

06 October 2014

AC1415/jn

Dear CEO

### **Active Communities – Moving Forward**

I refer to previous correspondence from Sport Northern Ireland (27 June & 10 July) to district council CEOs and Chief Leisure Officers, seeking your views on future SNI engagement with, and investment in, sports participation at a community level. This engagement process was cognisant of the anticipated expiration of SNI's current investment in Active Communities on 31 March 2015 and represented the culmination of extensive stakeholder consultation over the preceding 12 months.

Our previous correspondence invited district councils (the current 26 and new 11) to share their views with SNI in respect of a proposal to extend the current Active Communities programme and strengthen the partnership model, based on a 30% contribution to salary & associated costs from district councils.

SNI facilitated a roundtable discussion to that effect on 04 August, at which many of the 26 district councils were represented. At the 04 August meeting a number of views were expressed in relation to the proposed percentage contribution. Based on feedback from 4<sup>th</sup> August, SNI has listened to the issues highlighted and decided to extend the current programme for 12 months (2015/16); however given current and future anticipated reductions to SNI budgets in 2014/15 and 2015/16, this extension will only be tenable if district councils also commit to an increased contribution to the programme. Recognising the changes & challenges facing the 11 new district councils, SNI has decided to limit the contribution required. To date SNI has made a 10% contribution to help you defray the costs associated with the management of the programme; for the next 12 months (01 April 2015- 31 March 2016) SNI will continue to fund the costs associated with the deployment of your Active Communities coaches (salaries, travel, CPD & equipment) at the current level but will no longer make a contribution towards your management costs.

I understand that your new district council will be working through its prioritisation and rates processes over the coming months and may not have a confirmed budget until early 2015. However, I would be grateful if you could signal your council's agreement to proceed on this basis no later than 31 October 2014.

As discussed at the 4<sup>th</sup> August meeting, it is SNI's intention to communicate a longer term vision (post April 2016) for the Active Communities programme, reflective of our corporate planning (2015-2020) process, over the coming months; I will be in touch with you in the near future to confirm details of that engagement.

In the meantime, I look forward to receiving your response in respect of this current extension to the programme in 2015/16 no later than Friday 07 November. Responses may be submitted by hard copy or email ([claremcginley@sportni.net](mailto:claremcginley@sportni.net)) if that is more convenient.

By way of next steps, SNI will contact all those district councils who indicate a willingness to continue to deliver the programme on the basis outlined above (thereby extending Active Communities provision within their area for the period 01 April 2015 – 31 March 2016) during November; I anticipate that formal SNI Letters of Offer will issue to those district councils as soon as possible thereafter and subject to your own decision-making processes.

If you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact either John News (07899 666062) or myself (028 90383872) and we would be happy to discuss them with you.

Yours sincerely,



**Nick Harkness**  
**Director of Participation & Facilities**

cc. 26 District Council Chief Leisure Officers  
11 Active Communities Consortia managers