BOARD SYNOPSIS – December 2024

Meeting	England Hockey Board Meeting				
Venue	England Hockey Head Office				
Date	10th December 2024	**Start Time**	10:00	**End Time**	14:00
Lead	Kath Russ, Chair (KR)				
Present: **On-line:** **Invited in:** **Notetaker:**	Nick Pink (NP), Rich Beer (RB), Kuldeep Kaur (KK), Shelagh Everett (SE), , Damian Smith (DS), Heather Williams (HW), Angela Durnin (AD), Simon Mantell (SMa), Jacqui Barlow (JB) Anne-Marie Garner (AMG) Sheila Morrow (SMo) Andy Tapley (AT) – Chair of Finance and Audit, (On-line) Charlie Wells (CW), Head of Comms, Marketing & Commercial – Item 2 Cheryl Smith (CS), Finance Business Partner – Item 2 Michaela Smith (MS), Interim Head of Olympic Programmes – Item 4 Liz Boycott-Brown (LBB), Head of Performance Support, UKSI – Item 4 Michele Townsend (MT) (online)				
Apologies	Alex Danson-Bennett (ADB), Mark Darbon (MD)				

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

2. LEAD POSITIVE CHANGE

2.1 Membership Model (joined by CW and CS) – FOR INFORMATION AND APPROVAL

Paper taken as read with the following comments.

i. RB provided the board with detailed papers regarding the membership proposal with recommendations for Board approval. The Board is asked to consider and approve the following:
   a. Permission to progress the proposed model and to consult with some member clubs (sharing specific details);
   b. To decide the enhanced offering to clubs based on feedback from the survey and the alternative price rise on the existing model;
   c. To agree in principle the approach to resolutions at the AGM in readiness for final agreement at the February board meeting.

ii. RB explained the proposed changes in the benefits offered through the new model. The Board agreed that highlighting and delivering on what the NGB is offering is imperative. In addition it was suggested that assistance be provided to clubs to support their messaging to players.

iii. The Board discussed the financial numbers presented and confirmed they were comfortable with the detail provided, which included the split between adult and junior fees and the approach to communications.

iv. Further discussion on the precise resolutions, along with clarity of messaging would take place at the February Board.

v. RB highlighted the proposed consultation plan, which would include briefing the Areas and a series of online forums and roadshows to engage as many clubs as possible.

vi. APPROVED - The Board approved the process for consultation.

3. RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP

3.1 Statutory Accounts – FOR INFORMATION AND APPROVAL

The Board were provided with a paper assuring it that the Financial Statements for the year ending August 2024 are prepared on a 'going concern' basis.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

i. Recognition was given to the efforts made to end the year with the agreed £150k deficit, given staff changes and a first year of a new finance system.
ii. The Board were assured that the cash balances are healthy.
iii. The Board was asked to approve the 'Going Concern'.
iv. KK confirmed that the Statutory Accounts would be signed off in February and submitted to the AGM for approval. She did not envisage any changes to the numbers following the Audit Committee.
v. APPROVED - The Board approved the 'Going Concern'.

3.2 24/25 Budget and Forecast – FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

vi. The Board was presented with two options, one which realised membership income and speculative income and the other considered a reduced ambition.
vii. KK presented the forecast which included the reorganisation costs, increases as a result of government changes and broadcast costs, all of which were previously unbudgeted.
viii. It was suggested that a review of Pro League hosting costs would be prudent and that the ticketing model should take into account the Broadcast costs.
ix. KK assured the Board that the target deficit remains at £150k and the Board acknowledged importance of financial sustainability.
x. NP assured the Board that Exec is continually reviewing to manage the risk. He added that the broadcast opportunity might release some savings, discretionary spending will be paused or delayed, and budget holders will be asked to reforecast.
xi. The Board raised concern over the pressure already on the organisation to reduce costs and make savings and the impact on achieving its objectives.
xii. ACTION - It was agreed to bring back an updated 24/25 forecast to the February Board to ensure the year ends with the agreed £150k deficit - KK / NP.

4. INSPIRATIONAL INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS – FOR INFORMATION

4.1 England & Great Britain Performance Review (joined by MS and LBB)

The board was presented with a paper highlighting the key themes emerging from the GB Cycle review and Paris Olympic review alongside analysis and international trends. The Board were provided with additional papers presented to the GB Hockey Board in October. The paper included recommendations for action as presented to the GB Board.

Papers taken as read with the following comments:

i. There was a discussion about the necessary actions identified and where the responsibility lies. It was generally agreed that some things could and are being tackled now by the current team, but others would need to wait for the Performance Director (PD) to be appointed.
ii. There was a recognition that the new PD would need to be strategic about the priorities in consideration of upcoming international competition.
iii. The Board discussed the areas highlighted in the reviews, specifically PCA, depth of the women's team, programme fatigue, the impact of GB v Home Nations and not feeling prepared enough.
iv. It was agreed to review again in April once the new PD is in post, with a view to establishing a performance committee and athlete group.

v. RB suggested that a more holistic performance and talent plan be considered.
vi. NP highlighted the consistencies across other Pro League nations who are also identifying PCA, injury management, player load and that it was important to focus on the areas that are very relevant to us, ie fatigue, home nations, etc.

4.2 Talent Strategy – FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION

The Board was presented with a paper providing an overview of the progress of the talent strategy since 2021 and to outline strategic considerations ahead of a future Board discussion in February or April 2025, with a focus on the data required to track progress at a strategic level.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

i. The Board was asked to review the success measures already in place, some of which are outcomes, process, storytelling and feedback from surveys identifying the experience of different groups of people within the talent system.
ii. KR suggested that more quantitative data would be helpful.
iii. HW assured the Board that some of measures are required for reporting to Sport England and that feedback obtained from players, coaches and parent was generally positive.
iv. There was a suggestion that a better understanding of movement of players between schools because of hockey would be beneficial and data related to state schools v independent schools in the system. HW confirmed that some data is available, including bursary data. She added that there is a lot of anecdotal evidence of success - improvement of experience, understanding of performance environment, more talented players.
v. KR highlighted that one of the key objectives is to increase inclusivity and diversity and that there doesn't appear to be any data related to this. HW confirmed that there is some EDI data available but wider representation in clubs would be required to shift the dial in the talent system.
vi. The Board discussed the importance of relevant data and information related to performance and opportunity, along with the drop out rates and the threat posed by transition to University.
vii. ACTION - It was agreed to provide the Board with available data in respect of the Talent system for the April 2025 Board meeting - HW

5. MEANINGFUL GROWTH

5.1 Board Committees – FOR INFORMATAION AND APPROVAL

KR provided the Board with a proposal and recommendations for future committee structure and composition.

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

i. SMo confirmed that a committee or athlete liaison body had been discussed at GB board and sought clarification that this would be one in the same. NP confirm that it would and that KR and SMa are brainstorming ideas and will share with GB once finalised.
ii. SE asked if there is a need for the Board to have oversight of policies. NP confirmed that works has been done to review current policies, and this would fall into the remit of the Governance Committee. It was agreed that once the Committees are formed, clearer delineation between Exec and Board would be provided.
iii. AD would be approved as Independent Non-Executive Director (INED) at the AGM.
iv. Andy Tapley would continue as Chair of the Audit Committee.
v. Recruitment will commence in the new year for an INED to replace MD and following AD's move from Member-Elected Non-Executive Director (MENED) a new MENED would be elected by the membership.
vi. It was agreed that a Commercial Committee would be beneficial and that an additional member with expertise in risk awareness would be recruited to the Audit and Risk Committee.
vii. APPROVED - The Board approved the proposal and recommendations.

viii. KR presented recommendations for the Board cycle of work and invited the Board to advise of any changes directly to her.

6. EXEC REPORT – FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION

Paper taken as read with the following comments:

i. NP wanted to put on record his appreciation and recognition of the incredible work of the team over the last few months in realising the EuroHockey Champs bid and the Channel 4 partnership, which has already brought interest from new partners.

ii. NP confirmed that our current GB President, SMo has now formally resigned and will be stepping down after the March meeting. Recruitment to the position will commence in the new year and the GB Nominations Committee members will be the GB Senior Independent Non-Executive Director, Amanda Blacker-Laybourn and representatives from the three home nations. The JD has already been circulated to the GB Board for comment. He asked that any referrals be made to him.

iii. NP advised the Board that second round interview for the PD were taking place tomorrow and that panel members included himself, Paul Thompson from GB Board, Kate Baker from UK Sport and KR.

iv. Engagement with EuroHockey regarding the Euros has been good – an email update will be circulated to the board shortly.

v. The Facility Loan Scheme is progressing well with one of the funding partners agreeing investment of £2M – due diligence is now being undertaken. The group will be reconvened, and any governance changes will be reviewed.

vi. ACTION - It was agreed to produce a Terms of Reference and process for the Appointment of a Chair for the Facilities Loan Group was now urgent – RB.

vii. It was agreed that AD, KR and SE would join the Facilities Loan Scheme Working Group.

7. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING & AOB

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. AOB

RB confirmed that our Vice President, Nick Welby, is helping to develop a process for Board attendance at events.

SMo reminded the board that in the previous minutes it was agreed to run a session to bring people up to speed on the GB Framework and suggested that this would be done if enough interest.

The meeting closed at 14:09.