



From: Beverley Wall on behalf of
Tracy Meharg Permanent Secretary

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Mr William Humphrey MLA
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
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Via Email: Committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear William,

FURTHER COMMITTEE QUESTIONS – SPORTS SUSTAINABILITY FUND

I refer to your correspondence dated 22 November which seeks further information regarding the Sports Sustainability Fund following Sport NI's evidence at the Public Accounts Committee meeting on 18 November 2021.

The Committee has asked for further information on three areas and I have addressed each of the questions below:

1. *Details on the delegation limits of grant awards: that is the maximum amount Ms McKeown, CE Sport NI, can authorise; the maximum amount the Board of Sport NI can authorise and the amount, over which, the Department must authorise.*
 - For both revenue and capital grants the Sport NI Chief Executive has delegated authority up to a maximum of £499,999. Any recommendations to award funding over this amount must be referred by the Sport NI Chief Executive to the Sport NI Board who have delegated authority for awards of £500,000 or more. If the Sport NI Board subsequently approves any



awards over £500,000 Sport NI is required to seek approval from the Department.

2. *An update on the allocation of funding to the four major sporting governing bodies, out of the total £23.01m awarded: i.e. Rugby, Football, GAA and Golf. The following information outlines the funding distribution:*

- **IFA - £6,555,593** (£1,715,431 awarded to the IFA itself and £4,840,162 allocated to 77 clubs)
- **Rugby - £2,235,530** (£1,509,539 awarded to IRFU Ulster Branch itself and £725,991 allocated to 26 clubs)
- **Ulster GAA - £7,380,382** (£1,448,122 awarded to Ulster GAA itself and £5,932,260 allocated to 180 clubs)
- **Golf Ireland - £4,208,286** (allocated to 25 clubs)

3. *Information on Sport NI's wider funding programmes for sports and funding to cricket:*

- The key wider funding programmes that Sport NI are currently administering are Supporting Sport to Build Back Better, Sporting Winners, Transition Programme 2022/23 and Building Better Sports Facilities.
- A detailed update on the progress of these funding programmes and details of the funding distributed to Cricket in recent years is set out in Annex 1.

I hope that the detail provided against each of the questions gives the Committee sufficient clarity.

Yours sincerely,

BEVERLEY WALL
DEPUTY SECRETARY
Strategic Policy and Professional Service



ANNEX 1

Information on Sport NI's wider funding programmes for sports and funding to cricket

Supporting Sport to Build Back Better

Sport NI's National Lottery funded 'Supporting Sport to Build Back Better' initiative was established to contribute towards the achievement of the following outcomes:

- A strengthened, more connected sporting and recreation sector with increased capability; and
- An innovative sporting and recreation sector, confident with new ways of working.

The aims of this initiative is to '*strengthen the sports sector, improving resilience and increasing capability within the sports sector.*' The following objectives have been established for achievement in the period to 31 March 2022:

- Addressing the capability needs of sporting organisations across Northern Ireland to strengthen the sector against the impacts of COVID-19.
- Sustain the viability of sporting organisations in NI.
- Enable sporting organisations to innovatively adapt to, and plan for, a sporting landscape necessarily changed due to the anticipated long-lasting impacts of COVID-19.
- Enable sports organisations to positively impact their communities in the wake of COVID-19.
- Contribute to improved partnership working across the sports sector.

Grant funding of £2.9m has been awarded to achieve these objectives; and £333k in contracts let to provide support under Building Capability elements.

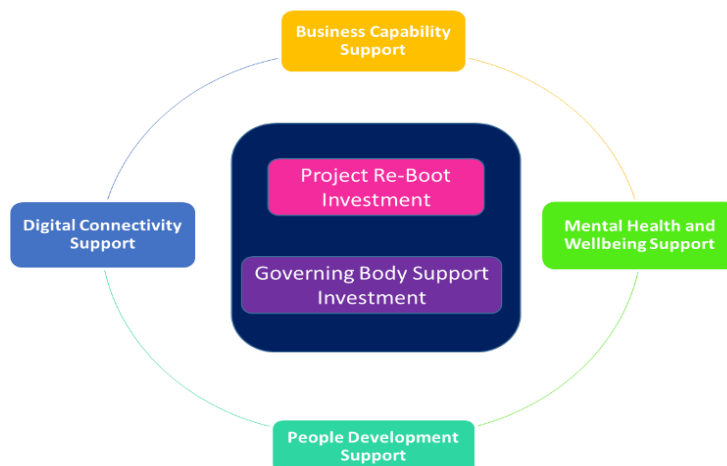
Sporting organisations will be able to avail of awards such as:

- Project Re-Boot: Team Up – grants of up to £25k to sports clubs and sporting organisations;
- Project Re-Boot: Activate in partnership with Crowdfunder UK – small grants of up to £5k
- Sporting Clubs extensions – grants to governing bodies of sport;
- Governing Body Support Programme – grants to governing bodies of sport.

'Supporting Sport to Build Back Better' provides a multi-strand approach to supporting the sporting system with an Outcomes Based Accountability Monitoring and Evaluation Framework being implemented alongside. As shown in Figure 1, it has two

main areas of grant investment and four areas of support for the sporting sector to engage new and re-engage participants.

Figure 1: Supporting Sport to Build Back Better – programme elements



Currently Project Re-Boot: Activate is open for applications. Support is also available through the Building Capability elements for Mental Health & Wellbeing, Business Capability, People Development, Digital Connectivity and Monitoring & Evaluation.

Sporting Winners

This is a one-year extension programme supporting Governing Bodies that were originally supported from 2017-21. This programme aimed to support the development of performance programmes that supported athletes and coach elevation to world class level and enabled them to compete at senior international level.

Awards were made to 18 sports on 1 April 2021 and the programme runs until 31 March 2022. The total investment in the programme is £2,555,907.

Transition Programme 2022/23

The Sport NI Board have approved up to £5.5million of National Lottery funded investment for the Transition Programme 2022-23. The programme will offer recognised Governing Bodies the opportunity to access investment to support their Club or Performance environments during 2022-23. The programme will offer a transition from the following investment programmes:

- Club Environment Support:
 - Sporting Clubs Programme (SCP)



- Governing Body Support Programme (GBSP)
- Performance Environment Support:
 - Sporting Winners Programme (SWP)

It will also offer recognised Governing Bodies not currently in receipt of the above investments the opportunity to express an interest in investment and if applicable make a submission.

Building Better Sports Facilities

The Building Better Sports Facilities programme closed on 4 October 2021 but was originally open to the following organisations who either own or operate their own sports facilities:

- Sports clubs (affiliated to an Sport NI recognised governing body of sport); and
- Community sports organisations.

The programme seeks to fund, or help to fund, such things as:

- General improvement works, including improvements/ modifications to Changing and toilet facilities;
- Facilities maintenance equipment;
- Storage facilities & containers;
- Access & egress projects, including improvements to:
 - Entrances/Exits (internal or external);
 - Car parks;
 - Pathways; and
 - Fencing.
- Environmental sustainability projects, including improvements to:
 - Heating systems;
 - Plumbing;
 - Power supply;
 - Ventilation; and
 - Insulation.
- Works to enable your facility to operate more efficiently within Covid-19 guidelines.

Successful applicants are currently being contacted to confirm the information submitted in the application form e.g. security of tenure and costs. If these are in order the application design team will be introduced to CPD who will take them through the procurement exercise.



The current available budget of £1.175m is greatly exceeded by demand and further funds will be/can be bid for in future years.

Payments made to Sport of Cricket 2017-22

The table below sets out the amount of support that has been made available to Cricket year on year through Sport NI administered funding schemes:

Funding Scheme	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22 To date	Grand Total
Active Awards	£11,692.00					£11,692.00
Active Clubs Programme	£80,726.00	£85,820.00	£32,146.00			£198,692.00
Athlete Investment Programme	£21,000.00					£21,000.00
Business Case Investment			£58,590.00	£70,468.00		£129,058.00
Performance Focus	£1,345.00					£1,345.00
Pitch Maintenance Programme 2018		£15,522.00	£20,868.00			£36,390.00
Pitch Maintenance Programme 2017		£9,870.00				£9,870.00
Project Re-Boot: Team Up					£66,995.00	£66,995.00
Ring Fenced	£77,610.00	£4,990.00				£82,600.00
Sporting Clubs	£26,000.00	£74,650.00	£141,950.00	£120,821.00	£130,596.00	£494,017.00
Sports Hardship Fund				£91,000.00		£91,000.00
Sports Sustainability Fund				£330,119.00		£330,119.00
Grand Total	£218,373.00	£190,852.00	£253,554.00	£612,408.00	£197,591.00	£1,472,778.00