

NF/RFL/COMMBBOARD/16.07.2014

**MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY BOARD MEETING
HELD AT CARRWOOD PARK, LEEDS ON WEDNESDAY 16 JULY 2014**

Present:

Clare Morrow (Chair)	Non-Executive Director, RFL Board
Ralph Rimmer	RFL Chief Operating Officer
Martin Coyd OBE	Tier 5&6 Adult Leagues
Charlie Bray	Tier 4 Youth and Junior Leagues
Ian Szwandt	English Schools Rugby League
Pat Crawshaw	Student Rugby League
WO Damian Clayton MBE	Armed Forces
Fred Baker	Independent Member
Peter Moran	Independent Member
Trevor Hunt	Conference Leagues
Sue Taylor	BARLA

Apologies:

None received

In Attendance:

Brian Barwick	RFL Chairman
David Gent	Director of Participations & Strategic Partnerships
Matt Birkett	Head of Community Game Programmes
Kelly Gordon	Consultant
Dave Rotherham	Head of Talent & Player Development
Emma Rosewarne (in part)	Operations Director
Ebony Giblin	National Education Manager
Natalie Flint (minutes)	Executive PA

ITEM

ACTION

1.0 WELCOME & APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
Ms Morrow welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Mr Rimmer, who will replace Mr Wood as the RFL Executive of the Board.

Ms Morrow also welcomed Mr Barwick, RFL Chairman.

2.0 MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS
The minutes of the meeting on 30 April 2014 were accepted as a true and correct record.

It was suggested that as the minutes are published on the RFL website, and therefore public knowledge, that the confidential watermark should be removed.

NF

Mr Moran asked how confidential matters would be dealt with. It was agreed that there should be a discussion at the end of each meeting about whether any aspects of the minutes should be redacted for reasons of confidentiality.

3.0 **MATTERS ARISING**

The Action Tracker was discussed and updated as appropriate.

NF

4.0 **COMMUNITY GAME STRATEGY**

The meeting considered the following within the report and the Community Board members were asked to note:

- The June 2014 Active People result and that the RFL Executives continue with the existing agreed plans to increase the numbers on Active People.
- The outcomes of the Sport England first six months review of 2014 and that RFL Executives implement the necessary improvements to be made within the identified timescales.
- The progress against the agreed targets contained within the Community Game Scorecard 2014.
- The work of the RFL Executives at present to ensure continued government funding into Rugby League and into the future.

4.1 **Active People Result**

The Board noted that the Active People Survey (APS) results for June 2014 had recently been released and is 45,900. The Active People measure remains the key performance indicator in the RFL's contract with Sport England. It is however, very disappointing to see a decrease (down from 53,500).

The RFL met with Sport England in April to forecast the June result, based on RFL management data and Sport England insight. The RFL forecasted that the APS rate for April 2013 to April 2014 (mid-year reading) would fall somewhere between 53,000 to 58,000 and Sport England estimated it would either fall by 500 or rise by up to 4,500. The prediction took into consideration; playing numbers, regularity data and fixture completion information across Community clubs, education and Play Touch Rugby League. It also considered wider participation influencers such as the weather during the period. All this pointed towards either no significant change (from 53,500) or a slight increase.

The RFL Year 2 target is 56,100 and will cover the period October 2013 to October 2014 which will be released in December 2014. The result just released means that Sport England has now classed Rugby League as "at risk" of not achieving its Year 2 target although it is supportive of its methodology.

The Board noted the outcome of the Active People result and that the RFL Executives are to continue with the existing plans to increase the numbers on Active People.

4.2 **Six monthly Review Meeting with Sport England**

Every six months the RFL has to meet with Sport England to review

the progress being made to encourage more people to play Rugby League. At the most recent meeting, they particularly noted the excellent progress made on Play Touch Rugby League as well as a significantly improved offer for those at Colleges and Universities. They also noted considerable improvements in areas which had previously been perceived as 'weak'; such as local area planning and the club offer, which hopefully will now lead to increases in participation. The targets on satellite clubs had been exceeded.

Overall, they recognised the considerable efforts undertaken by the volunteers and paid staff to develop the sport and still believe the RFL plan is the best positioned to increase the numbers of people playing Rugby League.

Sport England were also reassured on the progress made in the talent area as all agreed targets had been achieved. They noted the ongoing debate with the RFL on the Player Production and Youth Development System and the direction proposed was felt to be very much in line with what Sport England wanted to see in the area of talent development.

Four areas were agreed for organisational improvement over the next 6-12 months.

- Put people first. The RFL should continue to invest time, energy and resources into improving the skills, knowledge and understanding of RFL staff and volunteers to make them better at their job. A high performing workforce is crucial to the successful delivery of the plan.
- Apply insight. The RFL should analyse the findings of Stage 1 of the Let's Talk Rugby League campaign to refresh existing insight into the sport and apply the new knowledge to develop existing offers. The insight will also inform the journey to embed a participant centred approach across the Rugby League network.
- Focus on customer experience. Review how "place" and "people" influence a participants' experience of the sport.
- Continuous improvement. Utilise the HPNGB model as a self-improvement tool.

The Board noted the outcomes of the Sport England review and supported the RFL Executives to implement the necessary improvements within the identified timescales.

4.3 Community Game Scorecard

The results on the Community Game scorecard were noted and a request was made that future drafts include more trend analysis in the presentation.

MB

The Board noted the progress against the agreed targets, and reiterated the importance of developing robust ways of measuring participation alongside the Active People results given the imperfections of that measurement system on a small sample and the need to have confidence through other measures that efforts to increase participation are being successful.

4.4 Emerging issues and trends that may affect Government funding to NGBs and working with other team sports

The Board were updated on the issues and trends that may affect government funding to NGBs and the anticipation of what might happen for community sport funding with a new Government in 2015. Whilst there isn't one single clear policy or approach, there have been a number of common themes which, if they were to happen, would have a major effect on Rugby League at a community level. Those themes are;

- The UK does not have a world class sports participation system.
- How NGBs govern themselves and rely on structures which are not inclusive and/or effective.
- Involvement of women and girls, and people with disabilities in sport at all levels.
- Insufficient concentration of resources at primary school level to drive a sporting habit for life.

The RFL is responding to these challenges. Over the coming months, the Chief Operating Officer, Director of Participation and other senior executives will meet with senior Ministers and Politicians across the political spectrum to put the case forward on how the RFL is meeting the above challenges and why an NGB led funded system is still the best way to deliver increases in participation.

In addition to that, the six major team sports (Football, Cricket, Netball, Hockey, Rugby League and Union) have, over the last 6 months, been meeting with Sport England to find a way of best explaining to the Government why funding into team sports is so beneficial to 'UK plc'.

The Board noted the work of RFL Executives at present to ensure continued government funding into Rugby League into the future.

Mr Birkett, assisted by Mr Baker, gave a brief overview of the direction of travel of the Play Touch Rugby League franchises and the expected growth in participants.

Ms Crawshaw highlighted the funding and future of Women's & Girls RL. Mr Gent confirmed that he will discuss this issue further internally and report at a future meeting.

DG

5.0 PARTICIPANT CENTRED APPROACH

Mr Birkett gave a presentation on the 'Let's Talk Rugby League' survey and its progression since the update received at the April meeting.

Mr Birkett thanked Mr Baker for his continued assistance with the survey work and also, introduced Kelly Gordon, who is assisting with the survey on a consultancy basis.

Mr Birkett explained that the Let's Talk Rugby League survey had been completed with 5,166 responses and 125 focus groups, with an

additional 683 participants taking part in those focus groups. This has created a considerable amount of qualitative and quantitative data on the reasons why players want to play the game and why players have lapsed from the game as well as what might motivate them to play again.

The next steps are to segment the data and information on the motivations of why players want to play as well as compare those segments to other data and information held by the RFL and others, on the reasons for people wishing to play the game. It was noted that an analysis of the survey results will be presented at the Community Board with a report on how the survey results will be used to refine the Community Game Strategy and programmes in the coming months.

MB

Ms Gordon reported on the work with other governing bodies and Sport England on how they are developing their approach to becoming more player centric and the stages needed to be taken to have a truly player centric strategy.

6.0 RFL SAFEGUARDING APPROACH

Ms Rosewarne gave a brief overview of the Safeguarding paper and highlighted the increased cases over the last few years in the sport.

Ms Rosewarne asked that the members assist the RFL in promoting safeguarding awareness, and in doing so, recommended the following;

- Be vocal advocates and champions for Safeguarding, speak up for the principles against detractors
- Challenge and, where necessary, report unacceptable behaviour
- Take Safeguarding into account when deciding on Community Game policies
- Support and help to drive the new RESPECT campaign when it is launched
- Encourage clubs to operate in a way which mirrors the Safeguarding Policy
- Reward clubs who provide a good Safeguarding environment
- Question and take action against clubs who regularly feature in the SCMG's caseload
- Ask leagues to roll out policies which encourage good behaviour (such as using licensed coaches, ensuring equal playing time)
- Ensure that the transfer system allows players to leave clubs and join others if they choose
- Set a date after which clubs without trained CWOs will not be allowed to enter teams into Youth & Junior Leagues or Cups
- Require all RFL departments to take positive action to work with the Safeguarding team and make sure that departments take Safeguarding into account when producing policies and/or resource

Ms Crawshaw asked how the Leagues approach and manage these issues, such as with their Coaches. Ms Rosewarne confirmed that there are clear rules within the Coaching Code of Conduct that

licenses can be revoked should a Coach be guilty of a Safeguarding issue.

The Board agreed to assist where possible to help with the awareness of these issues and maintain a safeguarding approach within their respective Leagues. As such, Ms Morrow suggested that Ms Rosewarne bring a proposal to the October Community Board meeting on ways in which the Leagues can best promote the Safeguarding Approach.

ER

Mr Hunt suggested that a message be strategically placed on the RFL website which Mr Barwick welcomed and requested that Ms Rosewarne draft a message in his name.

ER

Mr Bray requested that a PDF poster be produced and circulated to the Leagues, which can be displayed in their respective clubhouses, to assist with the awareness of the campaign.

ER

7.0 PLAYER PRODUCTION & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Mr Gent briefly updated the Board on the paper and reported that the same paper had been discussed at the recent Youth & Junior Management meeting however, even though the Group were supportive of the direction of travel, they had raised a number of questions and are due to meet again on 26 July to discuss the finer details.

A debate took place around various aspects of the Policy. It was acknowledged that the current system was imperfect and that this proposal was an attempt to improve it, but there are still unanswered questions about how this will work in practice and clarifications on certain points required. As such, the following schedule was adopted, to maintain the current direction of travel of the policies proposed adoption;

- All Board members should send their questions regarding the paper to Mr Gent by Friday 18 July 2014.
- Mr Gent, with the assistance of Mr Rimmer and Mr Rotherham, to answer all those questions by Wednesday 23 July 2014.
- It was noted that the policy was to be discussed at the forthcoming RFL Council meeting.
- A further meeting of the Community Board on this specific area would be organised if members thought it necessary.

ALL

DG/RR/DR

DG/RR

DG/RR/DR

NOTE: Subsequently, Community Board members met after the RL Council meeting on 23 July for further discussion. It was recognised that the decision to approve this policy sat with the RFL Board and the job of the Community Board was to work on detailed implementation for the community game and find solutions to issues raised by both Board members and the Youth and Junior Management Group.

It was agreed that a Community Board Working Group should be set

NF

up to meet over the next six to twelve months to work through issues and find solutions which could work across the whole game. Ms Crawshaw will Chair the group which will feedback into the Four Way Group already established between the Educational sector, community game, Championships and Super League. It was suggested that the creation of pilot projects in some areas might be helpful to work through practical issues and establish best practice.

8.0 SCHOOLS RUGBY LEAGUE

Ms Giblin presented a brief update on the work that is taking place in Secondary Schools Rugby League.

The Board noted the excellent progress being made in developing the RFL Secondary Schools Offer and what needs to be undertaken into 2015.

9.0 SKY FUNDING FOR PRIMARY RUGBY LEAGUE

Mr Rimmer presented an update on the proposed Sky Funding offer to cover the areas of Primary Rugby League, Embed the Pathway, Champion Schools and Play Touch Rugby League. It was noted that the funding would be directed primarily through Super League Foundations against a strict set of criteria.

The Board noted the contents of the presentation and welcome further updates on progress at future meetings, where appropriate. Mr Rimmer further advised that at future meetings, he would hope that a Programme Director be recruited to update on the scheme.

10.0 GOVERNANCE

10.1 Operational Rules – Hull Open Age League

Ms Taylor gave a brief update on the work with the Hull Open Age League to obtain their signature and adoption of the RFL Operational Rules.

The League is the only area remaining in the community game which has not agreed to adopt the Operational Rules.

It was noted that the League had, on various occasions, indicated to both the RFL and BARLA that they were not prepared to sign the rules. It was agreed to once again try to get the League to sign and if they still refuse, then the Community Board agreed to recommend to the RFL Board that the Hull Open Age League should lose its status as a recognised community league and therefore, its relevant entitlements. All were in favour of this approach subject to one final attempt to get the League to sign.

DG

NOTE: Subsequent to the meeting, Hull Open Age have invited BARLA and RFL executives to attend a meeting to discuss this further. It is hoped any issues they have around the Operational Rules can be satisfactorily addressed at this meeting.

10.2 Operational Rules Updating

The Board were in agreement to the timetable for the review of the Operational Rules.

11.0 RISK REGISTER

It was noted that the Hull Open Age League could become a risk, if the Operational Rules are not adopted.

It was requested that, as a standing agenda item, any item discussed in future meetings, which is deemed confidential for is highlighted at this point in the agenda.

ALL

12.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no further business to report, the meeting concluded at 15:10pm.

13.0 Date of Next Meeting: Wednesday 22 October 2014