

RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

STRATEGIC & OPERATIONAL PLANS

2015 - 2021



RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 - 2021





CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S INTRODUCTION

RUGBY LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021



Rugby League in 2015 is perfectly placed to move forward with renewed confidence for the remainder of the decade. The Rugby League World Cup, hosted by the RFL in 2013, demonstrated that off the field, the RFL can successfully organise and promote truly world class events. The performance of the England team full of wonderful elite young athletes, proved that we can compete with the best in the world, consistently and sustainably.

There are other reasons for confidence. The sport has a long-term contract with excellent broadcasting partners which will showcase the best our domestic competitions can provide while providing the professional game with the financial stability to plan safely for the long term. The sport has embraced the new 'whole game' philosophy espoused in the 2013 Policy Review, restoring promotion and relegation and providing a canvass for collegiate and collaborative co-operation from all areas of the sport including the vibrant community game.

There can, however, be no complacency. We must remain focused on ensuring that the prizes we believe the sport can attain, with its new competition structure, deliver as promised. Our participation models from six to 60 must be constantly assessed to ensure the right number of players, coaches, officials and volunteers are emerging of the highest quality.

Rugby League has a long and proud history of innovation. There is insufficient space in an introduction of this type to do justice to the list of Rugby League firsts. The RFL will continue to hold dear its preparedness to dare, along with our values of caring for all sections of the sport, sharing the games resourcing in a prudent manner and being scrupulously fair in the application of the rules both on and off the field. We will continue to lead the equality, diversity and respect agendas in making our sport as accessible, welcoming and inclusive as it can be to all sections of society.

The following suite of strategic documents sets out our vision to take the sport forward for the next seven years with the underlying philosophies that our policies are in pursuit of. No-one in Rugby League needs to be persuaded about the merit of our sport, its ability to be a positive force for good and the important role it plays in people's lives. Our job over the next cycle is quite simply putting customers at the heart of everything we do, to really understand the needs of our players, fans and other stakeholders and to tell more people about the heritage, culture and ethos of Rugby League.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Nigel Wood".

Nigel Wood
January 2015

RUGBY LEAGUE IN 2021

**RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021**



WHERE WE WANT TO BE

A growing sport, available throughout the country, that is recognised as providing positive experience for all participants and spectators, in environments that are welcoming, inclusive, vibrant, safe and comfortable - encouraging people to return again and again, featuring :-

- Sold out major national and international events delivering spectacular entertainment for supporters and viewers;
- Compelling competitions which consistently grow live and TV audiences, commercial revenues and which provide the opportunity for well-run clubs to flourish and succeed;
- Financially viable and sustainable professional clubs creating stable employment opportunities, showcasing local, national and international playing talent, and leading the sport's development - and making a difference - in their own communities;
- Welcoming community clubs, putting players first, offering recreational enjoyment for children and adults alike in a safe and inclusive environment;
- England being successful internationally on a consistent basis;
- A central organisation that stands out for excellence, innovation, mutual respect, integrity and inclusion that understands its role in servicing the wider sport;
- A sport that lives its values in all its decision and actions.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

THE UNDERLYING BELIEFS & PRINCIPLES

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



The vision is underpinned by 13 core principles:

1. **An integrated whole sport.** Each constituent part of the sport will have a responsibility to ensure the good health of the entire game;
2. **Return on investment.** Investment will be targeted to ensure the sustainability of member clubs, and growth in the number and quality of players thus seeking an effective return for the game;
3. **Light touch regulation.** The regulations of the sport will be focused on making it easier for participants to play the sport;
4. **On-field meritocracy.** Progression through the competition should be more transparent and determined primarily (but not exclusively) by on-field performance;
5. **Commercially compelling.** The structure of the playing leagues must ensure the most commercially compelling offering for spectators and sponsors;
6. **Investment at the top of tier 2.** With the restoration of promotion and relegation, increased investment into the top of the Tier 2 (Championship) competition is essential to ensure that the clubs entering and exiting to and from Tier 1 (Super League) are sustainable and competitive on and off the pitch;
7. **Financial parameters.** Financial distributions will be undertaken to ensure the whole of the game will move forward together;
8. **Player focused.** A player-focused approach should be adopted to enable every player to reach his/her playing potential;
9. **Talent retention.** Member clubs should be rewarded for producing elite talent and given assistance to retain this talent;
10. **Open game.** There should be free and open movement of players throughout the sport and across the amateur and professional environments;
11. **Geographic expansion.** Geographic expansion of the sport should be carried out in a proportionate and sustainable manner;
12. **International development.** The Rugby Football League will work to support the Rugby League International Federation and the Rugby League European Federation in achieving international growth of the game;
13. **Broadcast attractiveness.** The structure of competitions should produce more games between equally matched sides; producing greater uncertainty of outcome, reduced mismatches and more excitement.

OUR GOALS

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



The vision will be delivered through 6 Corporate Goals:

A financially-sustainable sport – increasing turnover from

£118M — TO — **£146M**

BY 2021 FINANCIAL YEAR

**INCREASE SPECTATOR
NUMBERS FROM**

2.3M to 3M



INCREASE TV VIEWERS

**FROM 17M TO
22M BY 2021**

**ENGLAND TO WIN
THE WORLD CUP
IN 2017**



**AND EVERY HOME
SERIES TO 2021**



**INCREASED
PARTICIPATION**

The number of registered
participants increasing from
46,636 to 65,929
by 2021

**EXCELLENT
GOVERNANCE**

Fully meeting Tier 3 of
the Sports Governance
Code by 2017



APPROACH

**RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021**



HOW WE WILL WORK

The approach we will take to deliver the goals are:

- We will drive a customer-focused approach in all we do, understanding the needs of players, fans and other stakeholders;
- We will take a long-term strategic approach through to 2021;
- We will implement a Whole Game vision managing the interdependencies of our goals;
- We will work in partnership with organisations who have mutual objectives that grow the sport;
- We will continually seek to innovate and drive for excellence;
- We will place clubs at the heart of the sport to meet the needs of our participants;
- We will prioritise our investment to gain the best return against spend by evaluating performance against spectator, viewer and participant numbers;
- We will build the capacity of our workforce, both volunteer and professional;
- We will focus upon monitoring and evaluation and be accountable for our strategy.

VALUES

**RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021**



In our approach we will live our values through our behaviours:

UNITED

**WE ARE ONE TEAM,
HEADING IN THE
SAME DIRECTION**

PROFESSIONAL

**WE ARE OPEN AND
HONEST WITH
OURSELVES AND
OUR CUSTOMERS**

EXCELLENCE

**WE KNOW WHAT
EXCELLENCE MEANS
AND WE STRIVE FOR
IT EVERYDAY**

RESPECT

**WE LISTEN TO
EACH OTHER TO
UNDERSTAND
EVERYONES NEEDS
AND OPINIONS**

STRATEGIES

RUGBY LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021



The goals will be implemented through the following suite of Strategic and Operational Plans that will each contribute to achieving the vision:



CORE PILLARS

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



CRITICAL PARTS OF THE BUSINESS THAT REQUIRE INVESTMENT

The strategies are underpinned by the five core pillars that we will ensure remain central to all our strategies:



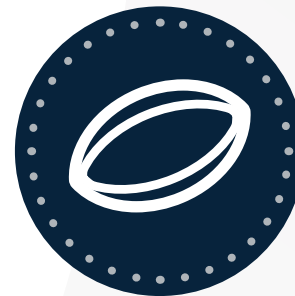
UNDERSTANDING
OUR CUSTOMERS



DEVELOPING
OUR PEOPLE



DEVELOPING
HIGH QUALITY,
WELCOMING, INCLUSIVE
ENVIRONMENTS



DEVELOPING THE
PROFILE OF THE
GAME



DEVELOPING
OUR INSIGHT

THE STRATEGY WILL BE MONITORED AND EVALUATED ANNUALLY
WITH REVISED OPERATIONAL PLANS PRODUCED.

A FULL REVIEW WILL BE CONDUCTED IN 2018

RUGBY FOOTBALL LEAGUE

OPERATIONAL PLAN

2015 - 2021



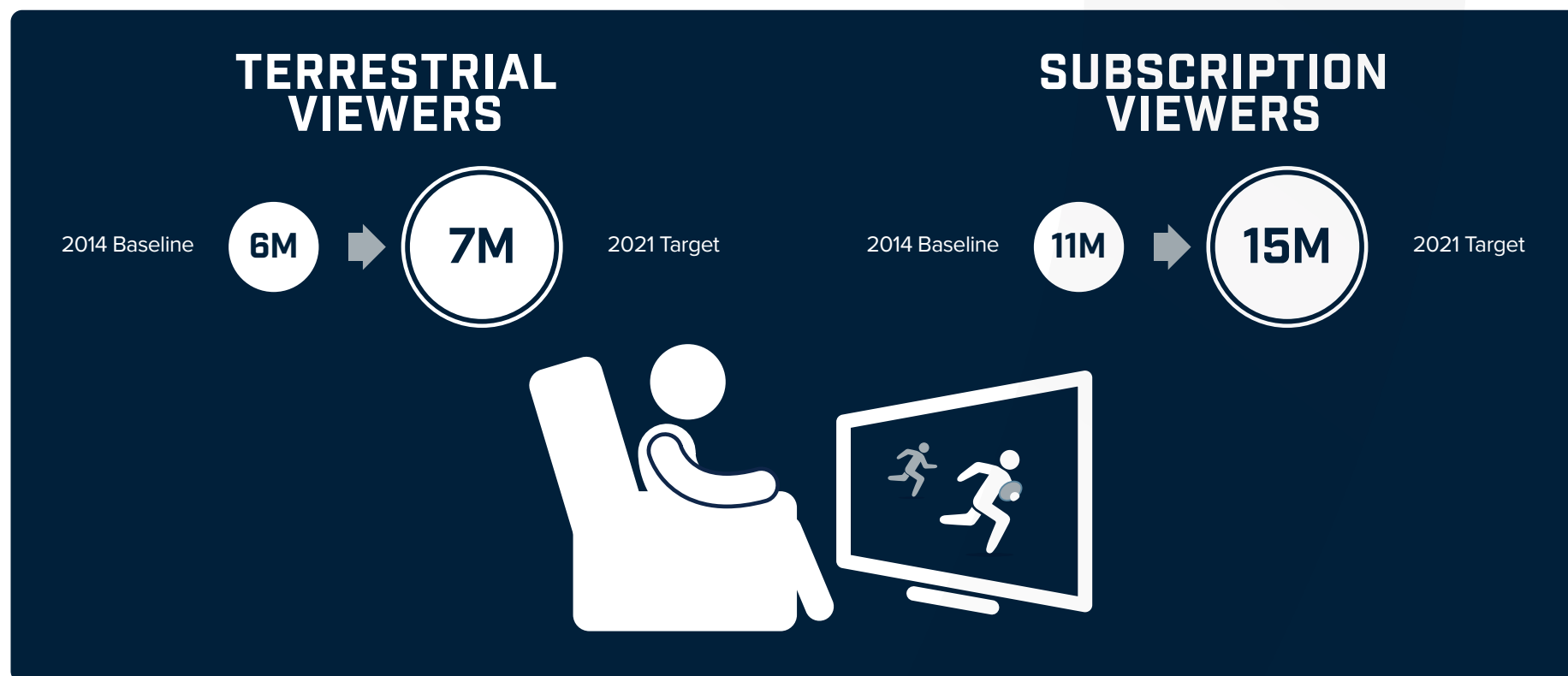


VIEWS

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



Outcome: Increased spectators increasing viewers from 17m to 22m.



SPECTATORS

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



Outcome: Increased Spectators rising from 2,344,887 to 3,027,342 by 2021.

NUMBER OF SPECTATORS ACROSS SUPER LEAGUE



1,533,907

2015 Baseline (est)

1,973,063

2021 Target

FINALS, PLAY-OFFS, MAGIC WEEKEND & SUMMER BASH

267,802

2015 Baseline (est)

326,656

2021 Target

NUMBER OF SPECTATORS CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1

345,178

2015 Baseline (est)

483,265

2021 Target

NUMBER OF SPECTATORS CHALLENGE CUP FROM

198,000

2015 Baseline (est)

244,358

2021 Target

LEVELS OF VISIBILITY AND PROFILE

100

2015 Baseline (est)

125

2021 Target

PARTICIPANTS

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



Outcome: Increased number of registered participants increasing from 46,636 to 65,929 by 2021.

NUMBER OF COMMUNITY CLUB REGISTERED PLAYERS



40,337

2014 Baseline

46,335

2021 Target

NUMBER OF REGISTERED TAG & TOUCH PARTICIPANTS



3,500

2014 Baseline

15,200

2021 Target

NUMBER OF REGISTERED COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY PARTICIPANTS



2,799

2014 Baseline

4,394

2021 Target

NUMBER OF PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH SKY GRASSROOTS RUGBY LEAGUE PROGRAMME

0

2014 Baseline

700,000

2021 Target

FINANCIAL

RUGBY LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021



Outcome: Financial sustainable sport increasing turnover for the sport from £118m to £146m.

SUPER LEAGUE EUROPE LTD TURNOVER

£27.7M

2014 Baseline

£34.3M

2021 Target

PROFESSIONAL & SEMI-PROFESSIONAL CLUB TURNOVER



£75M

2014 Baseline

£90M

2021 Target

RFL LTD TURNOVER

£15.5M

2014 Baseline

£22.3M

2021 Target

SUPER LEAGUE CLUB PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNTS

Average losses

£627K

3 Clubs in profit 2014 baseline

Average losses

£100K

9 Clubs in profit 2021 Target

COMMERCIAL INCOME

£2.5M

2014 Baseline

£7M

2021 Target

ENGLAND

RUGBY LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021



Outcome: Increased International Success with England to win Rugby League World Cup final by 2017.

SUPER LEAGUE ACADEMIES RATED AS 'OUTSTANDING'

05

2014 Baseline

12

2021 Target

ENGLAND ACADEMY PLAYERS MAKING A SUPER LEAGUE DEBUT



75%

2014 Baseline

80%

2021 Target

ACADEMY PLAYERS THAT GRADUATE TO SUPER LEAGUE

26
players
per year



40
players
per year

PLAYERS THAT CAN ACCESS TALENT DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENTS

2,500

5,000

ENGLAND PERFORMANCE TARGETS



World Cup winners,
Winners of each home
Test Series to 2017.

EXCELLENT ORGANISATION

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



Outcome: Fully meeting tier 3 of the sports governance code and working as a high performing governing body.

Investors
in People

GOOD

2014 Baseline

EXCELLENT

2021 Target

Customer Satisfaction
Measured by NPS

67

2016 Baseline

69

2017 Target

Medical
Standards

**RECOGNISED
FOR BEST PRACTICE**

2014 Baseline

**RECOGNISED
FOR EXCELLENCE**

2021 Target

Sport England Equality
Standard for Sport

INTERMEDIATE

2014 Baseline

ADVANCED

2021 Target



**FULLY MEET TIER 3 OF THE
SPORTS GOVERNANCE CODE**

Full time players engaged
in education or career
training

65%



85%

CPSU Safeguarding
standard for Sport

COMPLIANT

2014 Baseline

GOOD

2021 Target

PERFORMANCE SO FAR

RUGBY LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2021



VIEWERS



Terrestrial viewers (000s)
Subscription viewers (000s)
Total Viewers (000s)

**2015
TARGET**

**2015
ACTUAL**

**2016
TARGET**

**2016
ACTUAL**

6,000	14,788	↑	6,200	16,529	↑
12,000	12,468	↑	12,500	12,676	↑
18,000	27,256	↑	18,700	29,205	↑

SPECTATORS



Super League (000's)
Finals, Play-Offs, Magic, Summer Bash WCS & Internationals
Number of Spectators Championship and League 1
Number of Spectators Challenge Cup (Round 3 onwards)
Total Spectators

1,533	1,527	↓	1,610	1,545	↓
267,802	353,893	↑	282,177	353,760	↑
345,178	401,105	↑	379,697	355,289	↓
198,000	206,183	↑	207,900	183,937	↓
813,513	962,708	↑	871,384	893,937	↑

PARTICIPANTS



Levels of visibility and profile
Number of Registered Community Club Players
Number of Registered Touch & Tag Participants
Number of Registered College & University Participants
Number of people reached through the Sky Try Programme
Total Participants

104	104	↑	108	109	↑
41,193	45,242	↑	42,049	44,879	↑
5,171	4,740	↓	6,842	5,432	↓
3,027	2,950	↓	3,255	3,298	↑
41,665	43,955	↑	100,000	63,516	↓
91,056	96,887	↑	152,146	117,125	↓

PERFORMANCE SO FAR

RUGBY LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2021



COMMERICAL INCOME



Super League (Europe) Ltd Turnover
RFL Ltd Turnover (000's)
Professional and semi-professional club turnover (000's)
Super League Club Profit and Loss Accounts

**2015
TARGET**

**2015
ACTUAL**

**2016
TARGET**

**2016
ACTUAL**

30,584	29,834	↓	31,000	INCOMPLETE
20,517	24,862	↑	20,483	INCOMPLETE
83,500	INCOMPLETE		85,400	INCOMPLETE
Average losses £147k, + 4 Clubs in profit	INCOMPLETE		Average losses £147k, + 4 Clubs in profit	INCOMPLETE
3,130	3,344	↑	3,425	3,425 ↑

Commerical Income (000s)

ENGLAND & GOVERNANCE



Super League Academies rated as 'Outstanding'
England Academy players making a Super League debut
Academy players that graduate to Super League
England Performance Target
Investors in People
Sport England Equality Standard for Sport
Medical Standards
Full time players career engaged
Safeguarding

8	6	↓	10	7	↓
76%	79%	↑	77%	84%	↑
28	29	↑	30	39	↑
England to win NZ Test Series	ACHIEVED	↑	England to win Four Nations	3rd	↓
GOOD Bronze	INCOMPLETE		GOOD Bronze	ACHIEVED	↑
Intermediate	ACHIEVED	↑	Intermediate	ACHIEVED	↑
Consistent with best practice in British Sport	ACHIEVED	↑	Consistent with best practice in British Sport	ACHIEVED	↑
40%	35%	↓	50%	51%	↑
Compliant - Green	ACHIEVED	↑	Compliant - Green	ACHIEVED	↑



SUPER LEAGUE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 - 2017





INTRODUCTION

SUPER LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** As the elite club competition of Rugby League, Super League is the most visible exhibition of the sport in the public domain. Super League must therefore be seen as a vibrant competition with capacity crowds and extraordinary heroes, presented as must-see entertainment. Guaranteeing that Super League is viewed in this way will ensure people's wider perceptions of Rugby League are changed, with the entire sport achieving new levels of profile, participation and revenue. The Super League brand should also unite clubs, sponsors, broadcasters, stakeholders and staff in a common purpose.
- 1.2** The new competition format from 2015 ensures that every minute, of every match matters. This exciting new format also presents an opportunity to rejuvenate the existing 'Extraordinary' campaign. Current and potential attendees, viewers and commercial partners will be encouraged to "experience the extraordinary" at a Super League match - an entertaining spectacle with passionate fans and players that are incredible athletes, strong, quick and skilful but also the heart of their local community. Every match is played with true respect between players, officials and fans, in welcoming environments. Attending a Super League match is a memorable experience, a must-see entertainment event delivering unrivalled value for money.

2.0 Vision

- 2.1** To be the premier sports league of the UK summer.

3.0 Targets

- 3.1** Increase SLE commercial revenues by at least 75% by 2017.
- 3.2** Raise the visibility and profile of Super League by 15% in 2015 and 2016, and 10% each year thereafter (against a baseline measurement set in 2014).
- 3.3** Sell out the Super League Grand Final 2015 onwards.
- 3.4** Sell out Magic Day One 2017 onwards.
- 3.5** Super League 2015 to have 10 sell out games, rising by 5 games each year.
- 3.6** Super League total attendance to rise by 5% each year from 2015 onwards.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**SUPER LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017**



4.0 Strategic Priorities

4.1 The strategic priorities for Super League between 2014 and 2017 are:

4.1.1 Significantly improving the visibility and profile of the Super League competition and its member clubs.

A specific programme through public relations, media and sales activity addressing the corporate level consumers, government and media will be pursued to raise the profile of the competition. All marketing and PR activity will be of a standard that positions Super League as a competition with national and international appeal. This will be specifically targeted to improve the positive approval of Super League and the sport in general in the eyes of the public and key opinion formers. An integrated communications and marketing plan will be established, delivering a planned approach to raising a positive profile in mainstream and social media through a myriad of opinion formers including players, owners, sponsors, broadcast partners, administrators, government partners and the fan base.

4.1.2 Increasing central and club generated income.

The continued development of a strong Super League competition will require the maximisation of centrally generated revenues, together with specific measures to broaden the spectator appeal for both central events and individual club fixtures.

An improved approach to sponsorship sales and renewals, co-ordinated with the efforts to significantly raise the profile of Super League in the UK and France, will deliver improved commercial revenues. An enhanced portfolio of commercial partners that cover all key consumer markets and categories will be acquired. This portfolio of partners will assist Super League in growing overall attendances and selling out key events.

Additional revenue will also be derived from our events programme and digital assets, especially content and database.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

**SUPER LEAGUE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017**



4.1.3 Supporting the financial sustainability of Super League member clubs.

Efforts to increase the levels of centrally and club generated income must be supported by the maintenance of Salary Cap and Financial Sustainability Regulations that are fair and supportive. Whilst a review of these regulations will be conducted for the commencement of the 2016 season, the Super League is committed to a regulatory framework that ensures cost control but provides some flexibility to allow financially sustainable clubs to recruit and retain elite talent (in particular players that have been trained and nurtured by that club).

4.1.4 Supporting clubs in the development, recruitment and retention of elite playing talent.

In association with the RFL and Super League clubs, a co-ordinated programme of measures will be implemented to support the development and retention of elite playing talent. The Super League will use the increased investment in grass-roots participation to widen the player pool, increasingly reward those clubs that invest in and are successful at developing youth, lobby the RLIF to introduce fair and appropriate compensation regulations that span across all competitions and support the recruitment and (in particular) retention of elite playing talent.

4.1.5 Ensuring the development and growth of international club competition, with the particular objectives of expanding the World Club Challenge in 2015 and obtaining entry into the Auckland Nines competition.

Super League will continue to build improved relationships with the NRL executive and its member clubs to ensure the profile and commercial benefits of international club competition are understood and supported. This will require all opportunities to expand international club competition to be taken, and then executed in a manner that ensures the maximum amount of exposure and commercial return.



CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 - 2017





INTRODUCTION

CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1 STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017



1.0 Background

- 1.1** Until the end of the 2014 season, this tier of the sport has been referred to as the Championships and has comprised the Championship and Championship 1. From 2015, these largely semi-professional divisions will split into The Championship and League 1, and will become Tier 2 and Tier 3 of the sport respectively.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1** The new divisional structures will undoubtedly inject new energy and vibrancy to these two divisions. The introduction of promotion and relegation will provide the 'Every Minute Matters' backdrop to games played within these tiers however, it will also bring with it challenges which need to be met to take advantage of what will be a fantastic opportunity.
- 2.2** The prospect of playing in a competition which allows each club to realise its aspirations within a framework designed to give a stable environment, where clubs are rewarded through a system of meritocracy, is a long nurtured ambition. The ability for all clubs to operate at the appropriate level whilst providing week-in, week-out excitement for players, coaches, spectators, viewers, commercial partners and broadcasters is one which will inspire confidence and give value to all stakeholders.

3.0 Vision

- 3.1** Successful connectivity between the community and the full time elite levels of the game which allows each and every club to achieve its aspirations including movement between tiers through competitive promotion and relegation.

3.2 Championship

- 3.2.1** An intense competition which prepares its clubs to such an extent that they can compete against and surpass elite Super League opposition.

3.3 League 1

- 3.3.1** A highly competitive semi-professional competition which facilitates the entry of strategically significant clubs alongside more traditional clubs within a truly compelling competitive environment.

TARGETS

CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1 STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017



4.0 Targets

- Increase central commercial revenues by at least 75% by 2017 from a baseline of £100,000;
- Raise the visibility and profile of the Championship and League 1 by 200% between by 2017;
- Sell out the 'Million Pound' game on one occasion by 2017;
- Sell out on one day of the Summer Bash by 2017;
- Championship total attendances to rise by 20% from 2015 to 2017;
- League 1 total attendances to rise by 20% from 2015 to 2017;
- An increased uptake on central event ticket sales from Championship and League 1 communities of 30% over the period;
- Championship and League 1 clubs to be annually graduating a minimum two players to their first team squad from their own system;
- 75% players exiting category two and three Academies to be retained within the sport.

5.0 Strategic Priorities

- 5.1 The Policy Review spearheaded a subsequent suite of policies at

different tiers based on the principle of a Whole Game Solution. The step-change sought, was that of a sport moving as one, which galvanises interest from stakeholders across all tiers.

- 5.2 Significantly improving the visibility and profile of the Championship and League 1 competitions and its member clubs.

- 5.2.1 The integration of the competitions with the elite Super League inevitably means a dramatic increase in the visibility and profile of the Championship and League 1. With this platform, and an integrated communication and marketing plan, the objective of increased visibility and profile throughout the UK will be achieved.

- 5.3 Increasing central revenues.

- 5.3.1 Commercial maximisation of the new structures will be achieved through the development of more sophisticated approaches across the integrated competitions.

The targets projected should be achievable with the heightened visibility and profile produced through the launch of the new era and all that it has to offer these divisions, coupled with a much stronger broadcast presence. It is expected that the breadth of the portfolio for these divisions, and also the diversity of the commercial offer will both increase and allow considerable improvement on historic levels.

TARGETS

CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1 STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017



5.4 Sustainable Clubs

5.4.1 The introduction of promotion and relegation inevitably brings pressure upon club management to spend beyond their resources to achieve success. The regulatory framework that has been developed, including; salary cap and player pathway issues, has been designed to provide maximum support whilst retaining specific restrictions which will ensure sustainability is achievable to all participant clubs within competitive environments.

5.5 Supporting clubs in the development, recruitment and retention of playing talent

5.5.1 It is a stated aim that the Championship be an environment capable of producing teams and players that can compete within the Super League environment. Allowing clubs to develop their own player pathways through use of the three tiers of Academy available and giving salary cap allowances to ensure that these players can be retained, should ensure that this objective be achieved.

5.5.2 League 1 clubs will also have the ability to develop their own quality assured pathway, from junior to Tier 3 Academy; this environment will allow the clubs to identify and develop local talent to such a standard that the first team can compete and progress in this high performance competition.

5.6 Supporting clubs in the development of their grounds and associated facilities

5.6.1 The RFL, through the work of the RFL Facilities Trust, will assist

clubs in facility improvement. The environment in which the public experience the sport is an important one for the growth of the sport, and as such, requires some focus. This support will come in terms of; assessing spectator needs and developing subsequent development plans, lobbying and advising on funding applications and supporting the delivery of affordable maintenance where possible.

5.7 Supporting clubs to reach out into their local communities to get more people to play and be involved with the club.

5.7.1 In recognising the importance of the community link for these clubs, the RFL, through the work of the Community Department, will help to develop good practice in this area. It will do this through national, regional and local agencies, plus RL Cares, to promote the value of semi-professional clubs in stimulating activity, and in so doing, attempt to attract funding for the community foundation work.

5.8 Expanding the sports geographic reach through development of a pipeline of new clubs

5.8.1 The recent introduction of new clubs has given the sport an opportunity to grow and develop a talent pool in strategically significant markets. It is recognised that these clubs offer opportunities to increase the footprint of the sport and that other new clubs pushing for entry into Tier 3 should be considered based on sustainability, introduction of new players, spectators and viewers to the game, competitive impact and the ability to realise tangible growth.

CONCLUSION

CHAMPIONSHIP & LEAGUE 1 STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017



6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Championship and League 1 provide the essential link between the elite Super League and the community. They also give a greater geographic spread to the sport and help to achieve the objectives of igniting and widening local gene pools in terms of playing, spectator and viewing numbers.
- 6.2 If these divisions can be developed in this exciting new environment to such an extent whereby they can sustainably progress, then the sport will prosper to a much greater degree.

COMMUNITY GAME

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 - 2017





INTRODUCTION

COMMUNITY GAME STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This Strategy presents a transformative new approach to delivering growing participation in Rugby League at community level over the next seven years, against the backdrop of decreasing numbers of people playing team sports across the UK and the likelihood of reduced public funding to sport NGBs.
- 1.2 The aim of this Strategy is to grow participation by 5% per year by 2021, increasing capacity and capability on the ground by forming new partnerships across geographical areas, working in a co-ordinated way to deliver focused goals.
- 1.3 It outlines a plan to use new technology, and the individual relationship with customers it enables, to measure and track participation, understand and deliver what our customers want, and to unlock commercial value from the bedrock of the sport.
- 1.4 For the first time, our plans are based on specific insight; research and evidence, rather than gut feeling. We have carried out two extensive customer surveys – Let's Talk Rugby League and Let's Talk More Rugby League - which have elicited detailed information from thousands of current and lapsed players about what drives them to play the game and what barriers prevent them from playing.
- 1.5 The surveys show that the game remains extremely attractive to a wide section of society, but that a number of barriers exist in maximising that interest and turning it into regular and continuing participation in the sport. This Strategy pledges to put the customers at the heart of the development of the sport, to seek to understand what they want and when, and how it needs to be delivered.
- 1.6 The Strategy adheres to the main principles in the Rugby League's Policy Review 2013; that the prosperity of the sport requires a whole game solution in which every tier plays its part. It recognises the vital role a successful and thriving community game plays in ensuring the overall health of the sport, and that maintaining the health of Community Rugby League is the responsibility of the whole game.
- 1.7 This tier is where participants and their families are introduced to the game, where they develop their skills and passion for the game and go on to grow and flourish as players, spectators, coaches, match officials and as the all-important volunteers who ensure the sustainability of the game at a community level.

VISION, PRINCIPLES & TARGETS

COMMUNITY GAME STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017

2.0 Vision

- 2.1 'In every major English town I can play Rugby League in a way that suits me, on a regular basis in a high quality, and welcoming environment'.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1 We will put customers at the heart of everything we do.
- 3.2 We will make decisions based on insight.
- 3.3 We will focus only on activities that grow participation and increase retention.
- 3.4 We will work in partnership with organisations that have mutual objectives to grow the sport.
- 3.5 The RFL will provide direct services only when no other alternative can be found.
- 3.6 The health of the Community Game is the responsibility of the whole game and the whole RFL.

4.0 Targets

- 4.1 We will set an aspirational target to increase the number of people playing Rugby League by 5% per year to 2021.
- 4.2 We will improve retention throughout the sport by reducing the overall drop off rate by 2% per annum, particularly focussing on identified high drop-off points.
- 4.3 We will double the number of women and girls playing the game by 2021.
- 4.4 We will ensure that Rugby League continues to seek access to the available public and private funding streams required to support the strategic plans for growth in participation. We will develop the financial value of the Community Game through commercial methods that recognise its worth, and then double it by 2021.
- 4.5 We will increase the visibility and profile of the Community game by 200% by 2021. The benchmark will be established in 2016.
- 4.6 We will increase the number of schools playing Rugby League regularly by 10% per year.
- 4.7 We will seek to measure the number of registered volunteers within the Community Game and increase that number by 50% by 2021.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY GAME
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017

5.0 Strategic Priorities

5.1 We will develop a new real time measurement for participation.

We will use the benefits of modern technology, and the outcomes of the insight work being undertaken by the RFL to create a single customer view, to measure actual participation in rugby league activity rather than registrations. This will give us more accurate and timely evidence of participation numbers and frequency. We aim to have this new system in place within two years. This work will also enable direct communication with individuals to track their progress and retention within the game, as well as the associated commercial benefits that can be exploited to bring new sources of income.

5.2 We will use customer insight to deliver playing opportunities at all levels to make it easier for more people to play the game more often.

We will use customer insight gained from Let's Talk Rugby League and Let's Talk More Rugby League plus feedback and outcomes from new pilot programmes planned for 2016 to help shape new ways of playing the game in a variety of environments alongside the traditional game.

This will ensure that we maximise the number of people given the opportunity to play rugby league, and may mean new variants of the game or new ways of organising the traditional game.

Part of this work will develop and deliver effective interventions to

retain 12 to 16 year olds in the game, an age group which currently sees significant drop off. We will also continue to develop the new Primary Rugby League format for young children based on a style of game that gives them maximum time to develop their skills in an atmosphere of fun and enjoyment, and Play Touch Rugby League, which is proving successful in attracting new players to the sport.

We will also work to develop the environments that surround these offers and formats. Insight has identified environment as a significant factor in attraction and retention rates; this includes both the physical environment, as well as the learning environment and the behaviours contained within it. The creation of high quality welcoming environments will be a combination of facility development and raising the profile of volunteer schemes that develop good club management skills. The new look 'Respect' programme will be interwoven into the fabric of this work through creating awareness and finding innovative ways of delivery.

5.3 We will identify and support the most appropriate external partners to ensure that the best delivery solutions are found to generate growth across the different areas of the UK.

Funding will be targeted into partnerships that can demonstrate their ability to develop a suite of playing opportunities which directly deliver increased participation and better retention, in high quality, welcoming environments that can provide good customer experience. These are likely to include community and professional clubs working side by side with schools and colleges, armed forces bases, County Sports Partnerships and other delivery partners in

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY GAME STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2017

a co-ordinated way to deliver focused outcomes through agreed approaches.

The Sky Try programme is already beginning to use this approach, and will continue for the next seven years. In addition to this, a number of pilot projects will be rolled out in 2016, focussing initially on a partnership approach to attraction and retention of 14+ age group. These will directly address specific areas of concern, as well as trialling different types of partnerships to see what works best. From 2017 onwards, further partnerships aimed at all areas of the game will be developed.

- 5.4 We will develop a community club membership scheme, in which clubs can opt to become RFL members, receiving specific support to help them grow and improve what they do, in return for agreeing to work collectively and abide by the governing body (RFL) Rules.**

This is in line with the whole game solution approach outlined in the 2013 Policy Review which recognises that a collective approach is needed to develop the game and ensure sustainable growth.

- 5.5 We will significantly raise the visibility and profile of the community game.**

In a competitive environment we need to position Rugby League as an attractive option for our customers. We will develop clear marketing and communications strategies, providing central support for community clubs and other delivery partners so that the whole community game is able to deliver high quality marketing and communication with strong and consistent messages to all of the relevant stakeholders.

This work will include a strong campaigning approach to champion Community Rugby League, helping to develop skills within clubs and other partners, growing key events in the community calendar and using high profile promotional platforms available within the sport. This approach should recognise the all-important contribution that the community game makes in developing the star players of the future professional ranks, whilst also providing other international and representative programmes that continue to position the UK community game strongly around the world.

- 5.6 We will develop clear strategies for increasing participation in Women's and Girls', Wheelchair Rugby League and within the Armed Forces.**

Certain areas of the game require bespoke solutions to some of the issues they face in growing the game. Not all club environments are conducive to developing Women's and Girls' or Wheelchair Rugby League, and a specific targeted approach will be developed to ensure that growth targets are achieved in these areas of the game. The Armed Forces also face specific challenges, as well as offering some opportunities for further community development around significant bases in some areas of the country.

Three steering groups will be established as Sub-Committees of the Community Board charged with leading and monitoring the development of these important areas of the game. Clear strategies and targets for each of these areas will be developed during 2016.

CORE AFFINITY & GEOGRAPHIC TARGET AREAS

COMMUNITY GAME
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6.0 All our interventions are focused on our geographic target areas - divided into Core Affinity and Emerging Affinity areas. We will drive an 80/20 principle throughout our work. Full details of why these areas are prioritised and where they are is provided below.

With the support of Government, the Rugby Football League has been successful in bidding to host the Rugby League World Cup in 2021.

All the Rugby Football League's work for the period 2017-2021 is refocused on the Core and Emerging Affinity Areas as the sport looks to this game-changing opportunity for the grassroots game and the communities in which it is strongest; and the talent pathway.

This brings together Facilities, Volunteering, Development and Legacy as we utilise the positive benefit of a high profile sporting event to engage, inspire and energise some of the nation's hardest to reach communities. 80% of the RLWC2021 fixtures will take place in these communities; and the RLWC2021 Legacy activity both in terms of volunteering programmes from 2017-2021 and in terms of capital facilities investment for the community game will be in our Core Affinity areas.

Rugby League's Core Affinity areas see the sport make a considerable contribution to the regular physical activity of one of the under-represented groups identified in Towards an Active Nation – people from lower socio-economic areas.

Currently more than half of clubs engaging with Rugby League are located in the north of England. Of these, clubs 52% are located within the areas where the socio-economic position (SEP) on the gradient is situated within the top quartile (25%) of deprivation. This equates to nearly half (46%) of all participants playing Rugby League in areas within the top quartile of deprivation. Community Rugby League clubs play a significant role beyond sporting opportunities, in Rugby League and often other activities, for harder to reach participants in areas of considerable health inequalities and other forms of social deprivation. They contribute to creating and supporting community cohesion, resilience and a sense of pride and shared identity in some of the nation's most disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Rugby League clubs were often born out of former mining communities, working men's sports and social clubs, church social clubs and pubs; and they still provide some of the social glue that brings parts of the wider community together even though the socio-economic and cultural landscape of many of these areas has changed. They also provide informal and formal volunteering opportunities for individuals who are (nationally) underrepresented and are a focus target for Sport England's new Volunteering Strategy.

Interventions to improve resilience in community club players are designed to ensure that the support and services offered to them by the RFL and its key partners are what players want and need, and, in particular, are flexible enough to support them at key lifestyle points reducing drop-off and making returning to Rugby League easier.

CORE AFFINITY & GEOGRAPHIC TARGET AREAS

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Improving the resilience of players at secondary schools is particularly important - as evidenced during the scoping period – as not all resilient players (playing frequent, meaningful Rugby League outside curriculum) in this setting can be accommodated by capacity in clubs in Core Affinity or Emerging Affinity areas.

Building on growth in College and University Rugby League is part of how the sport develops a clear pathway through Education and retains players by making it easier for players to access a version of the sport that is right for them and maintain a meaningful playing habit.

Building on growth in Rugby League Variants enables players to transition from full-contact Rugby League to other formats of the game, and remain connected to their sport; or to get involved in the Rugby League community via a playing route that's right for them. By growing

the Variants offer we also want to provide engagement, profile and revenue opportunities to clubs and Foundations.

There is a uniquely symbiotic relationship between the community game and the professional game and the England teams in Rugby League. We consider all Rugby League players to be on the pathway; we work hard to support all players to reach their potential in the game, and aim to represent their country; and equally we have strong systems in place to ensure that the vast majority of players are able to transition from the top of the pathway back into the community game and are not lost to the sport.



GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

TARGETING GEOGRAPHICAL ‘AFFINITY AREAS’

COMMUNITY GAME
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017

7.0 Rugby Football League’s Core Affinity Areas and Emerging Affinity Areas: 80/20 principle

The RFL’s Development activity and associated campaigning 2017-2021 is refocused on Rugby League’s Core Affinity areas; and Emerging Affinity areas.

The RLWC2021 Legacy plans align to this refocused and targeted approach.

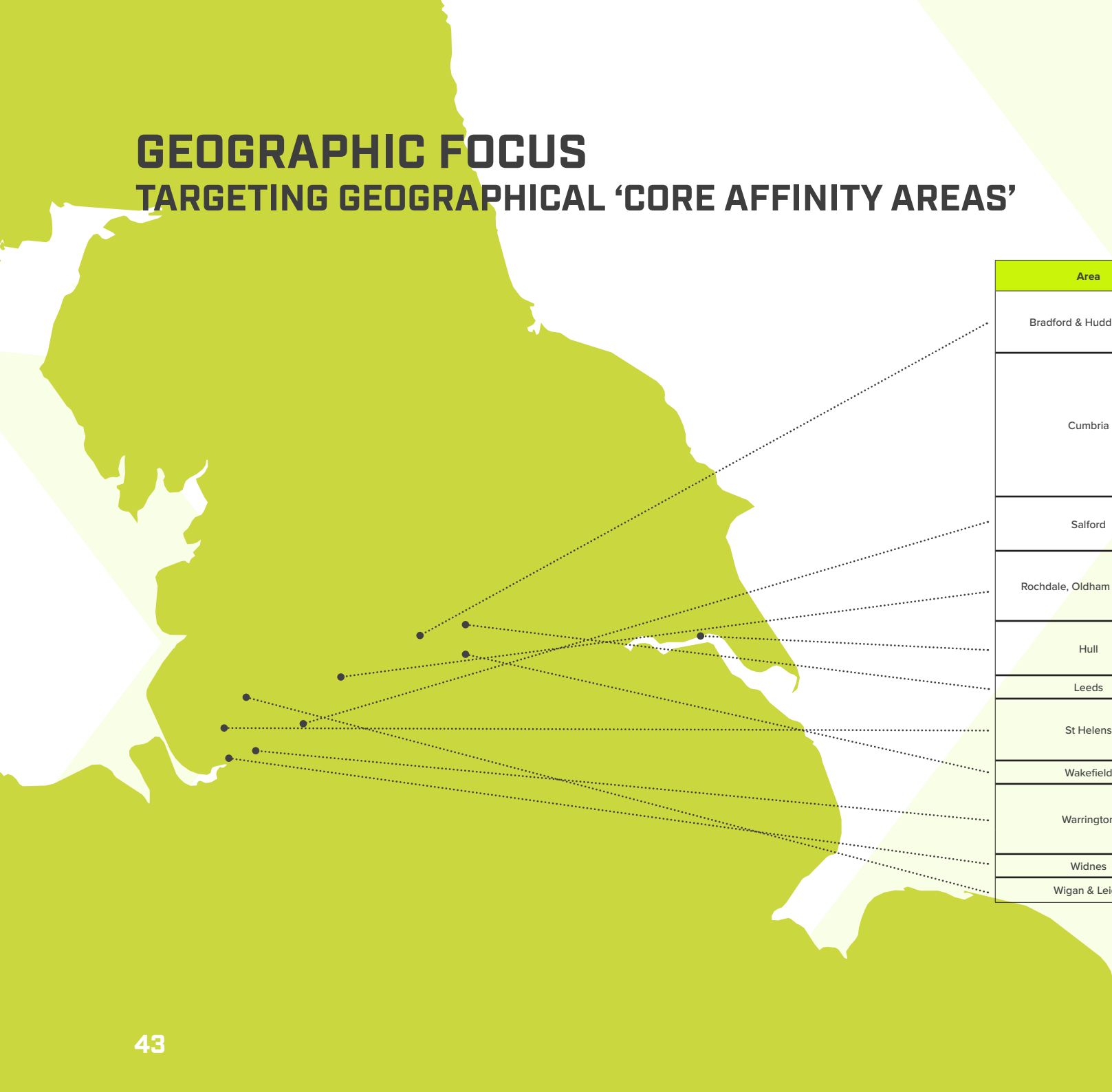
2017-2021 will see all interventions, support and activities uplifted in the Core Affinity areas, with proportionate delivery and support in the Emerging Affinity areas. This 80/20 principle of prioritisation applies to all the work streams in this submission and the wider RLWC2021 Legacy plans; encompassing interventions, club and Foundation support and programme delivery; alongside new strategies for volunteering and for facilities.

The tables show the number of clubs for each ‘affinity area’ that fall within the top 5%, top 6-10%, top 11-15% and top 16-20% most deprived wards in England.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

TARGETING GEOGRAPHICAL 'CORE AFFINITY AREAS'

COMMUNITY GAME
STRATEGIC PLAN
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A map of Northern England is shown on the left, with several black dots placed across its surface. Dotted lines extend from these dots to the right, pointing to specific rows in the table. The dots are located in the following approximate locations: one in the northwest (pointing to Cumbria), one in the north-central region (pointing to Bradford & Huddersfield), one in the central region (pointing to Salford), one in the east-central region (pointing to Rochdale, Oldham & Halifax), one in the east (pointing to Hull), one in the south-central region (pointing to Leeds), one in the southwest (pointing to St Helens), one in the south (pointing to Wakefield), one in the southeast (pointing to Warrington), one in the far southeast (pointing to Widnes), and one in the south-southeast (pointing to Wigan & Leigh).

Area	Local Authority	Clubs
Bradford & Huddersfield	Bradford	19
	Kirkless	19
Cumbria	Allerdale	9
	Barrow in Furness	9
	Carlise	1
	Copeland	11
	Eden	1
	South Lakeland	1
Salford	Salford	5
	Trafford	1
Rochdale, Oldham & Halifax	Oldham	8
	Rochdale	3
	Calderdale	9
Hull	East Riding of Yorkshire	5
	Kingston of Hull City	15
Leeds	Leeds	33
St Helens	St Helens	10
Wakefield	Wakefield	25
Warrington	Cheshire East	1
	Cheshire West & Chester	2
	Warrington	12
Widnes	Halton	9
Wigan & Leigh	Wigan	15

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

TARGETING GEOGRAPHICAL 'AFFINITY AREAS'

COMMUNITY GAME
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017

Features of these Core Affinity areas:

- Around 80% of Rugby League players play in our Core Affinity areas.
- The vast majority of the largest and asset owning community Rugby League clubs are in these areas; these clubs act as community hubs offering a range of social and sporting opportunities in the local community.
- These areas are Rugby League literate and feature established pathways for coach development.
- The majority of the clubs playing in the National Conference League (the pinnacle of the grassroots game) are here.
- Activity in Core Affinity areas is supported by leading Rugby League Foundations.
- Playing regular Rugby League is made easier by travel times of <30 minutes.
- The single talent pathway from community and/or schools Rugby League to professional is supported by experienced partners.
- Existing audience development work connects playing the game to watching and supporting the sport – a key factor in customer behaviour.
- Over 360 of our partnership secondary schools are here.
- 80% of the Sky Try campaign activity is delivered in Rugby League Core Affinity areas.
- 80% of the 31 RLWC2021 fixtures will be held in Rugby League affinity areas, as part of our commitment to central government, to reward the region's passion and harness it in support of our ambitious ticketing plans, and as part of the spectacle we will present to the world.
- The Rugby Football League's new Facilities Strategy aligns to the 80/20 principle and the community game legacy facilities which are central to RLWC2021 Legacy planning will be in the Core Affinity areas.
- Overall, people from lower socio-economic groups are under-represented in sports volunteering. However, this is not the case in Rugby League volunteering. This impacts on the volunteer personally and contributes to the building of social trust in our core (and Emerging Affinity area) environments.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

EMERGING AFFINITY AREAS

COMMUNITY GAME
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017

Features of the Emerging Affinity areas:

- Around 20% of Rugby League players play here.
- There is less Rugby League tradition but this is growing, anchored in part by new professional clubs and Foundations, and the sharing of learning and best practice from Core Affinity areas.
- It is often >30 mins to play and/or watch.
- There are fewer community clubs; and far fewer top flight community clubs.
- The single talent pathway is supported, with room for additional growth and support.
- Audience development work whilst less developed is underway with new multi-partner approaches
 - e.g. the City of Rugby partnership initiative in Coventry.
- Over 140 of our partnership secondary schools are here.
- 18% of the Sky Try campaign activity is delivered in Emerging Affinity areas.
- 20% of RLWC2021 fixtures will be held in Emerging Affinity areas.

Other Areas:

- Rugby League has a national footprint, with community Rugby League played in every county of the country. This means there are a number of Rugby League clubs outside of both the Core Affinity and Emerging Affinity focus areas. The Rugby Football League supports these clubs with central resources for volunteer-led initiatives. Investment is proportionate. These clubs are not asset-owning and in some of these areas the pathway is not yet established.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

'EMERGING AFFINITY AREAS'

COMMUNITY GAME

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015-2017

Area	Local Authority	Clubs
Bolton & Bury	Bolton	2
	Bury	1
City of Manchester	Manchester	3
Lancashire	Lancaster	1
	Burnley	1
	Pendle	2
	Rossendale	2
	South Ribble	3
	Chorley	1
	Hyndurn	1
	Blackpool	3
North East	County Durham	2
	Gateshead	3
	Newcastle	1
	Sunderland	2
	Hartlepool	1
	North Tyneside	1
	Northumberland	2
	South Tyneside	2
North Yorkshire	Scarborough	1
	Selby	1
	Richmondshire	2
	York	4
South Yorkshire	Sheffield	1
	Barnsley	0
	Doncaster	4
	Rotherham	1
Liverpool	Liverpool	2
	Knowsley	1

Area	Local Authority	Clubs
Coventry, Oxford, Gloucester Triangle	Coventry	2
	Birmingham	1
	Warwick	1
	Bromsgrove	1
	City of Bristol	1
	Wyre	1
	Forest of Dean	1
	Gloucester	1
	Cheltenham	1
London	Brentwood	1
	Colchester	1
	Croydon	2
	Bromley	2
	Newham	1
	Guildford	1
	Harrow	1
	Dacorum	1
	Maidstone	1
	Medway	1
	Haringey	1
	Elmbridge	1
	Northampton	1
	Vale of White Horse	1
	Southend-on-Sea	1
	Wandsworth	1
	Lambeth	1
	Richmond upon Thames	1
	Barnet	2
	Merton	2
	Portsmouth	1
	North Hertfordshire	1

ENGLAND PERFORMANCE

STRATEGIC PLAN

2015 - 2017





BLK

Kingstone Press

717



ENGLAND V NEW ZEALAND
10 OCTOBER 2015
JOHN SMITHS STADIUM
HUDDERSFIELD
ENGLAND

RUGBY LEAGUE
FOUR NATIONS

BLK

Kingstone Press

680



ENGLAND V NEW ZEALAND
10 OCTOBER 2015
JOHN SMITHS STADIUM
HUDDERSFIELD
ENGLAND



RUGBY LEAGUE
FOUR NATIONS

**ONE MISSION
ONE AIM
ONE PHILOSOPHY**

**ENGLAND PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017**



**CREATING A PLAYING POOL OF ENGLAND
PLAYERS CAPABLE OF WINNING.**

ENGLAND TO WIN

Create an Elite Performance System that is:

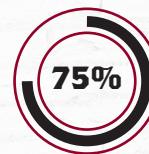
**ATHLETE
FOCUSED**



**COACH
LED**



**PERFORMANCE
DRIVEN**



**WORLD
CLASS**





CORE VALUES

ENGLAND PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017



**HONEST.
UNITED.
RELENTLESS.**

PERFORMANCE TARGETS AND STRATEGIC DRIVERS

ENGLAND PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017



Performance Targets

England performance

- Win NZ Test Series in 2015.
- Win the Four Nations in 2016.
- Win RLWC 2017.

World class performance system and environment

- Percentage of players and performance staff assessing the performance system as providing performance impact.
- Performance systems benchmarked against best of breed (RFL recognised as having a leading elite performance system.)

Increased depth of player pool

- Number of players in each position ranked in top three in the world.
- Percentage of Players England Elite Training Squad benchmarked and improved player profile.

Increased investment in England performance system

- £1million external investment in England Elite Performance System between 2015 and 2017.

Strategic Drivers

1. Elite performance environment

- Demand continuous improvement in a culture of elite performance.

2. Excellent club academy system

- Excel in talent identification and development.

3. Intense competition

- Pressure test players, staff and performance systems in intense international competition.

4. Research and innovation

- Applied research and innovation to gain performance impact.

5. Partnership investment

- Seek out and leverage new investment and partnerships to drive improvements in the performance system.

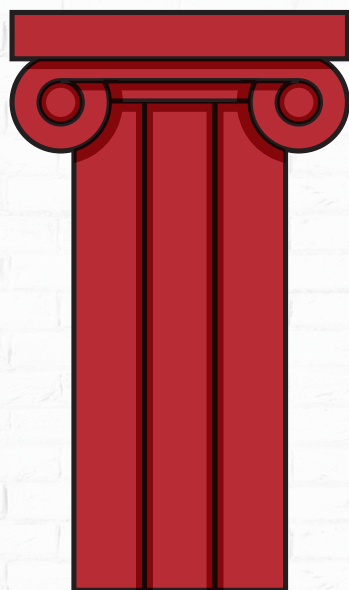


ELITE PERFORMANCE PILLARS

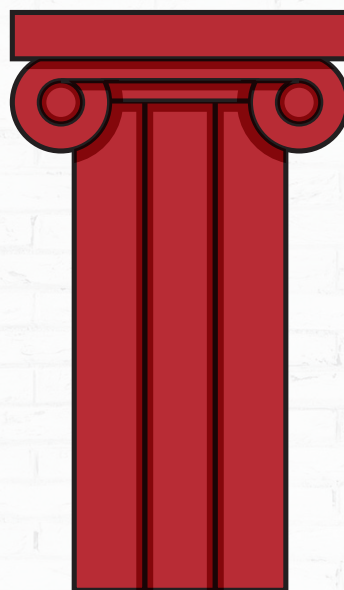
ENGLAND PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017



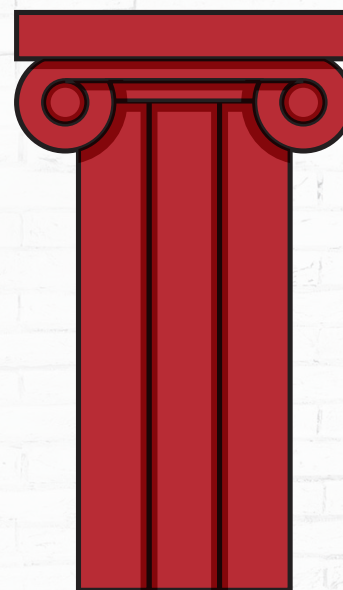
ENGLAND
PERFORMANCE
UNIT



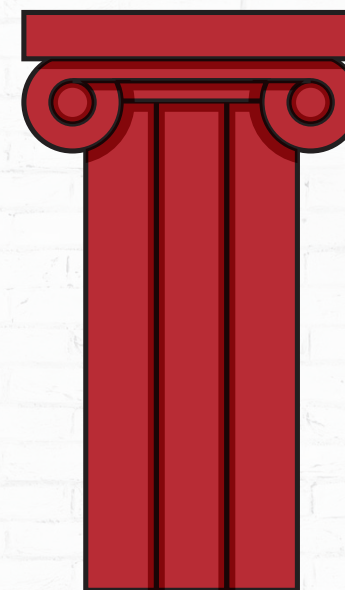
EXPERT COACHING
& PERFORMANCE
STAFF



EXCELLENCE IN
MANAGEMENT
AND OPERATIONS



EXCEPTIONAL
PLAYER SUPPORT
SYSTEMS



INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

ENGLAND PERFORMANCE
STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2017



- 1. ONLY INVEST IN INTERVENTIONS THAT WILL HAVE A PERFORMANCE IMPACT IN 2017.**
- 2. PRIORITY IS TO ACCESS MORE INTENSE INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION PLAYING NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA OR SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE TEAMS AT ALL LEVELS.**
- 3. RESOURCES ALLOCATED ON A TOP DOWN APPROACH WITH PRIORITY ON ELITE TRAINING SQUAD, ENGLAND AND ENGLAND KNIGHTS.**



