

Minutes of a Meeting of the UK Athletics Board of Directors

26 May 2021 on Microsoft Teams/at Edgbaston Cricket Ground, 10am

Present Nic Coward (Chair)
David Abrahams (DA)
Gordon Arthur (GA)
Penny Avis (PA)
Stuart Cain (SC)
Joanna Coates (JC)
Peter Crawshaw (PC)
David Ovens (DO)
Steve Perks (DSP)
Jennifer Thomas (JT)
Anne Wafula-Strike (AWS)
Mike Whittingham (MW)

Observers Hannah England (HE)
Jason Gardener (JG)

In attendance Mark Draisey (MD)
Kate Bradley (KB)
Katie Brazier (KTB)
Mark Munro (MM)
Ryan Murphy (RM)
Sara Symington (SS)

Apologies No apologies

1. Introduction and Attendees

Chair welcomed all to the meeting and a special welcome to DO and JT to their first scheduled Board meeting. There were no apologies.

2. Approval of Minutes of Meeting on 3 March 2021 meeting

The Board approved the minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2021.

2.1 Actions and Matters from the Minutes not on the Agenda

Chair proposed that, bearing in mind the wide-ranging Agenda and the draft Operational Plan, matters arising and actions would be addressed at the end of the meeting if not addressed during the agenda.

Action: KB to circulate a note of Actions from previous meetings.

2.2 Standards Ethics and Rules Committee Minutes - 12/05/21

Board noted the minutes of the Standards Ethics and Rules Committee on 12/02/21. HE asked if the Eligibility for Competition: Transgender and Female Classification also included road running and off-track events. PA and MM stated that this would be clarified.

Action: PA/MM/KB to discuss the wording of the Eligibility for Competition document to ensure it also covers off track events before publication.

2.3 Audit Committee Minutes - 17/03/21

Board noted the minutes of the Audit Committee on 17/03/21.

2.4 HR Remuneration Committee Minutes - 25/03/21

Board noted the minutes of the Remuneration Committee on 25/03/21.

2.5 TAG Meeting Minutes - 17/04/21

Charlie Grice record was confirmed as 1000m. MM was asked to clarify the formal process for the approval of athlete records by UKA, including the role of TAG and Board. The Board agreed that the final step in the ratification process should be the UKA Board.

Action: MM to consider and confirm process.

3 UKA Operational Plan 2021-2032

The Board had received in the Agenda pack a detailed current draft of the Operational Plan through which JC explained the executive believed UKA could best and most effectively and efficiently achieve its roles and responsibilities under Athletics Unified and the Framework Agreement. The Plan had been worked on by the executive with their respective teams and involving widespread collaboration and consultation. The timetable remained for formal release to the sport and more widely around the Diamond League in July. This would be through a webinar open to the whole sport and others. The Board was being asked for any thoughts, comments and challenge prior to the finalisation of the Plan document in the coming weeks.

JC presented the introduction to the Plan and each member of the Executive Team presented each of their respective parts. SS - Athlete First; MM – Superstructure; KTB - Competition and Events; RM - Commercial Edge; and MD - Organisational Health.

JC confirmed that the plan is for the whole of the sport, including Para, at the levels and in the areas that had been agreed with and by the HCAFs. A key theme was “resetting” major aspect of athletics, in collaboration with the HCAFs.

The Board asked as an introductory point any major themes that had emerged from webinars and consultation: JC confirmed that, although it was something that was often talked about, and despite significant messaging, the process had shown the continuing lack of awareness and understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of UKA and HCAFs. UKA was often asked questions relating to best use of membership fee, for instance, without apparent understanding from individuals with a significant time or involvement in the sport that UKA does not charge or receive any such fee.

Particular points noted in Board discussion included:

- A review of the medal targets which formed the UK Sport submission in 2020 through to 2032 and how these should be framed within the Plan. These targets formed one aspect of the Athletics Unified Goals, and were very important, but needed to be set in the context of other objectives. These would be reviewed internally and by UK Sport on a regular basis.
- The Board noted the importance of Hubs alongside the National Performance Centre and the importance of signalling enjoyment and entertainment in competitions and events. It was discussed how the events specific approach would work in practice for events that are currently less high profile than others or where participation is lower. SS confirmed the strategy is to profile on an equal basis but that development of individuals and the athlete population would require constant review and re-evaluation of investment.
- The focus on “The Age of the Athlete” was noted and supported, although questioned as to how this could be made to be inclusionary of all who came together to create the sport.
- The importance of Data and Insight was noted and supported, with a greater need for the sport to understand the available performance and pathway data, and make decisions on this basis. This needed to include the best possible understanding of the entire athletics system, and not just performance data within a single discipline. The Board supported a greater allocation of resource to data analysis as had been discussed at the previous meeting. JC confirmed that a data and insight plan would be developed for all areas of UKA, not only performance, before deciding how to resource the delivery of the plan and this was an area where the whole sport through UKA and the HCAFs needed to be addressed as one.
- The new commercial model and approach was supported, and the underpinning objective to create less dependency on UK Sport and Sport England funding. This included the Board supporting the executive progressing discussions with local authorities across the UK regarding potential long-term collaborations.
- It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the HCAFs about how best to achieve efficiency and value for money between them were ongoing, in particular with England Athletics.
- The focus on Technical Officials was noted and supported. It was felt that the current approach to events and competitions was potentially creating a demand for Technical Officials that would not be met, and would not be sustainable.
- A ‘chartered’ approach to coaching and the proposed Coaches Association was endorsed, and a move to build on the current “licensing” approach. This was supported as a priority. The promotion of continuing professional development and skills building was seen as important, as well as regulatory requirements and Safeguarding. It was noted that research did not identify obvious priorities amongst coaches. This was something the Board felt should be considered further. It was also necessary to build a full understanding of the way in which coaches were actually coaching, and a full understanding of the coaching capacity and where needs for more or different levels of coaches were. MM was asked to further develop insight from the coaching community as the themes identified from the survey were not clear. MM confirmed that the consultation process is ongoing and further analysis would take place.

Action: MM to identify themes from the next phase of the Coaching consultation and develop into proposals.

- The Board considered that a specific communications plan was needed for the Plan and the key themes within it, to all relevant audiences. It was felt that the five organisations all needed to be part of this, and Board members wished to play a role. It was also felt that Athletes and the Athletes Commission should be involved, as well as coaches and others. JC confirmed a stakeholder engagement and communications plan will be developed with important milestones identified over the next 10 years, post Tokyo. It was suggested that the plan could be launched in three phases rather than all at once, and this would be explored further. JT offered to provide assistance to the Executive Team in developing plans.

Action: Launch phasing to be considered. Launch and future communications and engagement plans to be created and circulated to Board at appropriate time. JC to follow up with JT to discuss the communications strategy.

The Board welcomed and supported the Plan, and all the work that had gone into it. The Board also noted and approved the budget information provided in the Board pack alongside the Operational Plan.

4 Performance

The Board noted the report from SS on Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games preparation. AWS thanked SS for this in particular, noting her request at the previous meeting.

5 CEO Report

The Board received and noted the report.

JC confirmed that following notification about a Panorama programme in relation to Para classification, which was understood to be scheduled for broadcast in early June, statements had been sent from the IPC and BPA to the production company.

6 Development

6.1 Safeguarding Policies and UK-wide Implementation Plan

MM gave a verbal update on Safeguarding progress within UKA and the HCAFs, noting the circulation of the final draft Policies and Procedures earlier in the week. UKA has agreed an implementation plan with the HCAFs and will support with education and training (a primary responsibility of the HCAFs with their members). UKA is on track to deliver all of the core recommendations from the Quinlan review by the deadline of 31 July 2021.

MM confirmed that the Policies and Procedures would be published in the week commencing 31 May, with a communications plan across all five athletics organisations. The education and training plan would commence after that. The Board formally adopted the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures and thanked MM and the team for their considerable work.

6.2 Electronic Start systems

MM gave an update following Metropolitan Police position of not issuing firearms licenses for starting guns in future, at a date to be confirmed. This may lead to a national policy across all police forces. MM is leading a project group to look at the full implementation of electronic starts across the UK and will keep the Board updated with progress. The Board approved this policy change.

7 Finance

Draft Financial Performance for 2020/21

MD presented Board the financial position for March 2021 and the timeline for the Audit.

The Board asked MD to circulate to all members the Board's reserves policy.

Action: MD to circulate a note on the reserves policy.

8 People and Culture

Chair confirmed that the Executive and Remuneration Committee continue to consider a proposal for a revised company pension plan, and there would be a further detailed update to Board before the next meeting.

Action: Proposal to be circulated to Board before the next meeting.


9 Strategy and Governance

9.1 UKA Members – consultation process update

Chair updated the Board on the process, timeline and recent meeting of the Sports Councils, at which JC had presented progress in relation to the Change Plan. One outstanding item was the UK Members Council review, on which the HCAFs had consulted with their member clubs. A meeting had been held between the five Chairs on 10 May. The meeting had confirmed that the relationship between the five organisations was working well and seen as a considerable positive. It was felt that the only possible area for an agreed proposal, which all agreed there would have to be so it could be proposed and adopted with strong support from the HCAFs as members of the company, was under Option C – this was that the HCAFs are members plus any groups that were considered to merit membership of the company, not being represented through the HCAFs themselves. This could therefore involve a continuation of membership of a member drawn from senior coaches and officials and the Athletes Commission as present, but with separate club individuals being less certain. There was also consideration for a differently constituted council group, which could be a greater number than present. The next step is for there to be a proposal discussed between the five Chairs. There would not be a formal proposal to the next scheduled meeting of members of the company in June, and it was noted that the Sports Councils on 25 May had expressed a view that this matter should be resolved by September. A letter of follow up is expected from UK Sport setting out their expectations on delivery of this part of the change plan.

9.2 European Athletics – Board appointment

It was noted that European Athletics stated in its constitution that officials at a certain level of that organisation should be a member of the Board of the federation with which they are affiliated. UKA



would seek to understand the purpose of European Athletics criteria, and would engage with European Athletics appropriately.

9.3 Recruitment of Chair

The Board has agreed the timeline circulated by PA and approved the appointment of Brewster McBride. The process is in place and the advert will go live on 1 July.

9.4 Eligibility for Competition: Transgender and Female Classification

This paper and the recommended policy it set out, as recommended by SERC, was approved by Board. The action raised under Agenda item 2 was noted.

9.5 Annual Governance Calendar

The Board noted the future dates.

The meeting closed at 14:20.

Next Meeting – 14/07/21 at 10am