

## **UK Athletics - Change Plan 2020**

### **Background**

In February 2020, UK Sport commissioned an independent review of UK Athletics (UKA) following a series of challenges faced by both the sport and the organisation. The purpose of the review was to quickly identify the main areas of change and development required to create an organisation that was fit-for-the-future. The reviewer conducted over 40 interviews with leading figures within and around the sport, including within UKA and the Home Country Athletics Federations (HCAFs).

The review concluded in March 2020, with the reviewer reporting directly to the UK Sport Board. Using the main themes and conclusions of the review, UK Sport has worked with Sport England, Sport NI, sportscotland and Sport Wales, to develop the following Change Plan which identifies a series of actions to be implemented across the UK.

### **Implementation**

All five Sports Councils (UK Sport, Sport England, Sport NI, sportscotland and Sport Wales) are committed to supporting UKA to become an exceptional organisation, as part of an aligned system of governing bodies overseeing athletics across the UK (these being UKA, England Athletics, Athletics Northern Ireland, Scottish Athletics and Welsh Athletics).

Collectively, a significant level of public funding is invested into the sport across the UK. All five Sports Councils are clear that the five athletics governing bodies need to align behind an effective and integrated approach to the sport across the UK.

This plan is intended to strengthen UKA (and its connectivity to the HCAFs), ensuring that it can continue to receive public funding and maximise the opportunities that such funding brings. UK Sport will amend its funding agreement with UKA, to ensure that this public funding is directly linked to UKA's commitment and contribution to the successful delivery of this plan.

Similarly, this plan has also been agreed by Sport England, Sport NI, sportscotland and Sport Wales, who provide funding to England Athletics, Athletics Northern Ireland, Scottish Athletics and Welsh Athletics respectively (the HCAFs). Those Sports Councils have agreed to link their funding agreements with the respective HCAFs to this plan, to ensure that those organisations also commit and contribute to its successful delivery.

A Sports Councils Group, consisting of the CEOs of the five Sports Councils, will meet periodically to review the progress of UKA and the HCAFs in implementing this plan, and to approve key outputs where required. Other parts of the plan will be for the sport itself to own, reporting progress to the Sports Councils. The Sports Councils Group will have the ability to vary this plan, including to the timelines in recognition of the challenges that may be presented by COVID-19. If insufficient progress is made, the Group will have the ability to consider wide-ranging options, including further reviews and alternative models/structures for funding the sport.

UKA and the HCAFs will, by the end of May 2020, agree and propose a set of key milestones to track the implementation of the plan (with regular reporting to follow), alongside an interim collaboration agreement to describe how they will work together to implement this plan. UKA and the HCAFs will also consult with the wider athletics community in implementing this plan.

All five athletics governing bodies now have a choice to make in terms of whether to move forward positively and collectively to improve the sport across the UK. As a first step, all five athletics governing bodies will be asked to make a formal statement by the end of May 2020, committing to work together to actively support the implementation of this Change Plan.

## Areas of Change

### 1. Strategic Alignment and Collaboration - UKA and the HCAFs to co-develop a long-term UK-wide strategy and framework agreement for the sport of athletics across the UK, with the following characteristics:

- Reflect UKA's role as the nationally and internationally recognised Governing Body for Athletics in the UK, including as the representative member for the UK in World Athletics.
- Build on 'An Athletic Nation' and develop absolute clarity around the respective roles and responsibilities of UKA and the HCAFs in leading athletics across the UK.
- Be clear about the purpose of UKA and the HCAFs, and work to the principle that 'UKA should only do what only UKA can (most effectively) do'.
- Agree a Framework Agreement between UKA and HCAFs, setting out how the five athletics governing bodies will not only collaborate, but also hold each other accountable in performing their interdependent roles and responsibilities to deliver this new strategy. This will also define how executive alignment between UKA and the HCAFs can be strengthened.
- Develop clear and cohesive underpinning standards across UKA and the HCAFs, including in respect of the performance pathway.
- Amend the Articles of Association of UKA and the HCAFs to provide visibility and clarity of their realigned roles and responsibilities.
- A CEO Forum of the UKA and HCAF CEOs to be responsible for driving the development of this new Strategy and Framework Agreement.
- UKA to develop and agree its own organisational strategy, through which it will deliver its roles and responsibilities within this UK-wide approach.

*A new long-term, UK-wide Strategy and Framework Agreement, detailing clear roles and responsibilities for UKA and the HCAFs, will be agreed by the five athletics governing bodies and presented to the five Sports Councils for approval by the end of September 2020.*

*Articles of Association reflecting the realigned roles and responsibilities to be approved by all five athletics governing bodies by the end of November 2020.*

### 2. Leadership and Governance - UKA to reform its Board and Members Council in order to implement a more effective and collegiate style of leadership and governance:

#### Board Reform Plan

- Ensure that each HCAF has the right to nominate a director to the UKA Board, whilst maintaining the requirement that all Board directors act in the best interests of UKA. The revised Board composition should remain in line with the Code for Sport Governance (including retaining a minimum percentage of independent directors).
- Appoint a permanent Independent Chair of UKA, as defined by the Code for Sports Governance, noting that this does not prohibit a person with experience and knowledge of the sport from the role.
- All appointments to the UKA Board to be made in line with the Code for Sports Governance.
- Amend the Articles of Association of UKA and the HCAFs to reflect these reforms.

*A Board Reform Plan, containing proposals as to how and when all of the above actions will be delivered, will be agreed by all five athletics governing bodies and presented to the five Sports Councils for approval by the end of September 2020, with those changes to have been implemented by the end of December 2020.*

#### Members Council Reform Plan

- The role of the UK Members Council (UKMC) will be radically re-thought, in order to significantly enhance UKA's connectivity and accountability to the wider sport across the UK.
- An options appraisal will be developed to consider at minimum: a) disbanding UKMC and utilising alternative ways to more effectively collate and listen to the views of the athletics community, and b) reconstituting the UKMC in a fundamentally different format.
- This options appraisal will consider the impact of a change to the Members Council on the corporate membership of UKA and will propose alternative ownership options.

*A Members Council Reform Plan, containing proposals as to how and when all of the above actions will be completed, will be agreed by all five athletics governing bodies and presented to the five Sports Councils for approval by the end of September 2020, incorporating a proposed timetable for the implementation of the agreed changes.*

### **3. Thematic Changes - UKA to deliver the following projects as a priority:**

#### Ethical Decision-Making and Culture

- UKA needs to transform the way that it approaches difficult ethical decisions.
- An Ethical Framework for taking such decisions will be established, founded upon clear organisational values, beliefs and standards.
- A plan will be developed to ensure that everyone in the organisation understands and lives the values, beliefs and standards that underpin this framework.
- People and HR processes and policy will reflect the requirement for all those involved in UKA activity (as employees, contractors and volunteers) to uphold and promote the framework, including (but not limited to) recruitment, recognition and reward processes.

#### New Communications Strategy

- UKA's communications style (both externally and internally) needs to become significantly more proactive, transparent, strategic and collaborative.
- A new Communications Strategy will be developed for the organisation, embracing these characteristics, and with clear accountability for its delivery at executive director level.

#### Shared Services Study

- UKA and the HCAFs will deliver a review that explores the scope for further efficiencies through further shared services across the whole athletics family in the UK.

*A timetable for the completion of these changes to be presented to the five Sports Councils for approval by the end of May 2020.*

### **Summary of Timetable**

- End May 2020 – UKA and HCAF formal statements of commitment
- End May 2020 – Key milestones submitted to Sports Councils
- End May 2020 – Interim Collaboration Agreement submitted to Sports Councils
- End Sep 2020 – Strategy and Framework Agreement submitted to Sports Councils
- End Sep 2020 – Board reform plan submitted to Sports Councils
- End Sep 2020 – UKA Members Council reform plan submitted to Sports Councils
- End Nov 2020 – UKA and HCAF Articles of Association amended
- End Dec 2020 – UKA Board changes made