



STADIA COMMUNITY BENEFITS INITIATIVE INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

Blueprint Development Consultancy
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1: INTRODUCTION

In March 2016 the Council, DfC and IFA signed an Agreement setting out their respective commitments to the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI). “The overarching purpose of the ‘Agreement is to ensure that the public investment in regional stadia and surrounding areas improves the quality of life now and for future generations, especially those who are socially marginalised and excluded across the city’. In 2019 the GAA joined the partnership with the aim of maximising the potential benefits of Casement Park. The agreement is for a ten-year period with financial commitments from Belfast City Council and IFA in place to the end of March 2026 and a recognition of the GAA’s investment of £500,000 over ten years in Belfast to support it’s Gaelfast strategy as an in-kind contribution to the partnership. The partners have also reached out to the IRFU over the years but to date the IRFU have not joined the partnership.

All partners are fully embedded in the partnership governance structures at Communications Board, Delivery Board, Policy and Performance Group.

The context to the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative is provided in DfC’s investment of £130 million in the stadium redevelopment programme, Belfast City Council’s annual contributions to local grassroots clubs and the priorities set out in the Belfast Agenda, particularly the second priority: “Living in Belfast – creating a great city and neighbourhood living experience”. The SCBI initiative works to help the major sporting codes in the city ensure that their stadia act as good neighbours to the community around them and reach out to the wider community to ensure they benefit.

The Agreement sets out the SCBI purpose and objectives.

“The overarching purpose is to:

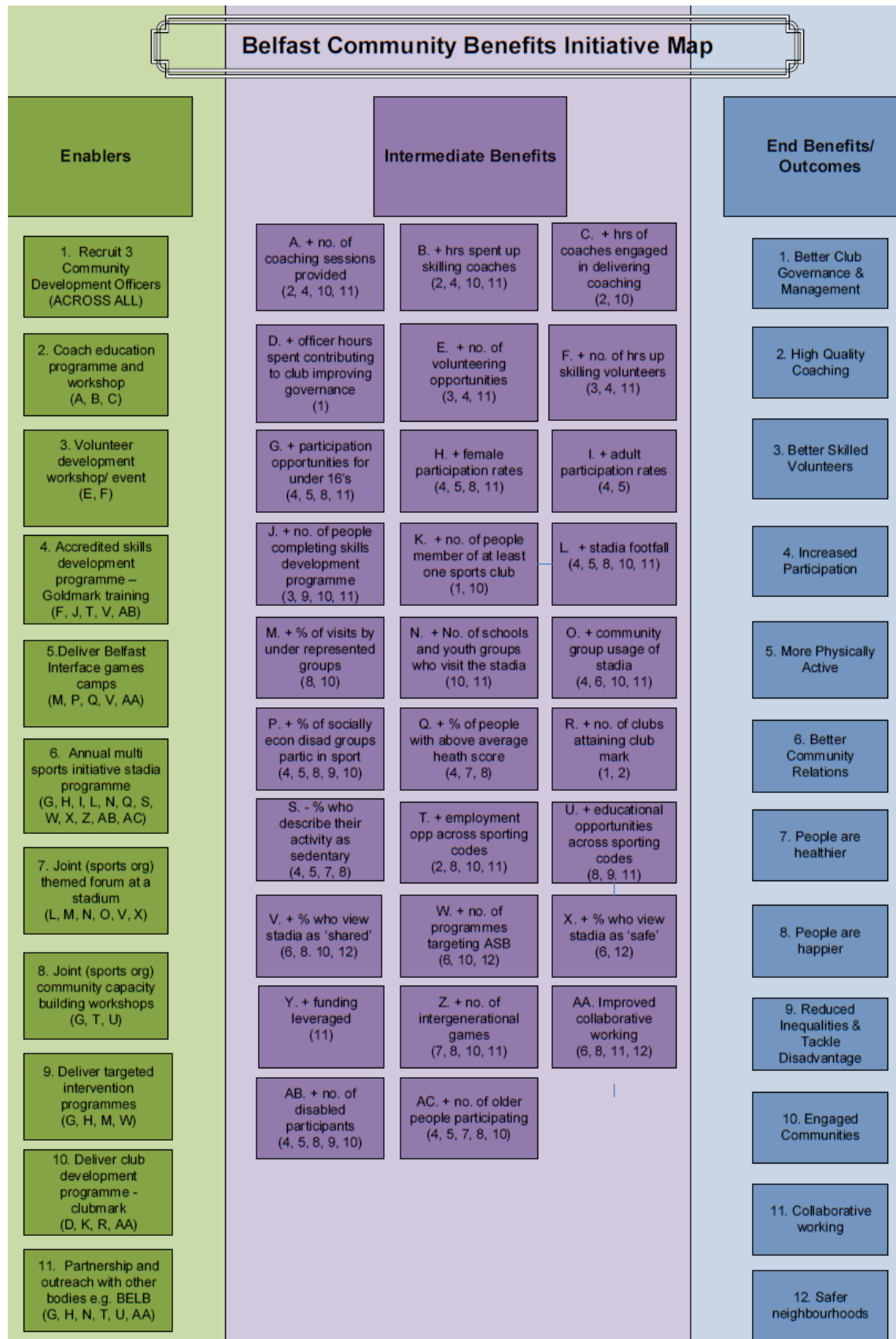
Ensure that the public investment in regional stadia and surrounding areas improves the quality of life now and for future generations, especially those who are socially marginalised and excluded across the city”.

The objectives of the Agreement are:

SCBI Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain welcoming, safe and accessible public facilities and spaces which are integrated into the daily life of local neighbourhoods, and attractive to all residents of Belfast, especially those within one mile of the National Football stadium, and visitors to the city
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce health inequalities in the city by encouraging and enabling more people to be more active, more often, now and for generations to come
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to a wide range of social outcomes including promoting good relations, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving employability.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribute to government policy objectives, as laid out in the NI Executive’s Programme for Government as well as the Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure’s mission statement to promote equality, and to tackle poverty and social exclusion.

In April 2017 Copius Consulting prepared a 'Baseline Assessment of Stadia Benefits Initiative Report', which further developed these objectives outlining a Benefits Realisation Plan with 11 enablers, and 19 intermediate benefits which would deliver the objectives above and which would be implemented through annual action plans which focus on single and joint actions, see p6 and p10. The plan is specific to Belfast with increased focus on the geographical areas of the stadia. In the early phases of the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative (SCBI) 2016-2019 the Action Plan was solely focused on IFA. In 2019 with GAA joining the partnership it was agreed by the partners that 2019 would become a transition year with both IFA and GAA actions focusing largely on their sporting codes with joint actions developed and delivered in 2020/21 and 2021/22. Delivery is managed through monthly meetings of the Delivery Board, which reports quarterly to the Policy and Performance Board, reports are based on achievement of the intermediate benefits listed overleaf in the Community Benefits Initiative Map, achievement of the programme outcomes detailed on page 12 and financial targets.

Table 1: INTERMEDIATE BENEFITS



The role of the Policy and Performance Group is to oversee the successful delivery of the project, it also works to ensure that GAA and IFA focus on delivering the higher-level outcomes/end benefits in addition to the intermediate benefits. The Policy and Performance Group provides the governance function for the SCBI and provides a more high-level focus on the outcomes/end benefits listed below:

Table 2: SCBI OUTCOMES

Stadia Community Benefits Initiative	
Number	End Benefits / Outcomes
1	Better club governance and management
2	High quality coaching
3	Better skilled volunteers
4	Increased participation
5	More physically active
6	Better community relations
7	People are healthier
8	People are happier
9	Reduced inequalities and tackle disadvantage
10	Engaged communities
11	Collaborative working
12	Safer neighbourhoods

2: ANNUAL ACTION PLANS

The SCBI work schedule is implemented through a series of annual action plans. From 2016 to 2019 the SCBI Action Plan was solely focused on IFA delivery, copies of these action plans are provided on page 10 and page 11.

With the GAA joining at the beginning of 2019, the financial year 2019/20 became a transition year for the SCBI, with both sporting codes developing singles actions for delivery and commencing the process of developing a joint action plan.

In November 2019 the SCBI held a workshop to assist the GAA and IFA to develop a joint plan for 2020/21, the purpose of which was to focus on the delivery of the intermediary benefits and the SCBI outcomes/end benefits. The joint action plan focused on delivering across the themes: Better Club Governance and Management; Wellbeing; and Engaged Communities. The implementation of the 20/21 action plan was hampered by the Covid 19 pandemic, the associated restrictions and with all of the GAA staff and some of the IFA staff being furloughed for a large part of the year this made delivery of the actions, intermediate benefits and outcomes very difficult.

2.1. INTERMEDIATE BENEFITS

A summary of the Intermediate Benefits delivered over the first five years of the SCBI, from the commencement of the project in late 2016 to the end of 2021 is summarised below:

Table 3: RESULTS

SCBI Intermediate Benefits	IFA 2017/18	IFA 2019	IFA 2020/21	GAA 2020/21
Number of coaching sessions provided	132	379	846	1,253
Number of coaches engaged in delivering coaching	148	118	133	592
Number of sessions improving club governance	21	60	0	2
Number of volunteering opportunities	651	203	132	215
Participation opportunities for under 16's	2267	7787	2,571	25,848
Female participation rates	421	5964	1,308	9,460
Number of people completing skills development programmes	525	723	843	61
Number of sessions for under-represented groups	225	356	280	308
Number of sessions for school and youth groups	24	62	408	832
Community group usage of the stadium	140	91	0	0
Number of clubs attaining clubmark	0	1	0	0

Educational opportunities	884	1797	252	61
Number of programmes targeting anti-social behaviour	8	11	18	4
Improved collaborative working	203	96	72	43
Number of disabled participants	86	71	16	495
Number of older people participating	263	880	125	18

The Intermediate Benefits are the outputs which will be delivered over the lifetime of the SCBI and allow the IFA, GAA and partners Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities to measure success as the work programme progresses. There have been many successes delivered through the programme to date.

- Coaching has been very successful, there is evidence of significant numbers of coaching sessions being delivered across the first 5 years of the programme. The introduction of minimum operating standards in coaching across both codes is also a direct and significant result of the SCBI, plus the number of coaches has increased substantially across both the IFA and GAA over the first 5 years of the SCBI. In interviews with IFA staff as part of research for the interim report, it was reported that SCBI funding has enabled IFA to roll out and attain the National Coaching Certificate at a much faster pace and free of charge. There's also an added dynamic of adults coaching adults through this certificate. An increased number of referees has been developed across both sporting codes as a result of SCBI.

Due to the covid19 pandemic IFA and GAA worked hard to develop a programme to enable the delivery of coaching online. This has proved very successful with the coaching training reaching a much wider audience, delivering better value for money in the approach and enabling coaches to undertake the training at their convenience. The SCBI funding has enabled this training to be offered free to clubs, resulting in a very substantial uptake, which has also been assisted through the online model that has been used.

- Safeguarding training has also been rolled out widely across both the IFA and GAA, creating a greater awareness and knowledge of safeguarding issues to coaches and volunteers. Safeguarding has long been an area of risk in coaching and volunteer development across sport. GAA and IFA have worked to share expertise and skills to deliver quality training to volunteers and coaches at club level. Coaches have also been trained in recognising signs of vulnerability and neglect in the young people they are coaching, and how to escalate concerns.

The sharing of information and expertise has been essential to the success of delivering coaching through the SCBI and has contributed substantially to developing and cementing the partnership between GAA and IFA.

- The number of Volunteers has increased substantially across both sporting codes as a result of SCBI, both GAA and IFA have indicated that the SCBI budget has enabled them to develop and invest in their volunteers. They have also provided training for volunteers and ex-players to develop new coaches thereby planning for succession and leaving an impact at club level. This has been assisted through volunteers having access to the online training and webinars. The GAA is also currently piloting a structured model for volunteer development which will be accredited through the University of Galway and which will provide UCAS points to young

volunteers. This volunteering model may be rolled out through the SCBI in phase 2 of the programme. Considerable investment was also made through SCBI in delivering training around unconscious bias and equality training.

- There has been a great deal of work carried out through the SCBI in promoting and developing young Girls in sport and Female participation in general, across both sporting codes. The aim has been to increase participation rates and keep girls and young females engaged. There has been a range of successful projects aimed at focusing on female engagement which is broader than physique and nutrition. These include: shooting stars and sport through acting out disney stories. The webinars aimed at female athletes have been particularly successful in reaching out to a wider audience and have been well attended. The webinar by Dr Elaine McLaughlin has been identified by both IFA and GAA for the expertise, role modelling, large attendance and audience satisfaction levels.
As a direct result of SCBI funding, GAA and IFA have been able to devote resources to developing the capacity of female clubs. They have also introduced a successful mentoring programme to assist in their club governance, skills and coaching development.
- The SCBI has successfully targeted under-represented groups, particularly through the walking football and shooting stars programmes both sporting codes have reached out to ensure sport is more accessible and fun. The Friday Night Lights project has also assisted in reaching out to a wider audience, promoting the fun side of physical activity and engaging an audience which might not be attracted to football or competitive sports.
- The Super Games model of 5 teams, 4 teams playing with the 5th team being coached during the games has been a very successful model and has been used effectively in club, community and youth settings. The Super Games model has also assisted in the development of coach education and the development of volunteers. This has been reflected in the participation numbers in schools, youth and community settings with the role of volunteers essential to the success of this element of the programme.
- IFA and GAA delivered a range of Shared Education days, with kids attending the Olympia Leisure Centre from different areas of the city to enjoy these programmes. These shared education days were very successful for the schools involved but also served to cement the partnership between IFA and GAA. Whilst this aspect of the programme was hampered by the covid pandemic, the work has recommenced in early 2022.
- Community group usage of the stadium was difficult over the period 2019/20 and 2020/21 largely as a result of restrictions on usage posed by the covid19 pandemic. IFA intend to further develop this aspect of the programme in phase 2 and share the learning as the GAA work to develop it's own flagship stadium and promote wider community access.
- The Arts Project around the Windsor Park stadium has improved the environment for the local community living alongside the stadium and has helped in improving relationships and engagement with the local community.
- Both IFA and GAA reported that the success in engaging young people in football and the wider activities such as Friday Night Lights has contributed to a reduction in youths engaging in antisocial behaviour. Both sporting codes have run programmes specifically aimed at addressing antisocial behaviour in young people.
- Both sporting codes have worked hard during the life of SCBI to make their programmes and activities more accessible for People with Disabilities, particularly through the ADAPT project. Over the 20/21 it was difficult to run the ADAPT project due to covid19, the sporting codes have worked around these difficulties and started delivering this project within special needs schools. Over the life of the programme the participation levels of people with disabilities

have increased steadily, however progress was halted with the covid19 pandemic. Both GAA and IFA plan to further increase participation levels in the next phase of SCBI.

- Tea dances, Christmas dinner and a Christmas ball have assisted in engaging Older People in physical activity and bringing them into the stadium. GAA and IFA have also been successful in engaging older people in club activities over the first phase of the SCBI through street soccer and volunteer opportunities.
- Both IFA and GAA reported a significant level of improved collaborative working as a direct result of the SCBI programme. They reported a partnership that is real and mature and which is producing mutual benefits, one of the partners reported “we are much stronger than the sum of our parts”

There is also improved collaboration between GAA, IFA and Belfast City Council as a direct result of the SCBI. Both sporting codes reported having greater access to senior staff, and increased opportunities to discuss and pursue other opportunities with Council staff.

- With GAA and IFA staff being furloughed and ongoing restrictions over the 2019/20 – 2020/21 period it has been difficult for both IFA and GAA to make progress with achieving the Clubmark accreditation. The Clubmark accreditation is now available to complete online and it is expected that this will be rolled out in significant numbers across both GAA and IFA clubs in Belfast over the next phase of SCBI.

COVID19 Pandemic

In November 2019 a joint planning workshop was held at the National Football Stadium at Windsor Park. The workshop provided the GAA and IFA with the opportunity to present their single actions for the year and was very successful in assisting SCBI partners to identify specific themes for a joint action plan for 2020/21. The SCBI Policy and Performance Group approved the single and joint action plan, which included plans for a joint SCBI Conference in June 2020, youth summer camps, disability summer camps and community outreach with BME communities. With the covid19 pandemic restrictions being imposed in March 2020 and the GAA staff and some of the IFA staff furloughed for a large part of 2020 it became very difficult to implement the joint actions and many of the initiatives were postponed. In early 2021 the GAA and IFA started to develop their programmes to ensure that they could be delivered online. The SCBI partners have shown great resilience in engaging with clubs, volunteers and coaches over the covid19 pandemic. Training for coaches and volunteers with OCN and part of the NCC level 1 have been delivered online, webinars were delivered on a range of issues such as nutrition, mental health and females in football. The online product developed through SCBI has enabled access to a much wider audience and sporting codes. Over the next phase of the SCBI there will be further development of these online products and services.

2.2. SCBI JOINT ACTION PLANS

In November 2019 a planning workshop was held with the SCBI partners to develop their first joint action plan for the period 2020/21. It was agreed that the themes for the Joint Action Plan would be: Better Club Governance and Management, Wellbeing and Engaged Communities. Implementation of these joint actions was made possible through successive roll over of underspends in the SCBI budget during the 5 years of the overall programme. The plan was agreed by the Policy and Performance Group at its February 2020 meeting. A summary of the joint actions is provided below:

Table 4: JOINT ACTION PLAN 2020/21

SCBI ACTION PLAN 2020/21					
Action	SCBI Objective/Theme	Funding	Timescale	Proposed Outputs	Proposed Outcomes
Summer provision for kids with disabilities & a particular focus on autism spectrum. Potentially delivered through the Disability Hubs.	Engaged Communities Potential overlap with coach education Links to other plans: Belfast Agenda Active living, no limits Disability Sports NI Link with Mencap & Autism	SCBI Potential for DfC Access & Inclusion Prog funding	Summer 2020	Target groups 8 to 12 yrs Numbers attending	Reduced inequalities Tackle disadvantage
Targeted programme for BME community	Engaged Communities Well Being Links with other agencies working in this area: Full Service, Community Network, work in schools etc	SCBI	Apr 2020-Mar 2021	Engage with BME Comm. To develop dialogues and understanding Engage with Full Service Comm Network to build on work to date & create shared learning	Joint workshops More sociable programmes which feed into established leagues Shared cultural & sports learning
Celebration of Sports	Engaged Communities Everybody Active Links with NI Olympic Prog.	SCBI	Apr 2020-Mar 2021	Develop joint initiative to celebrate sports Lobby NI Olympic leads to ensure representation of GAA/IFA	IFA/GAA joint initiative to celebrate sports Engagement & representation of both sports in NI Olympic prog.

Targeted work with communities around both stadiums	Better Club Governance & Management Wellbeing Engaged Communities	SCBI	Apr 2020-Mar 2021	Engage with IFA re: learning from Stadium build (gateway review etc) Develop prog. To engage older people Develop programme of activity of joint events & shared space	Shared learning re: consultation & engagement with local community More engagement & involvement of communities around the stadium
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As stated on page 9 the delivery of these joint actions was largely postponed or not implemented due to covid19 restrictions and staff being furloughed. However, the process involved in developing this plan was very significant in that it marked a genuine partnership approach to identifying actions that would be suitable for joint delivery, it was also effective in breaking down barriers between the partners. The workshop also marked the opportunity for the GAA and IFA to share information, learning and expertise.

The SCBI partners met again remotely in February 2021 to regroup, take stock of progress made over the pandemic and plan joint actions for 2021/22. The result was the development of a joint action plan for 2021/22 and single actions for GAA and IFA. The action plan was developed with the intention of delivering the majority of the actions using online methods in Quarters 1 and 2 with increased direct delivery in Quarters 3 and 4.

Table 5: JOINT ACTION PLAN 2021/22

SCBI ACTION PLAN 2021- 2022			
	THEME	BETTER CLUB GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT	
PROGRAMME	DETAILS	COMMUNICATION	TIMESCALE
More than a Club	Joint Webinar with GAA & IFA Potential topics: Volunteer Development, Coach Development, Partnership, Innovation, new training protocols for Covid19, Nutrition & Health & Well Being. These topics will be discussed in more detail at a joint Conference in March 2021 with a more detailed programme of webinars etc. Virtual tours of the Stadia	Joint Communication strategy to be devised with IFA, GAA, DfC & BCC Communications team. To promote and tell the story of the success of the joint projects, collaboration and the good neighbourhood work with local communities.	Qtr1, Qtr2 & Qtr3
	Funding webinars		Qtr1 & Qtr2
	Common Ground Workshops		Qtr2 & Qtr3
Wellbeing	Mental Health First Aid Webinars		Qtr1 & Qtr2

	Virtual Nutrition challenges and webinars with Clubs and Schools in conjunction with BCC Health Dev Unit re: diet and nutrition. Cookery book/resource developed with SCBI branding. Schools and Clubs Celebration event		Qtr3 & Qtr4 Qtr4
Engaged Communities	Further outreach to local communities living around the local Stadia (good neighbours) – virtual tours, access to webinars and the Nutrition challenge. Outreach and engagement with the BAME to assist integration into existing clubs in their area, promoting the mental, physical and cultural benefits. “Come Try Events” with new-comer communities		Qtr2 & Qtr3 Qtr3 & Qtr4 Qtr3 & Qtr4

Some of the highlights of the joint plan include joint Club webinars on club ethos and governance, female coaching and a webinar led by Dr Elaine McLaughlin which was very well attended, mental health webinars and first aid training. Work also commenced on a shared education plan which would be delivered at Olympia Leisure Centre with local schools showing enthusiasm to participate. Work to develop a sport nutrition booklet which will use the SCBI brand.

2.3. SUMMARY

Over the period 2017 to 2021 the SCBI has successfully delivered against the Intermediate Benefits which were agreed as part of the ‘Baseline Assessment of Stadia Benefits Initiative Report’, prepared by Copius Consulting in April 2017. These intermediate benefits have been delivered through the GAA and IFA single action plans and also more recently through the SCBI partners joint action plans.

Whilst the covid19 pandemic hampered both the single and joint actions being delivered through SCBI, the GAA and IFA project officers were very successful in finding work arounds. They have been very innovative in using other mechanisms to successfully deliver the intermediate benefits and the annual action plans, whilst reaching out and engaging successfully with their members and other sporting codes.

2.4 SCBI OUTCOMES

The Baseline Assessment of Stadia Benefits Initiative Report 2017 set out a series of outcomes/end benefits which would be achieved over the life of the SCBI programme. At its virtual workshop in February 2021 the SCBI partners developed a joint action plan to deliver these outcomes under the themes: Better club governance and management, Wellbeing, Engaged Communities, as detailed in the table overleaf:

Table 6: SCBI OUTCOMES

SCBI ACTION PLAN 2020/2021	
THEME	OUTCOME
Better Club Governance & Management	better club governance & management
	high quality coaching
	better skilled volunteers
	increased participation
Wellbeing	more physically active
	people are healthier
	people are happier
Engaged Communities	reduced inequalities & tackle disadvantage
	engaged communities
	better community relations
	safer communities

An assessment of the outcomes achieved over the first 5 years of the SCBI based on data provided by Belfast City Council, IFA and GAA plus the interviews with all partners using the structure questions in Appendix 1 is provided below:

1. **Better Club Governance and Management**

SCBI has assisted both GAA and IFA to develop their governance and management arrangements across member clubs and has assisted in sharing of good practice and expertise. The roll out of the Club Mark has been delayed by the covid19 pandemic but both GAA and IFA plan to further develop this element of club governance during the next phase of the programme.

2. **High Quality Coaching**

The introduction of minimum operating standards in coaching across both codes is a direct result of the SCBI and has significantly improved the quality of coaching, it has also resulted in an increased number of coaches across both IFA and GAA in Belfast. In interviews with IFA staff, as part of research for the interim report, it was reported that SCBI funding has enabled IFA to roll out and attain the National Coaching Certificate at a much faster pace and free of charge. There's also an added dynamic of adults coaching adults through this certificate. Coach education has also been rolled out to female games and it has been enhanced with a female mentoring programme. Both sporting codes have reached out to members who are interested in the game but not necessarily at player level, initially developing their volunteers skills but then working to engage them in coaching.

Due to the covid19 pandemic IFA and GAA worked hard to develop a programme to enable the delivery of coaching online. This has proved very successful with the coaching sessions reaching a much wider audience beyond the GAA and IFA codes, delivering better value for money in the approach and enabling coaches to undertake the training at their convenience. The SCBI funding has enabled this training to be offered free to clubs, resulting in a very substantial uptake, which has also been assisted through the online model that has been used.

3. Better Skilled Volunteers

Work has been undertaken as a result of SCBI to encourage ex-players to continue to engage with clubs through volunteering and in some cases as coaches. The webinars which IFA and GAA ran jointly have focused on developing the skills level of volunteers through education and sharing of expertise, attendance at these webinars was high as volunteers could attend from home or watch the webinar at another time. Both sporting codes reported that SCBI funds enable them to increase volunteer levels and the skills of volunteers across their clubs. Many of the volunteers gave their time during the covid19 pandemic to distribute food hampers and reach out to their local community. GAA reported that the development of youth leadership through the Dermot Early volunteer development programme will be a priority for them as they plan activities for the next phase. They identified the skills and expertise that these young people will gain through the Dermot Early programme and the work with young people through the University of Galway as essential elements of their future club development.

4. Increased Participation

Table 3 above shows increased participation rates which have been delivered as a direct result of SCBI across a range of areas, such as young people, females, under-represented groups, people with disabilities and older people.

5. More physically active

The increased participation rates in table 3 are directly related to more people being physically active. Both GAA and IFA have worked to increase participation rates across their games, hence increasing the physical activity rates of their players. They have also reached out to non-players to encourage more physical activity through their walking football, shooting stars and Friday Night Lights initiatives.

6. Collaboration working

Conversations with all the partners as part of research for the interim evaluation report revealed a mature and developed partnership with collaborative working at its centre. All the partners reported that in the absence of SCBI it is unlikely they would have reached out to the other sporting code to seek collaboration. Working relationships have developed organically with all reporting that collaboration has become easier over the past 2 years. Both GAA and IFA identified the workshop held at Windsor Park in November 2019 and the follow up online workshop in February 2021 as important in breaking down barriers and assisting them in identifying programmes which could easily be delivered in partnership. The partners also recognise the benefits and added value of collaboration in sharing expertise and information, as one partner stated “we are much more than the sum of our parts”. They also identified that the project officers tend to be from sporting backgrounds which makes conversations and sharing of ideas easier. They also reported that online meetings have assisted with participation levels and has further improved collaborative working.

The measurement of outcomes requires the establishment of a baseline at the beginning of a programme period and then measurement of change from the baseline. The data provided by the partners in table 3 plus the anecdotal information provided through the online interviews enables the conclusion that there has been progression and increased participation, engagement and collaboration as a direct result of the SCBI. The data also demonstrates that the SCBI has produced higher quality coaching, increased skills development in volunteers across both codes and better governance and management across clubs.

In relation to the remaining outcomes the data and anecdotal information is more limited and makes it difficult to make definitive conclusions about the achievement of outcomes.

7. People are healthier

The IFA and GAA successfully developed and delivered a joint mental health programme, it was delivered online to a wide range of participants but with particular focus on targeting young men who might be struggling with their mental health. It also provided volunteers and coaches with the skills to identify the warning signs of mental health issues amongst their members and participants. Both the IFA and GAA reported that this mental health programme would not have been possible in the absence of SCBI funding.

The sporting codes also developed a nutrition booklet to assist participants across their games and activities to improve their diet and lifestyle. The booklet also has the potential to be used by other sporting codes. Whilst these two initiatives will have the potential to improve health and wellbeing it is not possible to conclude that people are healthier as a result. If the partners wish to maintain this outcome as part of the next phase of SCBI it would be important to collect baseline data from participants and ask a direct question from them at the end of their participation.

8. Reduce inequalities and tackle disadvantage

Similarly, it is hard to conclude that the SCBI has successfully reduced inequalities and tackled disadvantage. Whilst both GAA and IFA have reached out successfully to target under-represented groups such as people with disabilities, older people, newcomer communities and communities in more deprived areas, the data provided doesn't enable a definitive conclusion that SCBI has reduced inequalities or tackled disadvantage. In moving forward it would be important to establish baselines in relation to inequalities and disadvantage which would enable measurement of the end benefits and outcomes.

9. Engaged Communities

Data and interviews with SCBI partners demonstrate that there has been some progress in achieving the outcome related to engaged communities. Pre-covid19 the IFA had successfully encouraged community usage of Windsor Park stadium, however with covid restrictions this has proved more difficult. IFA will work during the next phase of SCBI to increase community usage of the stadium and in turn to engage more effectively with the local community. The context for the SCBI was to ensure that the stadia became better neighbours to the local community, IFA has worked to improve relations and reach out to engage with the local community, the ARTs project around the Windsor stadium has improved the environment and has helped to improve relations with the local community. The continued delays to Casement Park has made it difficult for the GAA to engage with the local community, however the GAA has used its sporting and related activities to engage where possible with the local community.

10. Better Community Relations

Pre-covid19 the IFA and GAA developed and were delivering joint education programmes, busing kids from various parts of the city into Windsor Park to participate. Both partners reported that the work was starting to reap rewards in breaking down barriers and improving relations between the school children. The joint webinars and training being undertaken online have been attended by a wide range of clubs across Belfast. Both GAA and IFA have reported that the questions and sharing of information demonstrate the commonalities between the two codes.

The partners recognise that whilst some progress has been made in achieving the outcome better community relations, there is more to be done in the next phase of SCBI.

11. Safer Communities

Both GAA and IFA have worked hard to engage young vulnerable people in physical activity and sport through their Friday Night Lights and Shooting Stars programmes. Getting young people engaged in these activities helps to prevent them getting involved in anti-social behaviour, leading to safer communities at local level. In moving forward the partners should identify a mechanism for measuring the direct impact of SCBI on promoting safer communities.

2.5 SCBI Outcomes Summary

The SCBI has made substantial progress in achieving its programme outcomes and end benefits over the first phase of delivery. In particular, substantial progress has been made in providing high quality coaching, better skilled volunteers, increased participation, more physically active and improved collaborative working. Further work will be undertaken in the next phase of SCBI to improve club governance and management, and to better measure the outcomes: people are healthier; reduced inequalities and tackle disadvantage; safer communities; engaged communities and better community relations.

3: SCBI BUDGET

Belfast City Council has invested £1million in the Stadia Community Benefits Initiative over the 10-year period from 2016 to 2026. Belfast City Council's investment was provided to assist the three main sporting codes to be better neighbours to the local communities around the stadia of Windsor Park, Casement Park and Ravenhill. IFA joined the SCBI partnership in 2016 with GAA joining in 2019, to date Ulster Rugby has not joined the partnership despite Belfast City Council reaching out to them.

3.1: IFA Budget

IFA contribute £50,000 per annum to the budget and from 2017 to 2019 benefitted solely from the SCBI budget. In those early years IFA found it difficult to spend the SCBI budget as it took time and resources to develop the capacity to deliver against the MOU objectives and deliver the intermediate benefits and outcomes. A summary of the budget committed to date on SCBI across a range of programmes aimed at delivering the outcomes and intermediate benefits of the SCBI is provided below:

Table 7: IFA SCBI Budget Spend to date

Programme	2017/18	Programme	2019/20	Programme	Spend to date 2021/2022
Coach Ed.	17906.66	Community Events	10,000	40+ Recreational Club workshops	850 1,050
Inclusive Clubs	3000	Fanzone/Funzone		Inclusive Clubs	1,000
Disability Clubs	6500	Senior Citizen days		Disability – walking football F festival	720 1,000
Mental Health	6000	Community tours		Education Prog OCN OCN & refs	7,000 4,400 5,000
Vol. Conference	8285	Community outreach		Art Project 1 Art project 2	2,000 2,000
Vol. Programme	1600	Female Development	2,215	Christmas dinner Christmas ball	2,000 500
Community Dev. (OCN)	2200			Womens EHC Funding Shooting stars Club mentoring Blitz days Blitz days 2 Media Course Level 1 Level 2	5,000 6,000 5,400 1,000 2,500 2,000 5,500 2,600
Player Dev (GOALS)	2072			Level 1 RGDO	5,500
Street Soccer	0			Street Soccer	2,500
Educational Programme	0	Walking Football	1,696	Safeguarding	10,450
Safeguarding & First Aid	8860			LTPO: Summer camps	1,680

				NCC Level 1	4,600
Multi-Sports Camp	0				
Walking Football	2855				
Schools Programme	3500				
Schools Quality Mark	753.33	Street Soccer	5,000		
Futsal	2010			Futsal refs Futsal prog Schools Futsal	650 5,000 2,100
Events	8279.76				
Clubmark	0	Education Programme	4,000		
Big Weekender	0				
Info Leaflets	0	Safeguarding & Coach Education	26,818.56		
TOTAL	£73821.75		£49,729.56		£90,000

3.2: GAA Budget

GAA joined the SCBI in 2019 with Belfast City Council accepted their contribution as an in-kind contribution because of their £500,000 investment through Gaelfast in the Belfast City Council area and that their stadium had not yet been constructed. This in-kind contribution caused initial tensions with IFA, however many of these difficulties were resolved at the joint workshop in November 2019. A summary of the budget committed to date on SCBI by the GAA across a range of programmes aimed at delivering the outcomes and intermediate benefits of the SCBI is provided below:

Table 8: GAA Budget Spend to date

Theme	Programme	GAA Budget Spend 2019	Programme	Planned Spend 2021/22
Empowering People	Foundation Awards Award 1	£383.64 £1,080.00	Foundation Awards Award 1	£3579.92
	Volunteer Development/Webinars	£3,000.00	Volunteer Development/Webinars	£2,942.40
Engaging Communities	Club/School Link Programme	£12,000.00	Club/School Link Programme	£11,900.00
	GAA Go Games	£1,760.16	GAA Go Games	£1,892.00
	Super Games Centres	£6,721.00	Super Games Centres	£6,909.00
	Handball Redevelopment	£5,520.00	Handball Redevelopment	£5,520.00
	Summer Camps	£3,000.00	Summer Camps	
	Halloween Camp	£1,300.00	Halloween Camp	£4,010.00
	Winter Indoor Games	£2,880.00	Winter Indoor Games	£2,915.00
	A.D.A.P.t	£5,000.00	A.D.A.P.t	£5,049.02
Energisng Schools	Gaelfast Plan	£4,000.00	Gaelfast Plan	£4,000.00
		£49,644.76		£48,717.14

3.3: SCBI Joint Action Plan Budget

It was agreed that 2019 would be a transition year with the action plan for 2019/20 including a mixture of sports specific programmes and some joint collaborative initiatives delivered by both sporting codes. The IFA and GAA were able to access additional resources as a result of underspends carried forward in the overall programme budget. This enabled them to deliver joint projects such as club development workshops in the areas of social media, strength and conditioning and sports psychology. These club development workshops were attended by both GAA and football/soccer clubs. A series of tours of the National Football Stadium, Windsor Park also took place with youth football teams pairing up with youth GAA teams. The joint plan for 2020/21 was not delivered because all the GAA and some of the IFA staff were furloughed for a large part of 2020/21 due to covid19. The underspend from 2020/21 will be carried over to assist the delivery of joint projects in the next phase of the SCBI. In February 2021 all the partners of SCBI participated in a workshop to take stock of progress and develop a joint plan for 2021/22. Expenditure to date on the 2021/22 joint Action Plan is summarised against targeted spend overleaf:

Table 9: SCBI Joint Action Plan Spend 2021/22

Programme	Budget	Actual Spend
SCBI Branded Sports Nutrition Resource	£2,600	£2,600
Joint Club Webinars		
Webinar 1 - Nutrition	£650	£350
Webinar 2 - Funding	-	
Webinar 3 (IFA host) TBC	£800	
Webinar 4 (GAA host) TBC	£800	
Accredited Course: Mental Health First Aid	£3,000	
School Shared Education	£2,000	
SCBI Communication Support	£3,000	
TOTAL	£12,850	£2,950

Whilst progress in relation to implementing the joint actions has been slow in the first half of the financial year 2021/22 both the GAA and IFA reported, during the interviews conducted as part of research for the interim evaluation report, that considerable progress would be achieved in Quarter 4 of the year.

3.4 Summary

The single and joint action plan spends summarised in this section demonstrate that the SCBI budget has been well utilised in the first phase, with both sporting codes using the budget effectively to deliver the overall objectives of the SCBI programme and provide the associated intermediate benefits and programme outcomes. The roll-over of underspends in the SCBI budget has been essential to the success of delivery to date and has enabled the GAA and IFA to work in a collaborative way to develop a series of joint actions. These joint actions have led to considerable added value being delivered to the programmes and has produced considerable synergy between the partners.

In the initial phase of GAA joining the partnership there was some tension around GAA's contribution of £50,000 being accepted as in-kind to reflect the GAA's considerable investment through the Gaelfast programme in the Belfast City Council area. These tensions were resolved early in the process and have not acted as a barrier to progress.

Belfast City Council funded a SCBI project officer who works specifically on IFA projects but is employed and based in Belfast City Council. This post was very successful in assisting capacity development and project delivery in the early phases of the SCBI. In early 2021 this postholder was seconded to another Council Service and IFA took on the role directly, dividing the work across three IFA staff members. IFA reported that this new model of delivery is working very effectively and is building the capacity of the IFA staff working on the programmes. Furthermore, as the partnership

relationship has developed with GAA, there is much greater collaborative working between their project staff, which would lead to the question being posed as to whether this role is still required or whether it might be better to continue to deliver this role through the IFA and in turn leave an impact on the staff team beyond the SCBI project?

At the outset of the SCBI the statutory partners, Belfast City Council and Department for Communities planned that the SCBI budget would be used to leverage additional funding. Delivery of the action plans and development of joint plans together with the difficulties caused by covid19 have prevented the partners seeking additional funding sources. However, some of the products delivered through the SCBI such as the webinars, high quality coaching and the SCBI branded nutrition resource provide the opportunity to generate funding or subscriptions from other sporting codes or external sources in this next phase of delivery.

A formal invitation has been issued to Ulster Rugby at the end of February 2022, further capacity development will be required to develop the partnership should Ulster Rugby accept the invitation, furthermore there will need to be considerable thought as to how Ulster Rugby will contribute to the overall SCBI budget.

4: THE PARTNERSHIP

4.1. ROLE OF SCBI POLICY PERFORMANCE GROUP

The Policy Performance Group provides the overall governance and management arrangements for the SCBI programme. It meets quarterly and has been very engaged with the project since its inception. The Delivery Board meets monthly and reports to the Policy and Performance Group.

The role of the Policy and Performance group is to:

- Oversee this Memorandum of Agreement, and agree any changes to same
- Develop and agree a Benefits Realisation Plan based on the End Benefits set out at section 9 of this Agreement
- Develop and agree annual SMART targets based on the benefits and targets stated at section 9 and 10 of this Agreement
- Agree the allocation of the budget
- Agree the annual action plan for the Project, which shall be based on the Benefits Realisation Plan.
- Make any necessary changes to the Governance arrangements for the Project
- Review and monitor performance and progress and the overall strategic direction of the partnership
- Review quarterly progress reports presented by the Council
- Establish a robust evaluation framework against which progress towards meeting the targets can be measured.

The Policy Performance Group has effectively discharged all these roles during the first five years of the SCBI programme. It has also been very engaged in detailed discussions about budget underspends and finding flexible mechanisms to ensure that these underspends are sustained within the overall SCBI budget and used to deliver joint actions and for the benefits of local communities. The SCBI Delivery Board comprised of project officers meets monthly and reports quarterly to the Policy and Performance Group on the progress against single and joint actions. Whilst the terms of reference for the Policy & Performance Group states that it will consist of one representative each from the Council, DfC, the GAA and IFA over recent years the SCBI project officers have attended meetings and presented their work to the group. This has afforded the project officers to have access to senior staff who are also the decision makers in relation to the project, and it has also helped the project officers focus on the higher level outcomes to be achieved which in turn has assisted in the successful delivery of these. Having a wider representation of project officers and senior staff at the Policy and Performance Group has allowed the partnership to maintain its focus and commitment to the objectives and outcomes of the SCBI.

In the past year to 18months there has been considerable changes in staff across all the partner organisations, in moving forward it will remain essential to have Director level involvement at the Policy and Performance Group on a quarterly basis to sustain the commitment and focus on the programme.

This model of governance has proved very effective in ensuring that high level objectives and outcomes are achieved, this model could be easily replicated across Council and DfC partnerships across a range of sectors.

4.2. The SCBI Partnership

The data and interviews conducted as research for this evaluation have identified that the SCBI partnership model is highly effective in delivering against its objectives, intermediate benefits and programme outcomes. There is evidence of real synergy, shared learning, sharing of expertise and mature collaborative working relationships. All of the partners have played their part in ensuring this partnership has worked effectively and produced tangible results and benefits. As stated in 4.1 above there is learning for other partnership relationships as this model could be easily replicated.

5: CONCLUSIONS

The data provided by the SCBI partners plus the anecdotal information from the interviews with partners enables the following conclusions to be made:

- 1) The SCBI budget has been well utilised in the first phase, with both sporting codes using the budget effectively to deliver the overall objectives of the SCBI programme and provide the associated intermediate benefits and programme outcomes. The roll-over of budget underspends has been essential to the success of delivery to date and has enabled the GAA and IFA to work in a collaborative way to develop a series of joint actions
- 2) Over the period 2017 to 2021 the SCBI has successfully delivered against the Intermediate Benefits which were agreed as part of the 'Baseline Assessment of Stadia Benefits Initiative Report', prepared by Copius Consulting in April 2017. These intermediate benefits have been delivered through the GAA and IFA single action plans and also more recently through the SCBI partners joint action plans.
- 3) Whilst the covid19 pandemic hampered both the single and joint actions being delivered through SCBI, the GAA and IFA project officers were very successful in finding work arounds. They have been very innovative in using other mechanisms to successfully deliver the intermediate benefits and the annual action plans, whilst reaching out and engaging successfully with their members and other sporting codes.
- 4) Some of the SCBI products such as webinars, online coaching and education and the nutrition resource could generate funding from external organisations. Opportunities to lever additional funding should also be investigated during the next phase of SCBI.
- 5) The SCBI has made substantial progress in achieving its programme outcomes and end benefits over the first phase of delivery. In particular, substantial progress has been made in providing high quality coaching, better skilled volunteers, increased participation, more physically active and improved collaborative working.
- 6) Further work will be undertaken in the next phase of SCBI to improve club governance and management. Also work should be undertaken to establish baselines to enable better measurement of the outcomes: people are healthier; reduced inequalities and tackle disadvantage; safer communities; engaged communities and better community relations.

5.1. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION IN THE NEXT PHASE OF SCBI

The data provided in section 2 of this report highlights the successful projects delivered as single and joint actions during the first five years of SCBI. Many of these projects have further potential and could provide even further benefits in phase 2, these include:

- 1) Provision of high quality coaching;
- 2) Safeguarding training;
- 3) Further development of volunteer skills;
- 4) Further increase in female participation and development of female clubs;
- 5) Shared Education;
- 6) Mental Health First Aid;
- 7) Promotion of the SCBI Nutrition Resource
- 8) Opportunities to monetarise some of the SCBI projects to other sporting codes.

In addition to these successful projects there has also been significant successes in process and procedural elements of the SCBI programme including the Lessons Learned workshop and the Risk Register Workshop.

In moving to the next phase of delivery it will be essential for the partners to review the annual budget to ensure that with increasing inflationary pressures the SCBI programme is achieving value for money whilst also ensuring the maximum return on the allocated budgets. It will also be

essential that all parties are committed to providing a budget and resources in year 11 to undertake the PPE of the SCBI programme.

The Belfast Community Benefits Initiative Map on page 5, table 1. outlines the enablers, intermediate benefits and end benefits/outcomes of the SCBI programme. As outlined in section 2.4 page 13 of this report, some of the end benefits/outcomes have been difficult to measure, in particular: People are healthier; reduce inequalities and tackle disadvantage; engaged communities and better community relations.

In the next phase of the SCBI programme, if the partners decide that these outcomes will be the end benefits then it will be important to commission baseline research to establish baselines and undertake measurement to assess the outcomes and distance travelled from these baselines. Furthermore as partners plan for the next stage of delivery it would be beneficial to undertake a review of the enablers and intermediate benefits to ensure their relevance and to reflect the capacity that has been built amongst the partners and their sporting codes as a direct result of the first phase of the SCBI programme.

There is more work to be done in reaching out to underrepresented groups such as people with disabilities, older people and newcomer communities. Further work is also required in achieving greater community usage of Windsor Park stadium, ensuring that there continues to be shared access in and around the stadium and that work continues to secure community understanding through the Stadium Event Management Plan. At the forefront of this is a focus on the SCBI initiative working to help the major sporting codes in the city ensure that their stadium act as good neighbours to the community around them and reach out to the wider community to ensure they benefit.

The outcomes of the SCBI programme also provides a major opportunity to share the learning with the GAA as they plan their own stadium development.

The SCBI partnership model has been very successful in delivering programme objectives, intermediate benefit and outcomes and could be replicated in other Belfast City Council partnerships and across DfC's partnerships with other Councils.

APPENDIX 1

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

SCBI PARTNERS QUESTIONS

PARTNER:

Tell me about the SCBI Partnership – what have been the main outcomes, value added etc?

What have been the main successes of the AP

How have the management arrangements worked at Antrim GAA level and SCBI level?

What processes did you use to achieve your outcomes?

What is the learning from the process? What would you do differently next time?