

BOARD SYNOPSIS – November 2025

Meeting	England Hockey Board Meeting				
Venue	Bisham Abbey				
Date	25 th November 2025	Start Time	12:30	End Time	17:00
Lead	Kath Russ, Chair (KR)				
Present:	Rich Beer (RB), Kuldeep Kaur (KK), Shelagh Everett (SE), Damian Smith (DS), Simon Mantell (SMa), Claudio Borges (CB), Angela Durnin (AD), Janet Grant (JG)				
Invited in:	Alex Danson-Bennett (ADB), Jacqui Barlow (JB), Bobby Crutchley (BC), Heather Williams (HW), Charlie Wells (CW), Stuart Guise (SG); Andy Tapley (ADT) (Online); John Harrison, UK Sport Representative (JH); Keith Carder, Head of Sport, (KC) joined for item 5.				
Notetaker:	Michele Townsend (MT)				
Apologies	Anne-Marie Garner (AMG)				

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

KR reminded the Board of a standing declaration from JG in respect of performance discussions.

2. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP – **FOR INFORMATION, APPROVAL AND ACTION**

2.1 Finance

The Board were provided with papers detailing an update on year end, going concern and the current year position management. ADT reported a significant (albeit positive) variance in the figures. He explained that the Finance Sub-Committee has undertaken detailed scrutiny of the numbers following the September accounts and that the Committee has spent considerable time understanding the drivers behind the variance. Recommendations have been made to ensure a similar issue does not arise in future.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. KK highlighted the timeline including Audit progress, independent analysis of VAT and confirmed that a final set of accounts would be issued this week ahead of the Audit meeting on Tuesday.
- ii. The Going Concern paper, linked to cashflow, was presented. It was confirmed that the organisation is comfortable to continue as a going concern through to January 2027.
- iii. The year-end deficit was reported as more favourable than previously predicted.
- iv. Work has been undertaken to understand the reasons behind the final position and the movements within the figures and several line items were highlighted where significant movement had occurred, along with mitigating factors.
- v. KK confirmed that Hockey Futures would be consolidated going forward.
- vi. ADT confirmed that this situation would be avoided in future unless in exceptional circumstances and highlighted the following challenges: resource and recruitment/change during maternity leave; more accurate and timely forecasting by budget holders and unrecoverable VAT (currently working through this quarterly).
- vii. KK highlighted a balanced budget for the current year and no discernible big swings in the early parts of the year.
- viii. **The Board agreed that in terms of presentation it would be helpful to see a full P&L and not just a net P&L.**
- ix. **ACTION – a full P&L to be provided for the next meeting - KK**
- x. **The Board agreed the ‘Going Concern’ statement for approval by Auditors.**
- xi. **ACTION – It was agreed to send details of the Risks and Opportunities register to the Board following the meeting – KK**

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- xii. **ACTION - It was agreed to discuss any further risk for consideration at Audit & Risk Committee with ADT and to review lessons learned for feedback to Board – ADT/RB/KK.**

2.2 Membership Model

RB highlighted that the paper is presented for information not for decision; he explained that it was an opportunity to share ideas and present first thoughts on the proposal for next year. He added that the majority of clubs have now paid and the first cut of data would be available shortly to assist with budgeting. He confirmed that work is being done with KK and Finance Sub-Committee and that a paper would be presented at February Board (ahead of AGM) with a final proposal, which he believed would not be a significant step change.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. SG highlighted the current position and the targets in each area, based on a few months in. He explained that the focus had been on delivering on all aspects of the model and highlighted the huge demand for free learning and development, with 1503 participants through courses and workshops.
- ii. The Board expressed positive comments on progress thus far and were pleased to see tracking against the current KPIs.
- iii. 250 appeals have been concluded with most clubs resolved first time. The mechanics of collecting information will be adjusted to ensure the baseline is more accurate next year.
- iv. **The Board discussed the proposal and approved the concept with a formal paper to be submitted at the February meeting.**

2.3 CEO & Exec Report

RB explained that the report continues to evolve but he hoped it highlighted the enormous amount of work going on in the organisation. He explained that the Exec have spent some quality time together which has enhanced decision-making.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. Forums with clubs continue to be well received.
- ii. Strategy days have been held with staff (on a voluntary basis) to review strategic opportunities and identify the 'big plays'. Output will be shared with Exec and presented to Board at a later date.
- iii. With regard to projects, the Hockey Internationals Club is underway to create an alumni network, to engage with ex-international players to seek support with our objectives and learn from them on particular topics. There is also an opportunity to re-engage with them from a commercial perspective.
- iv. CW provided an update on Pro League tickets, which are tracking well following a successful early bird offer. Group and club bookings make up approximately one-third of sales to date, and it is hoped that this will help to inform packages for the Euros.
- v. Commercial Partner tenders are underway for Euros and a new partner, Mongoose, has been appointed. More detail to be presented at February Board with Commercial Strategy update.
- vi. The Board discussed the viewer numbers around Pro League and Channel 4s expectation to help us move on. CW explained that there is no guarantee of moving to linear, because they don't set the programme. She added that a meeting with their Head of Sport is planned for the new year to discuss Pro League and the Euros.
- vii. CB suggested that it might be beneficial to have someone from Channel 4 and the Euros Stakeholder Board Chair to a future board meeting.
- viii. HW reminded the Board that the Junior World Cup is underway with two good teams competing.
- ix. England Age Group teams are showing good state school numbers and a series of state school only training dates and a subsidised tournament is planned to highlight the message that there is a route in every area, representing a positive message around state school inclusion.
- x. Still little information regarding World Cup Qualifiers – communication with clubs is ongoing and concern has been expressed to the FIH.
- xi. The Governance 5yr review is underway with support from a third party.

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- xii. Competition entries are down; further analysis will be undertaken.
- xiii. Facilities loan launched with another club – communication with clubs is enhanced.
- xiv. SG highlighted the Junior Hockey Framework which launched in October. Forums and resources are available, and the implementation group is embedding with clubs. JB confirmed that this has been well received and appreciated.
- xv. The new Safeguarding Manager joins in February, and adverts are out for the Safeguarding Officer as we move to transition from the consultant.
- xvi. HW advised the Board that the Data & Tech strategy is now in a good place and an assessment of opportunities will be undertaken in the new year.
- xvii. With regard to the proposed contract extension with WTU, there has been communication with the Areas to help them understand the rationale, with an emphasis on all enquiries to be filtered through GMS support mailbox and a commitment to making small changes imminently.
- xviii. Trans Policy implementation has been managed well, and the EDI Action Plan (DIAP) is being reviewed by the internal working group.
- xix. The Board agreed delegated authority to the Finance Sub-Committee for contracts above £100k.
- xx. KR asked the Exec to consider what level of reporting should come to Board to ensure confidence that we are managing red cards and making decisions effectively.
- xxi. **ACTION - It was agreed that the Exec consider what evidence can be provided in this regard – EXEC**

3. INSPIRATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS – FOR INFORMATION

3.1 Performance Advisory Group update

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. ADB and SMa provided a brief update on how the group is working so far; both commenting positively.
- ii. BC advised the Board that the UKSI restructure will have an impact on resource.
- iii. He advised that there has been positive feedback regarding the coaching team and the Assistant Coach rotating pool is working well.
- iv. With regard to female coaches, there is a plan to identify talent in the short term and to provide exposure to top level coaching. The Long-term plan (10yr) has been discussed briefly and will be reviewed again in the new year – considerations are the centralised programme, frequency of training and what potential changes could be made. To be shared with the Board at a later date. He added that he is in consultation with UK Sport with regard to understanding barriers and progressing opportunities for female coaches.
- v. GB playing format is still in consideration, RB highlighted the importance of looking at the GB playing format and the implications of that for the home nations. BC confirmed that conversations are underway and hopeful.
- vi. He added that a long-term strategy is in development along with the rest of the organisation and talent development opportunities.

4. GOVERNANCE – FOR INFORMATION, APPROVAL AND ACTION

4.1 AGM Matters

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. KR confirmed the recruitment of an INED with a performance focus will commence shortly.
- ii. The Nominations Committee held a meeting to discuss the recommendation for DS and AMG to continue for a second term. **This has been approved by the Board.**
- iii. **It was agreed to try to align all Non-Executive Director recruitment with the AGM.**
- iv. The Appointments Committee will oversee the recruitment process for the VP and MENED. It was agreed that one of the MENEDs should have performance expertise, so it is hoped that SMa will stand again. The Committee are currently reviewing the skills required for the other MENED.
- v. The Board are encouraged to approach potential candidates.

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4.2 Committee Terms of Reference

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. KR clarified the Nominations Committee responsibilities – the Committee are responsible for leading the process around the recruitment of Non-Executive Board Directors but not for the recruitment of Executive Directors.
- ii. SE raised the question of whether or not the external Auditors should attend meetings of the Audit & Risk Committee outside of Audit Committee. It was agreed to update the Terms of Reference as appropriate
- iii. KR requested that a Sharepoint folder or some other repository be considered for holding all Terms of Reference.
- iv. **ACTION – It was agreed that Exec provide the Board with a repository solution for the Terms of Reference to ensure that the master documents are consistently and regularly updated and available - EXEC**
- v. **It was agreed that members of the Finance Sub-Committee should be qualified and that the Head of People should be included in 'attendance' with L&D as a separate heading.**
- vi. John Harrison at UK Sport, who is responsible for our compliance with the Code of Sports Governance has agreed to postpone the Board evaluation to the autumn next year.

4.3 Master Governance Document

Paper taken as read with no comments. The paper presented the Terms of Reference for all Committees.

4.4 Chair and President update

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

- i. ADB highlighted activity since the last meeting, including participating in the Athlete Voice groups, which was well received and valued.
- ii. In terms of recent connections, ADB connected with players at a Schools tournament in Oxford.
- iii. With regard to Membership ADB holds regular conversations with people about membership and whilst guidance from the CEO is always sought, it's a great opportunity to provide feedback both ways.
- iv. A recent visit to the House of Lords provided a great networking opportunity, namely with the Presidents from England Netball and the RFU, and Denise Lewis.
- v. KR also highlighted the Athletes Voice group and emphasised the importance of making this work for the players and the organisation and the need to manage expectations.
- vi. Hockey ID – KR expressed her interest in what more can be done in this area and the potential of opportunity.
- vii. Working with SG, KR is keen to progress the impact funding discussion and the opportunity to invest in interesting development projects with local authorities.
- viii. CB highlighted the social justice impact research being undertaken by Rugby. He suggested that any information obtained would be useful, especially in consideration of the Facilities Loan Scheme.
- ix. Both KR and ADB requested that Board and Exec let them know of any potential club visits they could undertake. RB added his appreciation and suggested that a more systematic and strategic approach could be beneficial next year.
- x. SMa highlighted that Access Sport would like to get more involved with Flyerz. RB confirmed that EH is undertaking some small grant project work with them.

4.5 Safeguarding update and Policies

- i. KK confirmed that a review of the current policy is underway with internal teams and referred to the changes in respect of dividing proactive and reactive work. She added that there will be adaptation for youth and any collateral will be redesigned.
- ii. The aim is for the amended policy to be live in April before the next CPSU assessment.

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- iii. KR questioned the timeline; the understanding is that our ‘conditionally met’ rating requires actions to be completed within 3 months and emphasised the importance of moving at pace in this area.
- iv. **ACTION - It was agreed that the CPSU be approached to advise them of the restructure and date for the policy update - KK**
- v. **ACTION - It was agreed that regular updates be provided to the Board – KK**
- vi. SG confirmed that with regard to Welfare Officer data, we now have a named Welfare Officer at every club and mapping is underway.
- vii. **ACTION - It was agreed that this mapping would be completed by end of December and presented to the February Board meeting – SG**
- viii. With regard to the Concussion Policy, minor changes have been made, and the policy is now on the website. The significant change is to ‘expedited return to play report’, if a Doctor is available.
- ix. **ACTION – It was agreed to specifically add umpires to the Concussion Policy – KK**
- x. ADB emphasised the need for careful wording, in particular the ‘specialist healthcare professional’ who is that and where is the decision made? RB highlighted the importance of capturing data, which is done in EHL and provided for insurance purpose
- xi. **ACTION – It was agreed to circulate the Concussion policy with Board for feedback – KK**
- xii. **ACTION - It was agreed to discuss again at a future meeting – KR/RB**

5. DRIVE VISIBLE IMPACT

5.1 EuroHockey Championships 2027 - Keith Carder joined the meeting.

A detailed paper was provided to the Board and taken as read.

- i. KC and CW presented a slide deck outlining the progress thus far.
- ii. RB highlighted that the risk sits with EH if we don’t deliver the breakeven target after contingency and that any growth would enable the expansion of the event.
- iii. CB suggested that it would be beneficial to have a list of priorities to expand the event.
- iv. ADT emphasised that expertise in this area is a huge risk for future events. He suggested that it would be useful to have someone from Finance Sub-Committee to shadow during this event to mitigate loss of expertise and knowledge.
- v. KR congratulated the excellent work by CW, KC and the team and the excellent relationships built with EuroHockey by all.
- vi. CW confirmed that work is still being done on the Hospitality ticket pricing model.

6 AOB

6.1 Minutes of previous meeting, matters arising and actions

- i. **Accuracy**
The minutes were approved as a true and accurate recording.
- ii. **Matters arising (see action points tracker)**
Updates and comments have been added against the actions in the tracker.
- iii. **No other business was discussed**
- iv. **The meeting closed at 17:10**