MINUTES

RFL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Location	RFL, Gate 13, Rowsley Street, Etihad Campus, Manchester, M11 3FF	**Date & Time**	Monday 18th May 2026, 10.30 - 14:00
Present	Nigel Wood OBE (NJW) (online), Dermot Power (DP), Lord Jonathan Caine (JC), Martin Coyd OBE (MC), Emma Rosewarne MBE (ER), Sara Symington (SS), Rhodri Jones (RJ) (online)	**Chair**	Dermot Power
Observers	Ed Mallaburn (EM) (online), Jo Drapier		
In attendance	Robert Graham (RG) (agenda items 6.0 & 8.0), Robert Hicks (RH) (agenda item 8.0), Alison O'Brien (AO) (Meeting Secretary)		
Apologies	None		

Item No		Agenda Item	Who
1.0		**WELCOME & APOLOGIES** The meeting started 10 minutes early given two Board members were joining online from Australia. MC joined the meeting by 10:30. As NJW was attending the meeting online he asked DP to Chair the meeting.	
2.0		**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** No additional declarations of interest were raised beyond those already recorded.	
3.0		**MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION TRACKER** The minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2026 were reviewed. Subject to a minor amendment the minutes were approved as an accurate record. AO sought feedback on two different styles of summarised minutes and Board agreed on a more formal and detailed style. The Board reviewed the action tracker It was agreed that a broad code of conduct should be developed to address standards of behaviour across the sport, framed as a general governance and culture initiative The code would set out expected behaviours around the sport. On COVID loan discussions, it was noted that the planned meeting with David Baines would be arranged. JD asked that the Sport England's loan team be	**AO** **RJ** **NJW/ JC**

		engaged in any future discussions regarding reprofiling or repurposing of the loans.	
4.0		**MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES** ER suggested RJ send a communication to clubs to set the context and intent of the code of conduct.	**RJ**
5.0		**INTERIM CEO UPDATE** RJ provided an update on his interim tenure, noting that the immediate executive priorities had been club sustainability, Sport England relations, executive team support, finance, anti-doping compliance, staffing matters, legal issues, and public affairs. JD suggested that the Sport England loan team be added to the RFL and Sport England engagement map. The Board noted the significant management time currently being devoted to maintaining club operations and addressing urgent operational risks. RJ also provided Board with an update on RL Commercial matters.	**RJ/AO**
6.0		**FINANCIAL MATTERS** RG joined the meeting. The Board reviewed the latest management accounts and forecast outturn. A worsening variance since the previous meeting was noted, driven principally by higher staff and consultancy costs, additional HR support requirements and board costs not being shared as previously assumed. The Board emphasised that the approved budget must remain the management target and requested a clear recovery plan to ensure financial discipline and move the organisation back towards break-even. DP highlighted the lost interest resulting from the Sport England payment delay and JD was asked to enquire if the interest could be added to the payment when it was sent.	**JD**
7.0		**RECAPITALISATION** The Board received an update on recapitalisation discussions and related broadcast negotiations from RJ and NJW. It was noted that further work is required to develop an investment framework and that independent governance remains a key principle in any future arrangement. The Board welcomed the constructive progress reported and noted that further proposals would be brought back in due course.	
8.0		**CLUB SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE** RH joined the meeting.	

		The Board received updates on several clubs. The Board noted the immediate financial and ownership issues affecting these clubs and the interventions being made to support continuity and viability. The Board also approved the proposed Championship salary cap model linking allowable spending to turnover, subject to clear communication to clubs and appropriate transitional arrangements for existing commitments. RH & RJ to arrange communications to clubs and brief Dave Craven for media enquiries. ER asked that Board be copied into key communications sent to clubs for awareness.	**RJ/RH**
9.0		**GOVERNANCE MATTERS, SPORT ENGLAND GAP, AND CEO RECRUITMENT** The Board reviewed progress against the Governance Action Plan and discussed the dependency of outstanding Sport England funding on completion of the final GAP requirement, namely the appointment of a permanent CEO. The Board noted the operational and cash flow risks arising from continued delay in payment and agreed that further clarification should be sought from Sport England on the exact trigger for payment release. The CEO recruitment process was reported to be progressing, with second-round interviews scheduled for 22 May.	**RJ/AO**
10.0		**UKAD** The Board noted the update from SS regarding the annual submission to UKAD and recorded that the required submission had now been made following urgent management action.	
11.0 – 22.0		**REPORTS** DP stated assumption papers read in advance of the meeting and invited questions and observations. RJ stated the purpose of the papers was to enhance communication to the Board on key matters and demonstrate the breadth and quality of work undertaken by the team. DP asked that thanks be passed on to colleagues for the detail and quality of the reports. Under 11.0 ER and NJW raised the importance of recording and archiving details of key decisions, including those recording in Board minutes. Under 12.0 In relation to safeguarding, the Board discussed workload pressures and agreed that resource needs, including administrative or IT support, should be reviewed and prioritised for consideration at the next meeting. JD mentioned Sport England could provide support resources around case management. ER asked for an	**RJ** **AO**

		update on the trend of Unacceptable Language and Behaviour cases, now sitting with the Compliance team. Under 17.0 ER praised the report format. Under 21.0 SS asked for further observation of costs vs World Cup budget. EM gave his apologies and left the meeting at 13:00 during the review of papers.	**RJ/AO** **ML/RG**
23.0		**BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES** DP stated no minutes to review since last meeting. Audit & Risk meeting held 14 May and minutes to be made available ahead of the next Board meeting in June.	**RG**
24.0		**RISKS** DP asked that following the meeting risk registers were appropriately updated. ER asked that current cost increases linked to the current conflicts and political situations be reflected in the risk register.	**RG**
25.0		**ANY OTHER BUSINESS** RJ provided an update on Honorary positions and stated an update including recommendation would be brought to the next Board meeting in June. RJ provided an update on Roll Of Honour plans, a recent Honours submission and the planned process for Honours submissions going forward.	**RJ/AO**
26.0		**DATE OF NEXT MEETING** Monday 29th June 2026	