants, athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers. Success in increasing women's participation in sport at all levels is dependent on changing the behaviour of girls and women. This in turn will require changing a vast array of influencers that shape and determine the ultimate behaviour of women and girls themselves. This requires an understanding of the issues and challenges facing female participation and a real commitment from a range of stakeholders – central and local Government, the sports sector, the private sector – particularly those who invest in sport, the media, and the voluntary and community sectors - to acknowledge and address these.

5.60 The Review Team acknowledges the key influence that Sport NI's *'Women and Girl's in Sport Policy'* has been to the growth of female participation and success in sport and also concurs with the view that this policy should be reviewed with a view to strengthening and sustaining opportunities for female participation in sport at all levels.

5.61 The Review Team also recognises that there is a need to consolidate the progress that has been made and to extend the profile of women in sport generally and not just women playing their version of the wide range of sports including some historically

thought of as exclusively male environments. There is a need to champion the profile of both female sports, females in the wider range of sports and to heighten the profile of female successes and achievements. There are good examples, but more needs to be done in terms of embedding female participation in sport in a consistent and co-ordinated manner and on a life-long basis. This should be inclusive of early years engagement through schools, to regular activity and development through clubs and for those with competitive talent through to representative sport. Women in Sports Leadership is another area where further activity would benefit the extended profile of female sport.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON WOMEN IN SPORT

Since the launch of Sport Matters the extent of women's participation in sport has accelerated beyond expectation, but not beyond necessity;

growth of participation and success at competitive levels has been particularly marked in recent years;

the emergence of the Female Sports Forum (FsF) supported through Sport NI is a significant factor in maintaining the momentum for change and development of women's sport;

Sport Matters Target PA8 "by 2019, to deliver at least a 6% increase in women's participation rates in sport and physical recreation, is deemed to be on track for achievement as the baseline figure of 24% in 2008/09 has risen to 41% in 2012/13;

78% of sports coaches in the North of Ireland are male;

the total investment in terms of increasing solely female participation was c. £ 2.6m across all sports; total investment across all sports available to both males and females, reaches almost £115m through 28 Sport NI Programmes.

Through non participation in sport and physical activity, women and girls are excluded from enjoying the benefits of healthy lifestyles;

Success in increasing women's participation in sport at all levels is dependent on changing the attitudes & behaviour of girls and women on sport and physical activity.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON WOMEN IN SPORT

That Women in Sport is recognised as a Sport Matters key priority throughout the next 5 years to secure an increase in funding to increase solely women and young girls participation for the future and secure a greater proportion for female participation of funding aimed at sports for both men and women.

Supportive actions:-

That Women in Sport is recognised as a Sport Matters key priority throughout the next 5 years;

That SMIGS respond to the priority by agreeing actions and targets for the 2015-19 action plan to achieve greater levels of participation;

That Lessons Learned from growth areas are shared with the wider range of sports;

An increase in funding to solely increase women's participation should be secured for the future;

Action to ensure women's participation attracts a greater proportion of funds aimed at sports for both men and women;

SMIGS should aim to set a target for an increase in the numbers of female coaches across all sports;

Sport NI's 'Women and Girl's in Sport Policy' should be reviewed with a view to strengthening and sustaining opportunities for female participation in sport at all levels;

That Sport NI facilitates discussions between The Female Sports Forum and NI Sports Forum to provide increased profile for FsF for the next 5 years; and

That actions are identified that will assist changing the attitudes & behaviour of girls and women on sport and physical activity.

****Volunteering**

5.62 There are over 100 recognised sporting activities in Northern Ireland, which through various governing bodies and more than 5,000 clubs, provide opportunities for participation in sport and physical recreation at local and competitive levels (Sport Northern Ireland, 1997). These organisations draw on a pool of highly committed volunteers and who can access support from a north of Ireland wide network of Sports Development Officers. Clubs are, in the main, single-sport, have a small membership and are volunteer dependent.

5.63 People in the north of Ireland value sport and physical recreation as an important dimension of their culture (DCAL, 2004), (Sport NI 2008) and interest in sport and physical recreation spans the entire community. People value the chance to play, compete, spectate and volunteer in sport and there is evidence to suggest that they would do so more often given the opportunity and if barriers were removed.

5.64 Through volunteering, individuals can develop a range of skills which are transferable into the broader community context. Estimations suggest that there were over 150,000 adults in Northern Ireland who had volunteered in sport, in various capacities and frequencies.

5.65 The most recent high profile example of where volunteering contributed centrally to the success of a major sporting event was the World Police and Fire Games in 2013. Belfast set out to deliver the 'friendliest Games ever' and with the support of 3600 volunteers, it achieved this aim! With around 6400 applications received, Games organisers were overwhelmed from the outset by the enthusiasm of 'Team 2013' and the official WPFPG volunteer team. WPFPG volunteers represented the 'Spirit of the Games', with each volunteer playing a unique role. Overseen by Volunteer Now, they showcased Northern Ireland at every opportunity to the 7000 WPFPG competitors and their friends and family. Now that the Games are over, and also considering the numbers of volunteers from the North of Ireland that supported the London 2012 Olympics/Paralympics, the emerging legacies of high profile events is the diverse pool of skilled volunteers, ready and enthusiastic about volunteering at events in the years ahead.

5.66 At local levels in sports clubs the reliance on weekly and consistently active volunteers is critical to the success of attracting and maintaining participation in sport. A recent DCAL study on Sports Volunteering by Adults in NI 2013-14, found that in terms of frequency and sports volunteering, more than two in every five sports volunteers (41%) had volunteered at least once a week. Indeed, in the last year, 60% had volunteered at least once a month. One-fifth (20%) had volunteered once every two or three months and a similar proportion (19%) once or twice in the last year.

5.67 The critical reliance on volunteers at community level sport places a significant amount of pressure on volunteers and on the sports clubs in terms of how the volunteering relationship is managed and monitored. The need for Access NI clearances and for Child Protection and Safeguarding Training are very relevant examples of that pressure. The DCAL Volunteering study comments that more than three-quarters of sports volunteers (76%) felt that they were provided with the necessary information and training to carry out their sport volunteering roles. Nearly one in every five (19%) felt that the necessary training and information was provided, but only some of the time. One in every twenty sports volunteers (5%) stated that they felt that the necessary training and information was not provided.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON VOLUNTEERING

Sports organisations draw on a pool of highly committed volunteers, who can access support from a Northern Ireland wide network of Sports Development Officers;

Many sports clubs are single-sport, have a small membership and are volunteer dependent;

Many people in the north of Ireland community value the chance to play, compete, spectate and volunteer in sport and there is evidence to suggest that they would welcome more opportunity to do so;

Estimations suggest that there were over 150,000 adults in Northern Ireland who had volunteered in sport, in various capacities and frequencies; and

The emerging legacies of high profile events is the diverse pool of skilled volunteers, ready and enthusiastic about volunteering at events in the years ahead.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON VOLUNTEERING

That stakeholders consider how additional opportunities for volunteering might be provided and co-ordinated, such as accessing lists of experienced volunteers held by Volunteer Now.

Supportive actions:-

That SMIGs lead considerations on how additional opportunities for volunteering might be provided and co-ordinated;

That SMIGs consider how barriers such as training and skills needs can be addressed;

That EU funding and networking be considered as a means of increasing volunteering opportunities and learning lessons from best practice examples; and

That Sports Governing Bodies and sports clubs consider how they could benefit from accessing the post major games lists of experienced volunteers held by Volunteer Now.

****Bridging the Facilities Deficit**

5.68 From the comments received within the stakeholder consultation the Review Team is aware of a concern relating to a perceived persistence in the facilities gap detailed in a 2009 Report by Sport NI. The 2009 Active Places Research Report (Bridging the Gap), identified unmet demand and shortfalls for sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts, athletics facilities, and pitches in Northern Ireland. The estimated figure on this gap has been indicated as c. £300m. The Executive in the last CSR indicated that it endorsed a £36.4 m programme for sub-regional football stadia in the next CSR. In terms of a probable commencement from a zero capital base and in light of the identified persistent gap of £300m it may be opportune to seek an extension of that endorsement to include the wider range of sports. Sport NIs proposed £17.5m programme would then complement what the Executive might plan to achieve in such a move to address the estimated £300m deficit.

5.69 The document also presented an analysis of other key facility types, such as, high performance facilities, performance development centres, spectator facilities, countryside facilities, multi-sport facilities, and motorsport facilities. The Active Places Research Report still provides an evidence base that informs the strategic development of sports facilities in the North. It has been developed to offer guidance to the key providers of sports facilities, opportunities for facility providers to strategically address key issues and to pursue unmet facility demands within existing and proposed geographical areas under RPA.

5.70 Accessing existing facilities is an important approach in meeting demand for quality playing places and surfaces. The ability to access good sports facilities within the local communities is vital to any sporting organisation, yet many clubs in the north of Ireland struggle to find suitable places to train and compete. A large number of sports facilities are located on school premises and by making these available to sports clubs can bring significant benefits to both the school and the local clubs. Sport Northern Ireland's 'Your School, Your Club' Policy details the benefits of community use, the various approaches to community use of sports facilities, the core principals of community use, and outlines a number of examples of best practice from across the North. Against this background it is imperative that work to maintain community access to schools facilities is continued and expanded.

5.71 The Review Team welcomes the fact that Sport NI is engaging with delivery partners to establish a revised Facilities Strategy that will replace the previous 2009 version. This time however, the Strategy will be linked to 11 sub regional strategies produced by Councils that will inform decisions on addressing needs at the local level.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON THE FACILITIES GAP

Stakeholders are concerned about the apparent persistence in the facilities gap detailed in a 2009 Report by Sport NI;

Shortfalls for sports facilities such as sports halls, swimming pools, tennis courts, athletics facilities, and pitches in the north of Ireland has an estimated figure of c.£300m;

Sport NI is to launch a £17.5m strategic facilities programme;

The Executive has endorsed a sub-regional programme within football as a priority in the next CSR period;

Accessing existing facilities is an important approach in meeting demand for quality playing places and surfaces;

Sport Northern Ireland's 'Your School, Your Club' Policy details the benefits of community use, the various approaches to community use of sports facilities;

Over the next 4-5 months Sport NI will engage with delivery partners to establish a Facilities Strategy that will replace the previous 2009 version.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FACILITIES GAP

That the Sports Facilities Gap as an anticipated output of the Sport NI revised Facilities Strategy is recognised as a strategic priority in the next CSR period and that the endorsement by the Executive of a sub-regional stadiums programme be extended to the wider range of sports as a means of addressing the indentified gap.

Supportive actions:-

That addressing elements of the Sports Facilities Gap is recognised as a strategic priority in the next CSR period;

That the endorsement by the Executive of a sub-regional stadiums programme be extended to the wider range of sports as a means of addressing the indentified gap;

That greater focus in applied to accessing existing facilities is an important approach in meeting demand for quality playing places and surfaces; and

That Sport NI continues with its planned revision and update of the Facilities Strategy as a tool to support future bidding to CSR rounds.

****Funding the wide range of sports.**

5.72 The recent concentration of major capital across 3 major sports in terms of Governments priority on Stadiums development has generated some comment on a perceived skewing of funding towards the 3 sports involved at the expense of sports development for other sports. This is a matter that the Review Team could not ignore and has considered it in terms of the wider spending activity and priorities before and during the planning and spend periods for the stadium builds.

5.73 From maintained records, and bearing in mind the Stadium Development Funding figure of £110m, it emerges that over the period of the Sport Matters first 5 years, Sport NI has invested almost £115m through 28 programmes across all sports. Within this figure, there have also been bespoke programmes designed and targeted for so-called smaller sports to benefit from and also programmes for applicants who had no record of applications to Sport NI for funding over the previous 10 years (at date of the programme launch). For example, the Sport Matters Community Capital programme was a capital grants programme managed and administered by Sport NI. The need for the programme was identified to develop a range of new, improved and shared sports facilities to a standard comparable with other regions in the UK. The programme aimed

- To support the needs of low capacity applicants and areas of historically low Sport NI uptake;
- To prioritise sports organisations /clubs who have not received Sport NI capital funding in the previous 10 years;
- To cater potentially for projects based at community halls which have the potential to provide sport and physical recreation: and
- To increase participation in sport for those who have not previously been engaged in sport and physical recreation.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON FUNDING THE WIDER RANGE OF SPORTS

Recent concentration of major capital across 3 major sports in terms of Governments priority on Stadiums development, has generated some concern about a perceived skewing of funding at the expense of sports development for other sports;

This issue has been considered by the Review Team in terms of the wider spending activity and priorities before and during the planning and spend periods for the stadium builds;

In addition to funding of c.£110m set aside for regional stadiums development, over the period of the Sport Matters first 5 years, Sport NI has invested almost £123m through 28 programmes across all sports;

Local authority spending was c.£494m

Lottery additional spending was c.£47.4m

RECOMMENDATIONS ON FUNDING THE WIDER RANGE OF SPORTS

That SMIGs recognise the breadth of sports investment and that Regional Stadiums Development has not hindered wider investment in sports development generally; and

That funding for sports at regional sub-regional and local levels achieves as wide an application as practicable to the broader range of recognised sports.

****Tourism and Sports Events**

5.74 Over the Sport Matters period covered by this review the north of Ireland has attracted and been involved in major international sports events. We have proved already that we can stage world-class events, the World Police and Fire Games (WPFG) was the largest sporting event ever held in the north of Ireland and this was followed quickly by the Giro d'Italia event. In previous years, the North attracted the World Rally Championship and the Equestrian World Cup. We also have a lot to look forward to in the future, especially with the ongoing development of our new stadia at Ravenhill, Casement Park and Windsor Park. However, we also have to be realistic for our future aspirations.

5.75 DCAL continues to work closely with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI), who have responsibility since 2010, for the funding of events – including major sports events. DCAL has been in discussions with DETI and the Irish Rugby Football Union (IRFU) and Departments in the south to see how we can all work together to bring the Rugby World Cup to Ireland in 2023. In the meantime there is the prospect of the Women's World Cup in 2017, dependent on a successful bid and the media has speculated on the Open Golf Championship coming to Portrush. That would be the largest world class sporting event ever to be held in the North of Ireland.

5.76 Sports Branch officials have commenced initial discussions with the Worldwide Corporate Sport Community (WCSC), who have invited the NI Executive to host the first ever 'World Peace Games' in the north of Ireland and discussions are at a very early stage. Work is underway to establish the necessary foundation that would contribute to attracting the **Commonwealth Youth Games in 201** Youth Games.**

5.77 In addition, Sport NI's 'International Sports Events Programme', a one year pilot programme, will provide funding totalling just over £200k to support six international events being held here during this financial year. The purpose of this programme is to complement the funding already provided by DETI to the following events

- Ulster Rally 2013;
- NI Open Challenge Golf
- International Netball Festival
- Northern European Gymnastics Championships
- International Cross Country
- U21s Men's Hockey Four Nations Tournament.

At the time of producing this report there were no plans to extend this programme beyond the pilot year.

5.78 There is an inextricable link between promoting the north of Ireland and the promotion of sport. Sport Matters therefore takes on an international significance as it produces the talented stars of Sport for the future and is the foundation on which a wide range of international quality venues and playing surfaces are developed. This level of development in future years, adding to that which has preceded, makes the North an attractive venue for world class events in its own right but also in conjunction with facilities in the South, taking Rugby World Cup as the prime example going forward.

5.79 That said, in light of the transfer of responsibility for Government events policy and funding for events, including sporting events, from DCAL to DETI and the NI Tourist Board, it is clear that the principle consideration on events will be tourism and the economic pay back that visitors from outside the North will bring to the local economy. This key consideration carries with it the risk that sports events that do not have an international tourist profile might be excluded from priorities for spending. Where there is a positive spin-off for sports from events and encouragement to participate in sports from international events, this may be abated to a degree if locally organised and well supported events by the sporting public in the north, do not attract DETI and Tourist Board funding attention.

5.80 The need therefore is to either ensure a level playing field for all events and a balance of funding between major international tourist events and local events inherent to the NI sporting community, or to recognise that there is a need to run a parallel policy and fund that concentrates on local events that will have only local sporting benefits to offer, for example the bid for the 'Visit Belfast' World Boxing Convention 2015.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON TOURISM AND SPORTS EVENTS

There is an inextricable link between promoting the north of Ireland and the promotion of sport;

Sport Matters therefore takes on an international significance, producing talented stars of Sport for the future and the development of a wide range of international quality venues and playing surfaces;

The north of Ireland has already attracted and been involved in major international sports events;

The North has proved it can stage a wide range and standard of world-class events;

Being realistic for our future aspirations, there is however great potential considering current partnership working to attract the Rugby World Cup to Ireland in 2023, also the prospect of the Women's World Cup in 2017 and the confirmation of the Open Golf Championship coming to Portrush;

The risk that sports events that do not have an international tourist profile might be excluded from priorities for spending; and

There is potentially a need to separate out another policy and fund that concentrates on local events or others that will have only local sporting benefits to offer.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON TOURISM AND SPORTS EVENTS

That the Executive and Departments actively pursue international sporting events for the future as a benefit to both the economy of

the North and the promotion of sports participation and active lifestyles;

That the Department considers an emerging potential need to separate out another policy and fund that concentrates on local events or others that will have only local sporting benefits to offer.

****RPA and the Imminent Super Council Structure**

5.81 From the consultation exercise it was clear that respondents had the new super Councils on their radar and along with clear concerns about the impact the new larger and powerful bodies would have for the vision that Sport Matters embodies. This included that sport and physical activity and the associated health, social and community benefits, should be retained as a priority for future planning and investment. All the responses said that the implementation of Sport Matters needed to be reconsidered within the context of the 11 super council structures and the community planning requirement.

5.82 It is important therefore that critical foundations and parameters are rehearsed again. Fundamentally, the RPA recommendation relating to sport connects primarily to the existing responsibility of District Councils statutorily for the development of sport and provision of sporting and leisure facilities and activities, at the local community level. As an outcome, the recommendation provides an expectation of closer collaboration between central Government bodies such as Sport NI and any new District Council structure, with regard to the planning and provision of local sports and leisure facilities and/or sports development programmes. What it does not provide for is any transfer of central public funds, other resources or functions.

5.83 In the absence of early implementation of the RPA recommendations and establishment of a revised Councils structure, DCAL approved through Sport NI the Active Communities Programme as a practical means of enhancing existing collaborative working relationships and to demonstrate what closer co-operation would look like in the post RPA scenario. The Active Communities Programme has led the way as an investment programme that seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full-time and part-time sports coaches and leaders to deliver activities within the community and club settings at local level across the North, with a view to increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among under-represented groups. This is an exemplary precedent in regional and local collaboration.

5.84 This prime example of the response to RPA and delivery of local sporting needs, is delivering investment to 11 consortia of District councils (based on RPA Model 11b) and so far has created 116 new coaching posts and over 225,000 participants (2.42million participations) have benefitted from the activities delivered across the North. The lesson is that going forward, the indications are that *Sport Matters* and the new Council structures and functions (particularly Community Planning) are compatible but dependent on a high degree of understanding, dedication and commitment to the benefits that sport brings to the wider community.

5.85 To ensure a successful ‘matrimony’ between regional and local sporting requirements and pressures there is an imperative that the new Councils are fully signed up to *Sport Matters* and that there is early commitment placed on the resources of Councils to deliver sport and its associated benefits. Additionally, Departments, Sport NI, the SMMG and SMIGs will need to assess how the approach to *Sport Matters* implementation needs to be adjusted or refined, balanced against an informed understanding of the ‘new’ functions of the super councils and an assessment of Councils’ understanding how to deliver sport in a sustained fashion taking account of established priorities. All of these will require the establishment of co-operative communication networks that will produce an equitable platform for super Council interaction in the development of succeeding sports strategies, particularly where Government priorities signal key interventions at the local level.

5.86 The imperative of Community Planning from April 2015 under the new Councils’ structure will provide a significant challenge to the relevance and priority status of the Strategy. However the Review Team is confident that the success factors that can be attributed to the Strategy will have an enabling influence that will allow Sport Matters to be a central factor in the consideration of local sporting needs.

5.87 Community Planning will provide a framework within which Councils, Departments, statutory bodies and other relevant agencies and sectors can work together to develop and implement a shared vision for promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of their area based on effective engagement with the community.

5.88 In summary, Community Planning is a process led by councils in conjunction with partners and communities to develop and implement a shared vision for their area. A long term vision which relates to all aspects of community life and which also involves working together to plan and deliver better services which make a real difference to people's lives.

5.89 The Review Team is confident to suggest that this description is not outwith the spirit and intentions of the vision, values and principles of the Sport Matters Strategy. Some respondents to the consultation felt that the changing landscape to be brought about through the new Councils structure led to a need for the Strategy to be re-written completely at this point. Rather, the Review Team argues that the existence of this Strategy, in its midstream status, will be an enabling foundation as community planning in relation to sports needs embeds itself at community level. In time, community planning might prove itself to be a useful contributor to future sports strategies. It is cautioned however that a high level of transparent co-operative and accommodating engagement to develop partnership approaches for the future will be an immediate objective.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS ON SPORT AND RPA

Clear concerns exist about the impact the new larger and powerful bodies would have for the vision that Sport Matters proclaims;

The implementation of Sport Matters needs to be assured within the

context of the 11 super Councils structure and the community planning requirement;

The RPA recommendation on Sport provides an expectation of closer collaboration between central Government bodies and a new District Council structure, with regard to the planning and provision of local sports and leisure facilities and/or sports development programmes.

It does not provide for any transfer of central public funds, other resources or functions;

The 'Active Communities Programme' has led the way as an investment programme, delivered in co-operation with the 11 District Council model, with a view to increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among under-represented groups;

The Sport NI 'Active Communities Programme' is an exemplary precedent in regional and local collaboration;

It is imperative to ensure that the new councils are fully signed up to Sport Matters and that there is early commitment placed on the resources of councils to deliver sport and its associated benefits;

Progress will require the establishment of co-operative communication networks that will produce an equitable platform for Super Council interaction in the development of succeeding sports strategies, particularly where Government priorities signal key interventions at the local level;

The success factors that can be attributed to the Strategy will be an enabling influence that will allow Sport Matters to be a central factor in the consideration of local sporting needs; and

A welcome synergy exists where the community planning process led by Councils will implement area-based long term vision on aspects of community life which make a real difference to people's lives; this is not outwith the spirit and intentions of the vision, values and principles of the Sport Matters Strategy.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON SPORT AND RPA

That the Department engage with DOE/Councils to ensure that the benefits of the PETPSE priority and the benefits of sport are central to considerations for future local level funding and community planning.

Supportive actions:-

That the Department Leads a Sports interface event that will champion sport, its achievements and all its associated public benefits, as a community priority with District Councils;

That the Department engage with DOE/Councils to ensure that the benefits of the PETPSE priority and the benefits of sport are communicated to the centre of considerations of future Local level funding and community planning; and

That the SMIGs through Sport NI, engage with the New Councils with a view to achieving a role with community planning process in the interest of maintaining the profile of Sport Matters and the priority of sports objectives for the Local level.