

Response to Strategy for sport in N.Ireland 2007-2017.

The strategy and response must be taken against the background of the following Ministerial statement.

Today sport in N I is facing major challenges and significant difficulties. Evidence suggests that participation rates are amongst the lowest in the U.K. and falling and that many of our sporting facilities require substantial development and modernisation.

① I agree in respect of this question  
I will answer questions ②, ③ and ④ in the affirmative

Regarding question ⑤ the targets proposed therein are laudable with emphasis on Sport in education Performance Sport sports facilities and role of District Councils

I am most surprised that the importance and role of Clubs and the volunteers and coaches therein have not been specifically included. To link participation and performance, the targets and key steps must be underpinned resourced and translated into action by a pragmatic and flexible approach. Let us take a case study - a remarkable talent has been identified by a Club coach in an Olympic sport - that coach knows that he or she cannot progress or raise the particular athlete to a world class level. Somehow a coach and appropriate training facilities should be found for the athlete and appropriate funding without much red tape. Time is of the essence in many of such cases

To achieve this object a Multi-sport High Performance Officer\* or Director with a background in sport participation should be appointed with total discretion to act within an appropriate budget or limits subject to reporting back to S I G on the action taken and the resulting progress.

Regarding question ⑦ I note the financial role played by District Councils in appendix 4 but their input in this regard must be considered in light of the fact that they are making Sports Clubs in general and even C A S Clubs pay RATES This does not happen in England Scotland and Wales and is unjust and unfair to our Clubs coaches and volunteers. Appropriate Legislation must be introduced or some other measures taken to remedy this deplorable and incongruous situation and anomaly.. Time is of the essence.

Signed  
J.L. Ian Bamford  
Past Chairman Ulster Sports Trust  
Board Member N.I. Sports Forum  
Past President G U I and former International  
Joint Founder of Newry swimming Club

*J.L. Bamford*

3/1/2008

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\* MSHPO

