

## **Draft Minutes of the Sport England Board meeting of 2 February 2022**

Held at 21 Bloomsbury Street, London, and remotely via Microsoft Teams.

Members	Chris Boardman (Chair) Azeem Akhtar Rashmi Becker Natalie Ceeney Chris Grant Andy Long David Mahoney (items 1-4a and 5-8) Tove Okunniwa Karen Pickering
Officers	Pat Brosnan (Items 5-6) Jon Fox – Strategic Lead, Investment Design (item 4) Louise Hartley – Head of Legal (Item 7) Tim Hollingsworth – Chief Executive Officer Suzanne Houlihan – Assistant Board Secretary Dan Johnson – ED, Digital, Marketing and Communications (Interim) Simon Macqueen – Director, Strategy Jayne Molyneux (Item 7) Rachel Musson – Chief Financial Officer (Interim) Nick Pontefract – Chief Strategy Officer Phil Smith – ED, Partnerships
Guests	Adam Conant – Head of Sport, DCMS

### **1. Introductory items**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all attending in person and virtually to the meeting: the first in a new and more flexible schedule of Board engagements and interactions for 2022. The present meeting combined an important strategic discussion around regulation and dispute resolution in sport, with some key time-sensitive decisions. The Chair felt that as part of this new approach, the use of Admincontrol for processing Decisions by Correspondence and sharing regular Board information was working well and this was endorsed by members of the Board.
- 1.2 The Chair noted that the minutes and actions arising from the meeting of 14 December 2021 would be held over for review at the next formal Board meeting of 28 March 2022.

- 1.3 Apologies had been received from Ian Cumming.
- 1.4 No declarations of interest were made additional to those already registered.
- 1.5 Chris Boardman noted David Mahoney's recusal from discussion at item 4b as the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) would be under discussion.

## 2. CEO Update

- 2.1 Tim Hollingworth provided an oral update on report on key areas of business:
  - a) There had been significant achievements in the year since publication of *Uniting the Movement* and its 2021-22 implementation plan, including 'System Partner' investment, the latest stage of which would be discussed later in the meeting. The 2022-23 budget and business planning process activating the 2022-25 implementation plan was now entering its final stages after a comprehensive cross-organisational scoping exercise, with the budget brought for approval to the Board of 28 March via the Audit Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC).
  - b) A new Executive Leadership Team leadership was now in place, with plans to progress and operationalise the new Sport England structure well under way. Perrett Laver was providing support in the recruitment process for two vacant Executive Director posts, and a Leadership Charter had started development with Positive Dynamics, the external specialist who had helped create the Sport England values. The Board noted the challenges that a change in leadership and structure presented and were pleased with the emphasis on cross-functional delivery in the new operating model. The Board **AGREED** changes to delegated authorities against the restructure and a letter of approval (filed as Board paper MB22-09) was signed by the Chair and Vice Chair. **ACTION: Rachel Musson** to progress accordingly.
  - c) Sport England's hybrid working trial continued. Staff surveys, a review of operational requirements and peer review continued with a view to informing future decisions on working arrangements. Plans for exiting Bloomsbury Street, London were ongoing with Sport Park, Loughborough, becoming Sport England official head office. Options for a London base for Sport England and UK Sport within the British Council building, in Stratford, were being progressed, with potential for hub sites in Manchester and at Bisham Abbey. The Board welcomed the significant longer-term financial savings these changes would deliver.
  - d) Engagement with DCMS on the Sports Survival Package continued. Sport England anticipated formal DCMS clarification around the loan agent

role and formal confirmation that Sport England was not the principal agent, nor accountable for the scheme. **ACTION: Tim Hollingsworth** to provide an update when confirmation received.

- e) Establishing a common measurement framework to assess performance towards *Uniting the Movement* and the Government's successor strategy to *Sporting Futures* had been discussed with DCMS and an evaluation framework was in development.
- f) The scope of the NAO Value for Money study had broadly remained as first presented with a shift away from focusing on children and young people the only major change. A number of staff were involved in providing data and feedback for interviews requested by the NAO regarding investment priorities and processes.
- g) Publication of The Whyte Review was expected in Spring 2022. The Board noted that findings and recommendations from the review would feed into Sport England and UK Sport future discussions on regulation and dispute resolution in sport.

### **3. IMS Business Case**

- 3.1 Nick Pontefract presented a revised IMS Business Case and Cover Paper (MB22-03 and MB22-03 Annex 1 refer).
- 3.2 The Board reflected on the extended project life to date and the challenges which had prevented delivery of the expected product. These included: a failed procurement exercise; an external supplier that failed to perform to a required standard; issues with in-house development due to difficulty in recruiting and retaining an appropriately skilled development team; and issues with the application of project management to ensure a successful outcome.
- 3.3 The Board felt that proposals to approach the remaining delivery through procurement of an expert third party supplier service, in conjunction with additional and adequate specialist project management resource, were sound. The Board was pleased to note that the chosen supplier had been cross referenced with recognised partners and had demonstrated extensive success in similar projects and had taken them effectively to completion.
- 3.4 The Board reflected upon the IMS project governance and felt that although the project had been referred to ARGC on a regular basis, with hindsight the Board should have had further awareness and oversight of the project risks and issues. The Board noted that a detailed internal report on lessons

learned would be presented at a future ARGC meeting. It was also felt that due to the nature and level of risk related to major IT projects, it would be helpful and prudent to have a regular progress update provided to the Board. **ACTION: Rachel Musson** to progress.

3.5 Board members felt that the IMS project team would benefit from project oversight provided by an expert Non-Executive advisor who could provide assurance and highlight emerging risks earlier which was likely to be a cost effective and sensible investment.

3.6 The Board was assured that gap analysis, financial profiling, capacity and capability planning, had taken place; that Cabinet Office spending permissions and requirements had been met; and engagement with the Cabinet Office for Procurement had resulted in positive steps towards commissioning the right resource for the project moving forward.

It therefore **APPROVED:**

a) The budget for the completion and implementation of the Investment Management System. This is a £1M increase which will take the overall value to £2M.

b) The procurement of Blue Wave to complete the development and implementation of the system. **ACTION: Rachel Musson** to progress.

#### **4. Investment in key partners: Track 2 Phase 2**

4.1 Jon Fox introduced Investment in Key Partners, Track 2 (paper [MB22-04](#) refers).

4.2 The Board noted that that this was the largest cohort within the process of 130 System Partners. Within the cohort they recognised a distinct focus on Sport England and partners working differently, which would lay the foundations for future relationships that in collaboration would deliver *Uniting the Movement*.

4.3 The Board acknowledged uplift recommendations in relation to Active Partnerships and organisations with a focus on disabilities and increasing access to physical activity. Members felt that the links between investment into each system partner, the physical activity involved, and *Uniting the Movement* could be more explicit so that all stakeholders would have confidence in the outcomes required from investment.

4.4 Members discussed the Sport England restructure in relation to system partners. They agreed that the new structure, if resourced with the necessary capacity, capability and leadership, in collaboration with national system partners, had the potential to drive forward key policy areas to

establish the types of change in the sport and physical activity sector envisaged in *Uniting the Movement*, . They welcomed the good progress towards delivery of *Uniting the Movement* and asked for an update in due course on the developing approach to partnerships, place and the impact on localities at a future meeting. **ACTION: Tim Hollingsworth** to progress once work underway.

- 4.5 The Board was content that system partner contract and performance management formed part of the approach to collaborative and partnership working. They noted that the initial performance framework had been developed with data supplied by partners. Moving forward, this would be developed on the basis of insight and data that would show return on investment and performance at organisation, portfolio, and strategy levels. The Board acknowledged the challenges in understanding investment and performance that had been affected by COVID- related delivery and recovery requirements.
- 4.6 The Board supported continued development of contract and performance management and were keen to see the progression of a performance dashboard which would track and demonstrate progress and success against agreed criteria. **ACTION: Jon Fox** to progress accordingly.
- 4.7 The Board welcomed the development of a system partner network mapping exercise which would highlight partnerships, coalitions and gaps, providing opportunities for further synergy. The Board felt this would also be a useful exercise to assess and ensure that governance was in place and working effectively across the system partner landscape.
- 4.8 Board Members noted that this track included one partner who had received private equity investment. It was noted that private investment was an area of growth in sports. Where there was also public funding, there was a need for Sport England to discuss and determine its policy position. It was felt that there was an opportunity to produce a joint private equity investment policy with DCMS in support of the sport sustainability agenda. **ACTION: Phil Smith** to progress accordingly.
- 4.9 Board Members raised the representation of culturally diverse communities within the Talented Athletes Support Scheme (TASS). Concerns were presented as the representation of minority ethnic groups within the scheme was disproportionately small compared to 2011 Census data. The Board felt that this was not a reason to delay a decision on the system partners portfolio, however, it was an area for further investigation with a

view to understanding the data and advocating our ambition that elite teams should be representative of the country they represent, directly with organisations. **ACTION: Phil Smith** to review and provide an update.

- 4.10 Overall the Board were content with the diligence, rigour and collaboration involved in the key investment process and **APPROVED** the recommendations to award of a total of up to £257,155,588 to 55 System Partners as set out in the paper. **ACTION: Jon Fox** to progress accordingly and ensure that the Board's wider advice is taken on board by colleagues taking forward the system partners work.

### **Cricket Matters**

- 4.11 Phil Smith presented Cricket and Racism Cover Paper (MB22-04b refers).
- 4.12 The Board noted that the exchange of correspondence (MB22-04B Annex A, Annex B and Annex C refer), prompted by the evidence supplied to the DCMS Committee about racism in cricket, had been accompanied by extensive discussions with ECB and other colleagues within the cricket sector.
- 4.13 The Board acknowledged that there had been progress made by the ECB to tackle the issues highlighted at the DCMS Committee. It was agreed there was a clear consensus around the urgent need for change, however, there remained concerns around the ECB's capability to drive the systemic change needed in all levels of the game.
- 4.14 It was felt that leverage to drive change was available through the reputational risk attached to the withholding or achieving Sport England investment. The Board was clear that any reservation of funding from the ECB should not be detrimental to achieving greater equality, diversity and inclusion within cricket.
- 4.15 The Board agreed that any approach and response to the ECB would need to be fair, equitable and stand up to robust scrutiny should similar issues be raised within other sports. The findings of the Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport (TRARIIS) report had made it clear that racism and racial inequities exist within sport, and that this resulted in ethnically diverse communities and individuals being disadvantaged, discriminated against, and excluded from sport and physical activity. The Board felt that the situation highlighted within cricket provided an opportunity to influence all sports to take an honest look at their sport at all levels and recognise and

tackle the racism and inequality that TRAARIS had highlighted. Members reflected that minority ethnic groups had felt excluded in sports and alternative competitions and spaces had been created outside the mainstream. The Board felt that this needed to change to a position where everyone felt able to participate and integrate within sport.

- 4.16 The Board agreed that any decision to delay investment should be communicated directly to the ECB along with justification and guidance on what further was needed for an investment envelope to be agreed, and an application solicited. In addition, the Board agreed Sport England should continue to influence and leverage change by working collaboratively and supportively with the ECB and partners who acknowledged their need to tackle racism and inequality.
- 4.17 The Board concluded that, on the basis of the ECB correspondence, communications and discussions, there remained concerns about the progress being made in the sport on tackling racism, and in addition how the issue of racism in cricket was being addressed by the ECB.
- 4.18 The Board reflected on the period of time that would be required to evidence a level of change needed which would result in the confidence in solicit an application for investment into the ECB. It was agreed that there would be a further review period with recommendations supplied to the Board at the meeting of 28 March 2022. **ACTION: Phil Smith** to progress discussions with the ECB accordingly.
- 4.19 The Board **AGREED with the recommendation** to delay the consideration of the solicitation of an application from the ECB in line with the system partners investment, until its March 2022 meeting.

## **5. Parklife Coaching 2021-2022 Investment Recommendation Report**

- 5.1 Pat Brosnan presented Parklife Coaching 2021-2022 Investment Recommendation Report ([paper MB22-05](#)). The paper sought Board approval of a further £2 million ring fenced exchequer investment into the Football Association (FA) to support their work to enhance the quality and diversity of the coaching workforce in football known as 'Project Parklife'.
- 5.2 The Board noted that the FA had improved access and engagement with coaches using a 'coach development workforce' divided across several areas, equality, diversity and inclusion, digital learning and delivery via an online platform. They welcomed this approach and acknowledged an

increase in diversity of the coaching workforce, noting future plans to continue to provide accessible routes to coaching for under-represented groups.

- 5.3 The Board were pleased that the FA had addressed historic issues with data sharing, and had now developed policies, procedures and practices for legal and legitimate data collection and sharing. This had provided necessary insight into the performance of FA led programmes which enabled further confidence in Sport England's investment. The Board felt that continued engagement on performance management and data sharing would be valuable to ensure this improved practice continued.
- 5.4 In line with the previous in principle agreement with DCMS where Sport England would act as the distributor for this funding, the Board **APPROVED** a final award of £2 million for coaching support directly to the FA for 2021/22 as 'rollover' funding allocated to NGBs and Active Partnerships through 21-22.  
**ACTION: Pat Brosnan** to note Board feedback and progress accordingly.

## **6. Football Foundation Exchequer Award 2022-2025**

- 6.1 Pat Brosnan briefed the Board on potential exchequer investment to the Football Foundation for 2022-25 and its alignment to the *Uniting the Movement* and the benefits of investment to football and other community sports (paper MB22-06 refers).
- 6.2 The Board noted the investment into community football facilities and the links to the *Uniting the Movement* implementation plan provided by the reach and popularity of football within priority groups. They welcomed that focused insight had been used and relationships had been built to ensure investment was being targeted where there was greatest need and where investment could have the most significant impact.
- 6.3 The Board noted that the approach to investment had been highly collaborative. Discussions with football partners and other key stakeholders had taken place to agree a "multi-sport" approach delivered through three key strands: strategic grass pitch projects, multi-sport policy and small sided facilities. The Board agreed that this strategy, delivered in partnership, and within a culture that was open to and promoted multi-sports usage, would provide added value for a range of sports.
- 6.4 The Board felt that continued, strong leadership and an effective stakeholder framework would be key to continuing to drive the cultural shift



away from facilities being solely focused on football to being multi-functional and multi-sport amenities. They welcomed ongoing engagement with local authorities, community sports clubs and community groups as part of the stakeholder development plan.

- 6.5 The Board reflected that this more unified approach was needed given the commitment that up to 40% of the investment across the country should be in the provision of multi-sport facilities (with football at the heart). It was felt however, that this should be an area for regular review to ensure that the culture shift underway continued, that it was also reflected in the practical use of facilities for multi-sport purposes and that the wider *Uniting the Movement* objectives were being achieved.

## **7 Regulation and Dispute Resolution in Sport**

- 7.1 Phil Smith presented Regulation and Dispute Resolution in Sport ([paper MB22-07 refers](#)). The paper provided context for the Board discussion, a brief readout from special Board session which was held on 14 January 2022 and a paper jointly submitted by Sport England and UK Sport to DCMS which set out how integrity matters are handled in National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and potential options for further action.
- 7.2 The Board acknowledged the critical and significant difference between regulation and dispute resolution and the importance of having an agreed understanding on the difference between the two and the options available to both influence and deliver related services before making any decisions.
- 7.3 It was agreed that robust and well communicated routes for reporting problems or complaints, support and resolution should be in place within sport. The Board acknowledged that not having clear, well defined and effective systems in place to report and record complaints and concerns was a risk to individuals, communities and the industry itself. In addition, members noted that the absence of clear and effective systems and processes to manage complaints and concerns, and ensure sound regulation, was having a detrimental effect on confidence in the sport industry.
- 7.4 The Board acknowledged that there should be a distinction made between the role of Sport England in influencing sport related regulation and dispute resolution and delivering the provision itself. It was agreed that as an investing agency Sport England could not also act as an independent

regulatory body. It also recognised a level of expectation on Sport England to resolve issues without it having the regulatory powers to do so.

- 7.5 The Board welcomed the significant Non-Executive Director expertise in the area of regulation and dispute resolution and there was strong steer to ensure that Board member's skills and experience were utilised in ongoing policy development.
- 7.6 The Board acknowledged the short-term opportunity to collaborate with UK Sport on an Independent Disclosure and Complaints Service and the long-term proposal to expand the (IDCS) or equivalent to cover complaints regarding NGBs. They felt that on balance further scoping was required to define the overall remit and scale prior to further discussion on Sport England's position on regulation and dispute resolution. **ACTION: Phil Smith** to progress.
- 7.7 The Board **did not APPROVE** working with UK Sport on the Independent Disclosure and Complaints Service at this time, preferring to be supportive of the establishing of that service for high performance sport and learn any appropriate lessons for how to serve community sport in the long term.

## **8. Any other business**

- 8.1 Nick Pontefract provided the Board with a verbal update on Board, Committee and Subsidiary appointments. The Board noted that an update on Non-Executive recruitment would be presented to the next Board meeting. Board members noted the importance of future-proofing Investment Committee and ARGC independent membership given the substantial turnover in Board members in the coming months. **ACTION: Nick Pontefract** to provide update to the Board meeting of 28 March 2022.
- 8.2 With no further items of business being raised, Chris Boardman thanked attendees and closed the meeting. The Board was next scheduled to meet formally on 28 March 2022.

**These minutes were agreed by the Sport England Board at its meeting of 28 March 2022**