

ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

Monday, 7th March, 2022

MEETING OF ACTIVE BELFAST LIMITED BOARD

(Held remotely via Microsoft Teams)

Attendees

Directors: Mr. J. McGuigan (Chairperson)
Councillor Corr
Councillor McLaughlin
Councillor McCann
Mr. C. Morrison
Mr. P. Boyle
Mr. K. Ellison and
Mrs. K. McCullough.

Officers: Mr. P. McGrattan, Leisure Development Manager;
Mr. N. Munnis, Partnership Manager;
Mr. G. Graham, Democratic Services Assistant.

GLL: Mr. J. Michael, Business Manager; and
Ms. J. Pope, Head of Service.

Apologies

An apology was reported on behalf of Councillor Newton.

Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 17th January were approved. It was reported that those minutes had been noted by the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 21st January 2022.

Matters Arising (ABLB 17th January 2022)

The Chairperson welcomed Councillor C. McCann and Mr. C. Morrison as newly appointed Directors to the Board. Mr. Ellison stated that the issue in regard to the graffiti removal at Loughside Recreation Centre had not been addressed and also that he had not received any update from the BCC Head of Corporate HR in relation to queries previously raised about BCC/GLL HR policy alignment. In response, the Partnership Manager agreed to contact the Head of Corporate HR. The Partnership Manager confirmed further that he was aware that the graffiti at Loughside had not been removed and that he was dealing with the delay currently.

Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest were reported.

Director attendance statement

The Board noted that there were no issues to report in terms of non-attendance of Directors at meetings.

Proposals for Future Board Meeting Agenda Items

The Board noted that there were no proposed items for inclusion on the agenda at future meetings of the Board.

Six monthly report - BCC Sports Development Unit update

The Leisure Development Manager provided the Board with an update on the delivery of sports and physical activity programmes following restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The Board was advised that sports development programmes were being restored gradually and that the sports camps had been particularly well received by young people and had been running over the Halloween, Christmas and half term periods. He stated that plans were in place to expand the programme further, as operational restrictions continued to return to normal.

The Board was informed that the Boxing Strategy had been impacted significantly by the Covid pandemic and was, however, continuing to be rolled out under revised operating procedures.

The Board was informed also of the use made of online platforms to provide training for coaches, which had accelerated the qualification of coaches to deliver many of the programmes being offered. The Leisure Development Manager highlighted the fact that some of the physical programmes had been impacted, adversely, by the Covid-19 pandemic, including the cross-country events, which it was hoped would re-commence in 2022-23.

The Board was provided with an update on the development of the Stadium Benefits Initiative, which was a joint enterprise between, DfC, BCC, GAA and the IFA. He stated further that, activities associated with quarters one and two, had been impacted, adversely, by Covid-19 but that online engagement had proved successful in the delivery of a number of coach education courses, including the identification of new development areas which had been used to expand the initiative. He referred to some of the on-line delivery mechanisms such as the use of collaborative working and on-line webinars some of which, including nutritional guidance, had proved very popular.

The Leisure Development Manager provided the Board with further information in regard to the pitches partner agreements under which seven pitches were being managed by third party clubs/organisations. He stated that community assets transfer was at an advanced stage with two clubs namely, Rosario and Clarendon. The Board was advised that work was ongoing with the remaining five clubs being supported in terms of their governance and infrastructure requirements. Board members were informed that the GAA facilities were being utilised well and that a meeting of the GAA joint management board had taken place recently.

In terms of the Support for Sport programme, the Leisure Development Manager reported that the grants application process, attached to the programme, had opened recently and would remain open until the end of March 2022. He provided the Board with a list of the

various funding grants available, under a range of categories, and stated that organisations were being encouraged to apply. In terms of organisational structure, it was reported that two Sports Development Officers would be providing support for clubs throughout the grant application process. The Leisure Development Manager informed the Board further that a tender exercise would be commencing shortly to seek assistance with the design and delivery of the Sports and Physical Activity Strategy. The Board Members were informed that delivery of the strategy would require the creation of a management Board, with input from relevant stakeholders.

In response to a question from a Board member in regard to how it was proposed that Council staff would engage with GLL to promote the grants scheme and maximise uptake, the Leisure Development Manager stated that his team would be engaging with the GLL outreach officers and would be setting up a number of workshops and webinars as a means to promote the scheme and, where appropriate, expanded use of the Council's leisure centres and recreational facilities.

The Board noted the information provided by the Leisure Development Manager and thanked him for the update.

2022-23 Q3 KPI Scorecard report

Mr. J. Michael and Ms. J. Pope (GLL) attended in connection with this item and were welcomed by the Chairperson.

The Business Manager provided the Board with an overview of GLL's performance in regard to the scorecard. He stated that Loughside had remained closed, over the period of the pandemic, and consequently no statistics were available for that facility.

The Board was informed that restrictions, as a result of Covid-19, had impacted negatively on business during the period October – December 2021 and had resulted in a reduction in income, facility utilisation and user numbers. The Board noted that, during December 2021, a reduction in membership numbers had been recorded which the Business Manager stated was a normal and anticipated seasonal trend.

The Business Manager reported that membership had decreased slightly from the previous quarter and that the swim school had recorded a similar reduction in membership numbers. The Board was informed that 2022 to date was showing a considerable recovery in terms of membership, with a target of 20,000 being achieved ahead of schedule. In terms of occupancy, which included main halls, studios and pitches, the Business Manager stated that group exercises had returned to studios which had previously been delivered, during Covid restrictions, in sports halls. He reported that indoor sports activities had risen by 9% and studio occupancy by 5%, while pitch usage remained static over the quarter, with a slight reduction in usage during December 2021. The Board was informed that pitch utilisation was dominated by the 5 pm -10 pm (Monday – Friday) peak slots and that group exercises continued to perform well.

A Board member stated that, while the programmes were both extensive and varied, there was no information contained, within the report, to identify who had instigated the programmes and how the success of the various programmes offered was being monitored and measured. The Board member requested information on how the various programmes

were being targeted to ensure that marginalised and hard to reach groups were being included.

In response to the questions raised by the Board member, the Business Manager reported that the programmes offered consisted of both GLL programmes and those initiated by external bodies utilising the centres and delivered by GLL on their behalf. The Business Manager provided the Board with an extensive list of communication methods used to target its customers and user groups, including the use made of client feedback as a means to measure both the success and satisfaction levels of the programmes offered.

The GLL Head of Service highlighted the extensive range of management information data generated by GLL. She pointed out further that, when introducing new programmes, existing class/customer displacement was a key consideration. The Business Manager stated that GLL continued to engage with community development groups to assess local needs and would be able to produce further detailed information on the usage by particular groups.

The Board noted the information provided by GLL and welcomed the improvement in the statistics on usage following the relaxation of Covid restrictions.

Six monthly report - Underrepresented Target Groups

The Board considered the undernoted report which had been prepared by GLL.

“1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide Board members with a progress update on the participation of underrepresented target groups in centres managed by GLL in Belfast from August 2021 to February 2022.**

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the board considers and formally records receipt of the information presented below.**

3.0 Main Report

- 3.1 GLL is a leading social enterprise. One of the core priorities of GLL is to ensure full access for all members of the community and encourage regular participation amongst traditionally under represented target groups.**

- 3.2 GLL employ a Regional Business Manager, whose key focus is to drive participation and usage, ensuring more people from every background are regularly and meaningfully engaged and taking part in sport and physical activity. Three Community Sports Officers also support the implementation and review of participation programmes and another staff member is responsible for group exercise.**

- 3.3 Previous targets to increase usage by 2% each year have been reinstated as Covid restrictions have been relaxed and early signs highlight the positive growth across the city. Each month represents opportunities to welcome back more participants that have been impacted by the pandemic and GLL continue to report on usage figures and utilisation to ABL & BCC.
- 3.4 GLL is committed to support community access offering varied opportunities delivered in centres that are accessible, affordable and not inhibiting.
- 3.5 GLL re-invests through the GLL Foundations (Sport and Communities) that provide and sustain support for community cohesion and talented individuals.
- 3.6 GLL sustain a positive contribution to the local economy through investment in a workforce that is diverse, passionate, trained and skilled operating in well-managed, maintained and resourced centres.
- 3.7 53% of Belfast GLL members benefit from concessionary charges thereby helping to remove affordability as a barrier to participation.
- 3.8 People with disabilities**

 - 3.8.1 GLL continue to partner with ‘Menshed’ by offering Girdwood Community Hub and Whiterock where the focus is on improving mental health for men.
 - 3.8.2 GLL have delivered a mental health programme in partnership with Action Mental Health with the aim of having a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of 50 programme participants across the city.
 - 3.8.3 GLL continue to support the social enterprise NOW group in the delivery of a ‘Lets Get Fit Now’ programme which takes place in Falls Leisure Centre. This programme offers participants with a learning disability the opportunity to participate in tailored fitness classes and gym inductions.
 - 3.8.4 The NOW group are also contributing to the work in Olympia Leisure Centre by running the café provision under their ‘Loaf’ brand.
 - 3.8.5 Orchardville who support people with learning disability or autism to live, learn and work operate the café spaces at Andersonstown and Grove. They also plan to open at Lisnasharragh in March.
 - 3.8.6 Girdwood Community Hub in partnership with Disability Sport NI provides a dedicated disability sports hub catering for a range of wheelchair-based sports and activities including Wheelchair Basketball, Powerchair Football, Boccia and New Age Curling.

- 3.8.7** Whiterock Leisure Centre supports disability groups in Upper Springfield by offering sports and fun fitness sessions twice a week.
- 3.8.8** Ballysillan Leisure Centre supports the Northern Ireland Powerchair Squad in their preparation for involvement in the World Cup in Australia which will take place in 2023.
- 3.8.9** In January 2022, Ballysillan hosted the Irish FA Powerchair football All Ireland Championships with over 200 participants in attendance.
- 3.8.10** The GLL Sport Foundation in Belfast currently supports 3 disabled and Paralympic athletes. Athletes benefit from financial awards of up to £1,250 which will contribute to their individual coaching, travel, competition and equipment costs.
- 3.8.11** In recent years the GSF programme has supported athletes that have competed at Olympic, Paralympic and Commonwealth Games. Paralympic middle-distance athlete Dr. Michael McKillop is the Ambassador of the programme in Northern Ireland. Michael has successfully won four Paralympic Gold medals and is a role model to all our locally supported athletes.
- 3.8.12** Brook Leisure Centre has a swimming pool specifically designed to cater for those with sensory needs and those with wide range of disabilities. The centre pool runs weekly quiet swims currently attracting approximately 20 to 30 participants in each session.
- 3.8.13** In addition Brook Leisure Centre supports the delivery of Air Venture inclusive sessions which are designed to meet the sensory requirements of participants.
- 3.8.14** GLL have a partnership with Swim Buddies to deliver swimming lessons to those with Autism but it has not been possible to deliver these sessions during the pandemic due to the requirement for coaches to be in the water with participants.

3.9 Women and Girls

- 3.9.1** 48.0% of all current Belfast members are female (15,032).
- 3.9.2** In partnership with Irish FA, GLL provide female only football sessions at four centres across the city through the Shooting Stars Programme.
- 3.9.3** GLL have supported Netball NI in the delivery of their social netball programme and are also in discussion about the potential of Lisnasharragh becoming a regular training base for the senior international squad.
- 3.9.4** GLL supports 88 female athletes through the GSF programme (58.3%) to enable them to compete at national and international level in their respective sports.

- 3.9.5 GLL works in partnership with WISPA in the delivery of female only classes at Andersonstown, Avoniel, Girdwood and Olympia.
- 3.9.6 Brook Leisure Centre delivers an after schools multisport and fitness programme for girls and also works in partnership with local GAA clubs to deliver a Gaelic for mothers programme.

3.10 Older People

- 3.10.1 13.4% of all current Belfast members are aged 60+
- 3.10.2 Free access for over 60's before 11am Monday to Friday.
- 3.10.3 GLL have a daily programme of activity targeted at and suitable for older people.
- 3.10.4 GLL deliver chronic disease (Cancer & Cardiac) rehabilitation programmes, whilst also supporting and hosting Diabetes and Strength & Balance programmes. Many of the referrals for these interventions are older people.
- 3.10.5 GLL now delivers lower intensity physical activity programming designed to target referrals coming off the rehabilitation programmes and is also suitable for all members for a lower level/low impact workout. In addition to this walking groups have become part of the mainstream group exercise offering so can be accessed by the wider membership and not just those on PARS.
- 3.10.6 In January GLL introduced a number of new active aging mornings across the city. They include activities such as danderball, pickleball, table tennis, boccia and water polo. These are being delivered at Avoniel, Falls, Girdwood, Lisnasharragh, Olympia, Shankill.
- 3.10.7 Strategic partnerships and working groups established around chronic conditions pathways to ensure collaboration with key organisations such as Public Health Agency, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust and charitable partners.
- 3.10.8 Girdwood partners with Chest, Heart and Stroke Association in the offering of weekly low intensity exercise along with arts and crafts.
- 3.10.9 GLL have set a date for the return of Club Games for Friday 30th September 2022. After two years of cancellation, due to the pandemic, the centres are looking forward to this returning. The event will coincide with International Day of Older Persons.

3.11 Families

- 3.11.1 GLL have created a balanced programme of activities across all centres allowing families to participate. GLL have created a basic

group exercise offering which permits junior members to exercise with older family members.

3.11.2 Junior group exercise class have also been introduced into the group exercise timetable in February 2022.

3.11.3 Adult and Child gym sessions have been added across the city which permits children as young at 9 to attend the gym as long as they are accompanied and supervised by a parent.

3.11.4 Junior and family products such as water slides, Surf Belfast and the Aqua Play at Andersonstown, Air Venture at Brook and Aqua Splash at Lisnasharragh are all meeting the demands of families, particularly over the weekend and holiday periods.

3.11.5 Birthday parties, after being restricted throughout the pandemic, have been reintroduced with all centres offering a wide range of provision including bouncy castles, climbing wall, sports (indoor and outdoor) along with the new products mentioned above.

3.11.6 Wet centres provide family fun sessions as part of their weekly programme that includes floats and inflatables.

3.11.7 Brook Leisure Centre offers weekly pool parties and family aqua aerobics sessions.

3.11.8 The family membership has been offered since August 2021 and to date 124 memberships have been sold which equates to 478 members. This membership option is now being reviewed as the six month testing period has now passed.

4.0 Decision(s) Required

4.1 That the board considers and formally records receipt of the information presented above.”

The Board noted the information provided by GLL and recorded formally receipt of the report.

GLL KPI targets for following year

The Business Manager provided the Board with the KPI targets for 2022-23, under the headings of Business, Membership and Occupation. He stated that the targets were essentially a re-setting of baselines following business disruption during the pandemic.

The Board stated that it would be useful to have comparative data presented and was advised of the intention to reintroduce the standard ‘red, amber, green year to date analysis’ from quarter one of 2022/23.

The Board noted the KPI targets, for 2022-23, submitted by GLL.

Six monthly review of ABL Companies House returns

The Partnership Manager reminded the Board of its legal obligation to submit updated returns to Companies House. The Partnership Manager provided the Board with a list of its current Membership stating that a number of vacant positions remained to be filled pending completion of the ongoing governance review. The Partnership Manager confirmed that returns to Companies House were complete and up to date and that new director registrations/resignations, following recent changes to NIPSA TU and elected member representation, would be processed as soon as possible.

BCC Review of Leisure Operating Model Governance Arrangements update

The Board noted that the review of the Leisure governance model was on schedule and that the final report would be presented to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee on the 25th March 2022 with ratification, by the full Council, anticipated at its April meeting, subject to the outcome of Council consideration and that a full report should be available, for presentation to the Board, at its next meeting on 11th April 2022.

The Board noted the update provided by the Partnership Manager.

Chairperson