

# MINUTES

## COMMUNITY BOARD

**Location:** Boardroom/Meeting Room One, RFL North West Offices, Quay West, Trafford Wharf Road, Manchester, M17 1HH

**Date:** Wednesday 9 November 2016      **Chair Person:** Nigel Wood

**Time:** 10.30am - 2.47pm

**Invited to Attend:** Chris Brindley, Flt Lt Damian Clayton MBE, Fred Baker, Jan Robinson, Pat Crawshaw, Peter Moran, Stuart Sheard, Sue Taylor

**RFL Officers in attendance:** Jenny Baxter, John McMullen (part), Jon Roberts, Kelly Barrett, Robert Hicks, Sarah-Jane Gray

**Apologies:** Dave Rotheram, David Raybould, Fred Baker, Neil Ashton, Trevor Hunt

Item	Agenda Item	Responsibility
1.0	<p><b>Welcome, apologies &amp; introduction</b></p> <p>Mr Wood welcomed the delegates to the meeting. Apologies were received by Dave Rotheram, David Raybould, Fred Baker, Neil Ashton and Trevor Hunt.</p>	
2.0	<p><b>Minutes from the previous meeting</b></p> <p>The minutes from the meeting held on 7 September 2016 were agreed to be a true and accurate record. Jan Robinson highlighted one spelling error to which Ms Baxter was tasked to amend.</p> <p>Mr Roberts confirmed all actions detailed in the previous meeting minutes have been completed and one of which will be discussed during this meeting.</p>	Jenny Baxter
3.0	<p><b>Matters arising</b></p> <p>Mr Roberts confirmed action point 1 on the tracker was discussed at the previous meeting and is to be removed from the action tracker.</p> <p>3.1 Code of conduct and terms of reference.</p> <p>Ms Barrett advised this action is part of today's meeting on agenda item 6.0.</p> <p>3.2 Challenge Cup dispensation for Armed Forces.</p> <p>Ms Barrett confirmed there will be no dispensation given to which Mr Clayton agreed. It was confirmed this item is to be removed from the action tracker.</p>	Jenny Baxter

<p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p>	<p>Article 83 of the RFL Articles of Association review.</p> <p>Mr Hicks explained this will be fit for purpose in 2017 and is to be removed from the action tracker.</p> <p>Gambling policy.</p> <p>Ms Barrett described how this will be implemented in 2017 and how a separate meeting with NCL is to take place. A discussion over the Gambling Policy followed, with a conclusion for this to be removed from the action tracker.</p> <p>Mr McMullen went on to state how action point 5 regarding CBIG working up proposals on 'umbrella' team for Community International game to commence in 2018 season, had been completed and action point 9 referring to Match Official training on the completion of disciplinary report forms has been completed. It was confirmed by Mr McMullen both of these could be removed from the action tracker.</p> <p>Mr Roberts requested the colours in the action tracker are removed, and dates only are used for reference in future.</p>	
<p>4.0</p> <p>4.1</p>	<p><b>Standing reports</b></p> <p>Mr Roberts explained that papers are to be read ahead of meetings and how an offer of direct questioning to the author of standing report papers was offered at the time of distribution.</p> <p>Community Delivery</p> <p>Mr Sheard explained his question (asked pre-meeting) to Mr Raybould regarding match completion rates.</p> <p>Mr McMullen went on to state how an end of season report is to be completed by each individual competition to give an overview of the competition and to give a reflection of the season. This will enable the identity areas in need of work and improvement. Mr McMullen had a paper which was distributed to the Board from the NCL 2016 season.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding Data and Insight. It was stated data has only recently become consistent and how the RFL cannot give 5 years of full like for like data for a direct comparison. Visibility is needed on data as soon as possible. Ms Gray confirmed participation and retention trends are available now.</p> <p>Ms Gray was actioned to produce documentation to show trends on game completion rates based on true data, not anecdotal comments. A future project is to analyse the wider data and to include BARLA in this.</p> <p>Ms Crawshaw requested in future Community Delivery reports, affiliated Leagues are included and an annual end of season report is to be presented to the Board. This will require information and data from all Leagues.</p>	<p>Sarah-Jane Gray</p> <p>All Leagues</p>

<p>4.2</p> <p>4.3</p> <p>4.4</p>	<p>Player and Coaching Development Report</p> <p>Mr Roberts described how Salford Category 2 Academy has been dissolved. He went on to explain this decision and their ideas surrounding a Category 1 Academy.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding clubs merging to become Academies and Hull was given as an example. The positives and negatives of this were discussed.</p> <p>Mr Roberts explained there is more talent emerging from an education pathway than ever before.</p> <p>It was noted by Mr Wood and Mr Roberts that reflection is needed in East Manchester, Wakefield/Huddersfield, Wakefield/Castleford and Cumbria areas and how the North East is in need of support and more investment.</p> <p>A discussion took place over the improvement of Academy ratings.</p> <p>Ms Taylor requested both Scholarship and Academy players are included in Mr Rotheram's update at the next Community Board meeting.</p> <p>Mr Moran questioned 4.5 on Mr Rotheram's paper regarding a desire within Category 3 Academy colleges to allow Embed the Pathway 14+ Open Access session groups 2 games each to incentivise attendance and subsequently retention. Mr Roberts responded to Mr Moran's questions over fixtures and college programmes. He explained that the RFL aim to attract more students in higher education and went on to explain the operation of Category 3 Academies.</p> <p>A discussion took place on 16 -18 year-old players in colleges and sixth forms which are linked with a school, not being able to play each other. Mr Roberts described this age band as being the fastest growing in the game. It was agreed flexibility is needed for a positive growth.</p> <p>Mr Crawshaw praised the Education team's work and explained more colleges are playing Rugby League than ever before.</p> <p>Operations</p> <p>Ms Barrett explained her paper and regulatory meetings. No questions were received. No objections were received on the proposed extension to the period of time a player can be classed as a trialist within the Academy and the reserve competition.</p> <p>Marketing and Communications</p> <p>Ms Gray explained her paper and the positive engagement with community social and traditional media. Mr Sheard went on to congratulate Oliver Roby and Brogan Shaw from the Performance &amp; Development Communications team for their recent work at events, with Mr Clayton reiterating Mr Sheard's comments.</p>	<p>Dave Rotheram</p>
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<p>4.5 Embed the Pathway</p>	<p>Mr Clayton went on to state he is keen for the Armed Forces to feature in the tier one events calendar and subsequent media coverage. Ms Gray explained that a list of ‘tier 1’ community events for the 2017 season will be put in place in order to gain more publicity on events and will include an Armed Forces event. A possibility suggested was ‘The Jack Harrison’ as a flagship event for the Armed Forces. The list will also include other important events in the wider community game.</p> <p>Jan Robinson suggested amendments to the RFL website regarding navigation for information on DBS. Ms Gray took on board the comments and confirmed the navigation issues would be resolved by multiple access points. Mr Wood praised the journey so far regarding the community game content on the RFL website.</p> <p>Mr McMullen received no questions on this paper but encouraged delegates to feed in any questions.</p> <p>Mr Roberts requested an area-specific review of Embed the Pathway to be documented for the next Community Board meeting, similar to a previously received format.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding player profiling. Mr Wood stated that he thought the Embed the Pathway name is not strong enough and a rename should take place.</p>	<p>Sarah-Jane Gray</p> <p>Tony Fretwell</p>
<p>4.6 Sky Try</p>	<p>Mr McMullen explained the paper and how no feedback had been received pre-meeting.</p> <p>Jan Robinson stated how Girls’ Touch Rugby League had not been included on the paper as a strand of Sky Try. Ms Gray responded explained how local demand now determines the delivery of the programme; and flexibility is built-in.</p> <p>A discussion took place over the Girls’ Sky Try programme. It was decided insight into the Girls programme is to be included on future paper updates for Sky Try and it is to be ensured the Girls’ programme continues to be offered. the post Sky Try pathway for Girls’ needs addressing as currently there is not a clear pathway. Ms Gray explained the data on post Sky Try players and their pathways.</p> <p>Mr Sheard requested to see the report as detailed in the Sky Try paper item 1.2 on quality assurance. The report is to be distributed to the Board.</p> <p>A discussion took place over the delivery of Sky Try and whether the programme is working as predicted. Mr Wood was positive about the programme delivery and how its figures are improving.</p>	<p>Tracy Power</p> <p>Tracy Power</p>

4.7	<p>Sport England Development Projects Update</p> <p>Mr McMullen began by explaining the paper. Ms Crawshaw requested more figures are included in the next paper. Mr Rankin-Wright was requested to attend the next Community Board to go into more depth. It was agreed the paper could be expanded upon, and Mr Rankin-Wright is to present regarding the learnings into the next 12 months' work at next meeting.</p> <p>Mr Sheard questioned the content on the paper regarding Coventry Bears 5's project to which Mr McMullen confirmed the project is not part of Sky Try and the Coventry Bears delivery.</p>	
	<p><b>A lunch break was due at this point however the Meeting ran ahead of times stated on the Agenda so the meeting continued.</b></p>	
5.0	<p><b>2017 Calendar</b></p> <p>5.1 Fixtures</p> <p>The timeframe for community game fixtures 2017 to be released was discussed. It was noted work has already begun with the affiliated leagues.</p> <p>Ms Gray described a community game season launch event and the marketing purpose. She explained she is seeking approval at this meeting.</p> <p>Mr McMullen described past struggles with this idea and how each league currently holds their own. Ms Gray explained that a single launch would be held at the beginning, pre or post start of leagues' seasons as accommodating each league's start date is not possible. She reiterated her eagerness to go ahead with a main community season launch event as part of the launch of the 2017 season.</p> <p>This was approved and it was suggested that this event would be held either the first or second week in March 2017. The education and winter competition would be mentioned at the event, as these would have already begun.</p> <p>Mr Wood was positive that the event takes place and it was agreed by the Board it is a viable and worthwhile activity.</p> <p>Ms Gray continued to state the newly appointed ex-players/well known personnel employed by the RFL would be assets to this event and their support and presence would receive positive media.</p> <p>5.2 Tier 1 game events</p> <p>Ms Gray explained the need for a 'tier 1' community event list for the 2017 season and how this will be fed into the Communications department.</p> <p>A discussion followed regarding the list of selected main community events in the past. Ms Gray reiterated that if an event is not classed as tier 1, this will not mean the RFL will not support it, but the level of media presence and content creation will be at a lower level.</p>	

<p>5.3</p>	<p>Community Board meetings</p> <p>Both Mr Wood and Mr Roberts stated positive effects of a Tier 1 structure from an Executive point of view and practically.</p> <p>Ms Gray stated the list is to include national and international events that could be a platform for raising the profile of grass roots Rugby League, and how the campaign or event can be a national campaign.</p> <p>Mr Roberts explained how criteria needs setting for lead events, and a draft list for circulation. Ms Gray was tasked with writing up the criteria and to distribute to the Board through email.</p> <p>Ms Gray continued, stating how an Executive presence on the day of an event is not always necessary to increase the event's visibility. She mentioned that all leading events should support the central objectives including 5% growth.</p> <p>Mr Wood stated how the community game is deserving of more attention and positive of a Tier 1 events list moving forwards, and how Rugby League venues should be used for events wherever possible.</p> <p>At the next Community Board meeting, the criteria are to be agreed upon.</p> <p>A discussion took pace over the time, day and quantity of Community Board meetings. It was noted CBIG meetings are not to follow the Community Board moving forwards.</p> <p>It was agreed the Community Board would be kept to day-time meetings, four times a year, however this may change with a governance refresh.</p> <p>Mr Wood stated his eagerness to get the meeting dates in diaries, but not to be a burden on delegates' time. Mr Roberts reiterated this and stressed meetings should be kept strategic.</p> <p>It was agreed the authors of papers are to be contacted pre-meetings with any questions to keep the meetings on schedule.</p> <p>Ms Gray was tasked with putting 2017 meeting dates in calendars.</p>	<p>Sarah-Jane Gray</p> <p>Sarah-Jane Gray</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b></p>		
<p>6.0</p>	<p><b>Community Board Governance review</b></p> <p>A Government-produced paper was distributed for the Board's attention entitled 'A Code for Sports Governance.' A presentation was displayed to support the discussion.</p> <p>Mr Wood explained the piece of work that has been undertaken along with Jennie Price from Sport England and UK Sport. He went on to explain the RFL Board structure and governance. Mr Wood expressed how positive he is regarding the RFLs compliance with the content of the paper.</p>	

	<p>Mr Hicks and Ms Gray both stated how the paper offered new opportunities as well as covering mandatory requirements. The elements of the paper were noted as structure, people, communications, standards and conduct, policies and procedures.</p> <p>Mr Hicks explained the mandatory requirements. He also stated the RFL are ahead of other Governing Bodies in relation to governance. An element that needs work was identified as diversity, and it was discussed how the RFL can improve this. He explained the RFL's aim to be a leader in governance compared to other Governing Bodies.</p> <p>Ms Gray explained she is keen to develop a communication loop between athletes and the RFL and volunteers and the RFL. She explained how future funding cycles will be affected by compliance with the code.</p> <p>Mr Sheard suggested a structure/description is written for his role as a representative of 17 leagues. Mr Roberts agreed and said that this task has been flagged. Mr Hicks explained that since Mr Sheard was appointed to the Community Board 12 months ago, the RFL have improved procedures but agreed more work is to be completed.</p> <p>Any observations are to be brought to the next meeting by delegates. A decision is to be made on the ongoing role of the Community Board.</p>	All
<p><b>7.0</b></p> <p>7.1</p> <p>7.2</p>	<p><b>Update on Community strategy and Sport England business planning</b></p> <p>Receive an update on Sport England funding.</p> <p>Mr Roberts explained the update on Sport England funding. He explained the core market has been pin-pointed by both the RFL and Sport England together. Sport England require the core market to become more resilient, and Mr Roberts went on to explain the work completed behind understanding player behaviours and ways to engage people to take up Rugby League.</p> <p>It was explained there had been a substantial shift by Sport England and the focus they require from the RFL.</p> <p>Discuss priorities of Community Strategy</p> <p>Mr Roberts went through the 2017 strategic objectives with a presentation and the priority of the RFLs drive. It was explained that the core market is 130,000 players across all settings.</p> <p>It was stated by Mr Roberts the RFL business plan will be submitted mid-December to Sport England, with a decision on funding due in February 2017 and how a significant reduction in funding is expected in line with the new sports strategy which reduces investment in NGBs.</p> <p>A working group, as previously discussed, is ready to be put together which will focus discussions on the Education pathway, Rugby League variants, talent, sustainable clubs and foundations. The workshop needs to discuss funding pillars. This is to be set up for the end of November where possible.</p>	Sarah-Jane Gray

Mr Clayton questioned RFL provisions if reduction in funding becomes reality. Mr Roberts explained a commercial sponsor plan and how the RFL is reducing its dependence on public funding. Mr Wood explained the RFL's financial position and how a strategic flow of funds and some displacement will happen.

The figures shown in the presentation were:

- 175,000 play Rugby League in England;
- 34,000 of which are adults;
- 47,000 are Primary School age children;
- 94,000 are Secondary School age children - described as the key target and education must be a key focus due to missed current opportunities.

The conclusion to the discussion was retention and resilient numbers of 130,000 core market - what Sport England want at the end of the next funding cycle.

Ms Gray went on to explain that a single customer view will aid better engagement with the market.

Discussion over barriers to playing Rugby League took place. It was concluded that the education sector pathway is the biggest opportunity and Rugby League needs to offer an easier pathway for potential players to play in that setting, whilst clubs and leagues also consider how they remove barriers to growing the game.

**8.0**

**Any other business**

Jan Robinson questioned the lack of a RESPECT update and it was agreed Julia Lee will be asked to present at Community Board when a paper can be produced.

Jan Robinson mentioned Women's RL not being on the agenda and Ms Gray stated a consultation is to be sent out imminently.

Jan Robinson brought up a Youth and Junior issue that a Super League club has begun a U12 competition under the Sky Try umbrella and asked how this would affect community clubs. Discussion took place and it was concluded any opportunities given to play Rugby League should be supported and moving forward, Super League clubs need to be encouraged and targeted on the support offered to, and success of, local community clubs.

Ms Crawshaw questioned ex-players who set up Rugby League sessions and clubs and how this sits with the Performance and Development department. It was concluded that additional playing must be seen as positive. Mr Roberts stated that quality assurance is currently being considered.

Mr Clayton gave a plea for attendees at this year's President's Ball.

Mr Hicks brought to the Board an issue regarding a BARA team advertising a tour to play a team in Italy who are not recognised by the RLIF. It was described how the team have been asked not to play. BARLA have been asked to write to BARA and the Pennine Leagues to insist the game does not go ahead. It was brought to the Board's attention a member of BARA currently sits of the RFL disciplinary panel and this could be a way to channel action.



9.0	<b>Date of next meeting</b> Not decided, detailed in item 5.3.	
	<b>Following the meeting delegates were given the opportunity to view the presentation on the new STG Operation system by Richard Donlon.</b>	