

Board Meeting 09 December 2025

Mary Ward House,

Members

Chris Boardman, Chair

Mel Bound

Michelle Cracknell

Elena Narozanski*

Tom Gribbin

Vaughan Lindsay

Natalie Daniels*

Jason Fergus

Executive Officers

Jeanette Bain-Burnett – Executive Director, Policy and Integrity

Lisa Dodd-Mayne – Executive Director, Place

Lizzie Hanna – Chief Finance Officer

Simon Hayes – Chief Executive Officer

Nick Pontefract – Chief Strategy Officer

Phil Smith – Executive Director, Partnerships

Ben Wilson – Executive Director, Digital, Marketing & Communications (until item 14)

Officers

*Greg Clements – Director of Partner Relationships (item 9)

Sarah Forster – Finance Director (items 8)

*Emma Heel – Head of Strategy Delivery (item 10)

Niall Judge – Head of Workforce Development Workforce Transformation (item 13)

Simon Macqueen – Director, Strategy

*Lizzie Hughes – Director of Investment (item 9)

Hazel McCluskey – Director of Sporting System (items 13)

Jitendra Patel – Strategic Lead, Corporate Governance

Helen Price – Principal Analyst Quantitative Research Insight (item 11)

Naomi Shearon – Strategic Lead, Strategy (item 9)

John Vincent – Consultant (item 9)

Attendees

Adam Conant – Head of Sport, DCMS

Heather Sinclair, Head of Children & Young People and Sport Integrity, DCMS

Stefan Terry – Undivided (item 9)

Laura Farrell – Undivided (item 9)

**via MS Teams*

1. Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed members and attendees. The Board noted the apologies from Heather Sinclair on the delay in confirmation of Board member re-appointments.

The Chair acknowledged the professionalism of Executive Directors in response to the Organisational structure process, and also the response to the Secretary of State's letter.

2. Apologies for absence

Noted apologies from Helene Raynsford.

3. Declarations of interest

Noted that there were no new declarations from Board Members.

4. Minutes of Meeting of 23 September 2025

The Board **approved** the minutes of the previous meeting.

5. Matters Arising - Action Log

The Board noted the updated to the Action Log including the planned update to Board on the Every Move strategy in March, and DCMS's support for minister engagement with DEFRA in the AGP Recycling Task & Finish Group to support their commitment. An update on the Movement Fund and AI as part of an engagement session was also noted.

6. CEO's report

The Board noted the update, including Jason Fergus's assurance on the EDI report, including; the submission to the Secretary of State; the interest in the recent Place announcement; the consensus of the need for organisational change; and the latest position on the response to the planning consultation.

The Board noted the need for an Equality Impact Assessment in the Organisational Change programme and related MTP. The Board also noted the challenges in response to the query regarding LGBTQ+ related staff data.

7. Chairs' reports

The Board noted verbal summaries of recent Investment Committee (IC), Audit, Risk and Governance Committee (ARGC), English Sports Development Trust (ESDT) and Sports Council Trust Company (SCTC) activity.

Michelle Cracknell highlighted: developments on the Investment Technology Programme, Counter Fraud and Risk, Finance (including constraints and limitations), and the positive upturn with repayments in the SSP programme. The opportunity for a joint-IC and ARGC meeting was also noted in response to the

Governance and Assurance report, to discuss wider areas of alignment.

Jason Fergus highlighted key points from IC: strategic approach on RoI framework, a planned update on the EDI roadmap in February, a revised ToR and further assurance sought on timelines during the transition period, and the overall investment envelope and pipeline.

Ben Wilson reported on ESDT, highlighting the assurance on campaign performance, and the approach for evaluation of the This Girl Can campaign.

Lisa Dodd-Mayne, on behalf of its Chair Geoff Wilson, reported on SCTC highlighting the decarbonisation at Bisham, and the use of NSC facilities as training camps for the Euros and LA2028.

8. Finance Update

Finance and Cashflow reports

Sarah Forster highlighted that we are on track to meet our finance and cost control targets, and the Board noted the contingency held to support Organisational Change, The Board recognised the work of the Finance Team and across Sport England in supporting the Annual Report and accounts process.

The Board **noted** the Finance and the Lottery and Exchequer Cashflow Reports

9. Medium Term Plan

MTP Framing

Simon Macqueen, supported by the MTP Team, set the context on the development and implementation of the MTP, with assurance noted through the Change Steering Group.

The Board had a substantial discussion on the MTP as we move the approach into investment design to support priorities previously discussed. The developments in sharpening objectives for priorities and the budget, pending confirmation of the spending review settlement. Alignment with DCMS on the National Plan for Physical Activity were also highlighted, along with the confidence levels on contribution modelling and RoI,

Assurance on the design of the application process (to ensure smaller and values-driven organisations can access funding opportunities and are not disadvantaged by larger organisations' capacity to meet investment criteria) was provided and further information sought on the use of discretionary spend and budget allocation. The Board noted the need to develop and communicate a clear transition plan for partner organisations affected by changes, including responsible exit strategies and support for those no longer funded.

Change Communications Strategy and Brand Narrative

The Board noted the presentation on the communications and brand narrative aligned to the change comms strategy which aimed to clarify Sport England's purpose, unify messaging, and better articulate its community-centric mission to internal and external stakeholders.

The Board reflected on and discussed the language related to active recreation, opportunities to champion communities, and assurance on the positive nature of the tone. Assurance on testing the narrative with partners was also noted.

The Board **noted** the update on the MTP and Brand narrative.

10. Active Lives (CYP) results

Helen Price provided headlines on the Active Lives (CYP) survey which showed record high activity levels (since the survey began in 2017), with over half a million more children meeting the 60+ daily minutes guideline. The Board also noted the areas of concern, with inequalities widening in some areas.

The Board **noted** the update.

11. Place Deepening (Birmingham)

The Board **noted** the update from Lisa Dodd-Mayne on Birmingham, with assurance provided on the commitment to the place-based approach with a strong place partnership. An update on the investment will be provided in March.

12. Stage 2 Business Case: Workforce System Development

Phil, supported by Hazel and Nial provided context and rationale for the investment to support the wider framework of the sport's council duties and increasing activity levels through a better experience for participants and coaches in the sector.

The Board supported the principles of the programme which would be applicable to all governing bodies and discussed the financial input from other sports councils noting the leadership role for Sport England in the space. Consideration of tapering funding as part of was also noted to mitigate in-perpetuity funding.

The Board discussed the governance route with agreement that future decisions should follow a straight forward route, involving the Investment Committee.

Action 091225-01

Niall and Hazel to provide a note to Investment Committee members to provide assurance on the measurement and evaluation approach proposed.

Decision

Board **agreed** to £5m of investment into Workforce Governance System Development from April 2026 to March 2029, with agreement to solicit an application for £3.6m from CIMSPA.

The Board **agreed** to procure support, communication and evaluator services of up to £1.4m, noting the need for robust conditionality, evaluation and KPIs to measure the impact of the investment – with a note to Investment Committee to provide assurance on the evaluation approach issues raised.

13. Any Other Business

The Board thanked and recognised the commitment, contribution, and valued counsel of David Mahoney during his time as a Board Member at Sport England.