

<p>3.0</p>	<p>Minutes of the December meeting The minutes from the meeting on 3 December 2025 were approved as an accurate record, and matters arising were addressed within the agenda.</p>	
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Community Strategy Mr Lovering provided an update on progress against the Community Strategy and the key areas of focus for 2026. The update highlighted the continued emphasis on strengthening club experience, supporting volunteers, and ensuring consistent, development-focused governance across all playing offers.</p> <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of a strong first season of NCRL remains a central priority, with continued support for Management Groups and Competition Management Groups. • The Sport England application process will get underway in the next few months, with the strategy refresh aligned to the requirements of the funding cycle. • Strategic Review recommendations continue to shape operational priorities, particularly around governance, competition alignment, and volunteer support. • Foundation income and sustainability were noted as ongoing areas of focus. • The <i>2025 More Than A Sport</i> End of Year Report will be published, showcasing participation growth and community impact. <p>Participation Insight</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total participation has grown from 92,386 in 2022 to 100,821 in 2025. • Significant increases in Women & Girls (+3,200) and Boys (+1,300) since 2022. • Open Age male participation remains below 2019 levels, with a reduction of approximately 4,000 players. • Primary, Junior, and Youth age groups show steady recovery and growth post-COVID. <p>The Board noted the update and endorsed the strategic direction.</p> <p>A further update will be provided once the Sport England submission progresses.</p>	<p>Mr Lovering</p>
<p>5.0</p>	<p>NCRL Update and Introduction of Management Groups</p> <p>Ms Barrett provided a detailed update on the NCRL governance structure, including the operation of the NCRL Management Group and the supporting Management Groups across Men’s, Women’s, Youth & Junior, and Primary Rugby League.</p> <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The unified governance structure is designed to streamline delivery, remove barriers to growth, and ensure consistent standards across all playing offers. • The NCRL Management Group acts as a sub-group of the Community Board, providing oversight of all affiliated community competitions. • Responsibilities include rule alignment, minimum standards, operational oversight, and coordination of Competition Management Groups. 	

	<p>Management Group Composition: The NCRL Management Group includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair (RFL-appointed) • Head of Delivery – Community Game Competitions • Representatives for Men’s, Women’s, Boys’, Girls’, and Primary Rugby League • Player Development Lead • Relevant RFL personnel to ensure alignment with coaching and engagement activity <p>Structure Beneath the NCRL Management Group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men’s Management Group • Women’s Management Group • Youth & Junior Management Group • National Primary Rugby League Steering Group • All underpinned by Competition Management Groups (CMGs). <p>Operational Updates by Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Men’s Competitions: Management Groups in place across Cumbria, North West, Yorkshire, and the Southern region. Tier 3 and 4 rules and minimum standards have been drafted and shared. • Youth & Junior: Management groups established in Cumbria, North West, Yorkshire, Hull, London and Midlands. Draft competition rules completed. • Primary RL: Steering Group established with regional representation and a focus on deregulation, inclusion, and development. • Women’s RL: Pyramid structure noted, with Midlands and Southern pillars not yet active for promotion. <p>The Board noted the update and reaffirmed the importance of consistent governance and clear communication with clubs.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Match Official Fees</p> <p>The Board received an update on the introduction of standardised match official fees as part of the NCRL implementation. This work ensures that Match Officials receive consistent payments for equivalent fixtures across all regions, supporting fairness, transparency, and alignment with the unified governance framework.</p> <p>Key Points</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardisation of fees is a core component of the NCRL approach and will apply to all affiliated community competitions from the 2026 season. • The updated fee structure has been developed in consultation with Match Official representatives and regional delivery leads. • The approach supports recruitment and retention by providing clarity, consistency, and parity across the Community Game. <p>Regional Cost Pressures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board discussed the impact of regional travel costs on Match Official availability, with particular reference to London and other areas where Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) charges, congestion charges, or road tolls apply. • It was noted that these additional costs may affect both the willingness and the practical ability of Match Officials to accept or fulfil appointments, especially where travel distances are significant or where public transport is not a viable option. <p>The Board approved the implementation of the standardised match official fee structure across the Community Game. It was agreed that the RFL will publish</p>	<p>Ms Barrett</p>

	<p>the updated fee schedule and provide supporting guidance to Competition Management Groups and clubs. The Board noted that regional cost pressures should be monitored as part of the implementation process, with further consideration to be given if required to ensure that competitions in affected areas remain appropriately supported, and requested that ongoing monitoring be reported back to the Board.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Strategic Priorities for the Community Board</p> <p>Mr Coyd felt that the Community Board should have more of an active role in shaping the future direction of the Community Game and in supporting the delivery of key priorities alongside RFL staff. A long and constructive discussion took place, with Board members expressing a strong desire to be actively involved and to contribute their expertise, networks, and insight.</p> <p>It was noted that this collaborative approach reflects the core purpose of the Community Board: to bring together strategic leadership, operational understanding, and community representation to drive meaningful progress across the game.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that, in the past, the Board had occasionally strayed into operational matters; however, these will now be addressed through the NCRL Management Groups, allowing the Community Board to focus on strategic leadership, oversight, and long-term development. This reflects the core purpose of the Community Board.</p> <p>The Board agreed on the following priorities from now on, and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to contribute to this work, with thanks recorded for the valuable input and support provided by all members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Participant Growth, including new player recruitment, retention, compliance, playing environments, and facilities. 2) Commercial and Revenue Generation to strengthen the sustainability of the Community Game; and 3) Brand, Media, Marketing, and Events, with a focus on enhancing visibility, reach, and the overall quality of community-facing activity. <p>It was agreed that the RFL would go away and work up a collaborative plan for the three agreed priorities, to be shaped with Board Member input and brought back to a future meeting.</p>	<p>RFL</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Meeting Close The meeting closed at 2.30 pm.</p>	