

# **Rugby League Club-Led Strategic Review**

Commissioned by the members of the RFL  
pursuant to a member-led resolution passed at  
the RFL Council meeting in March 2025.

## **Background**

The Strategic Review (“the Review”) was instructed by the RFL Council to address a number of fundamental issues that were adversely affecting the sport.

The Review began in March; an update on the initial findings was presented to Council in July; and the final report has been prepared for members with relevant recommendations to be approved at the March 2026 Council meeting.

## **The Strategic Review Group (“the Group”)**

The Group was chaired by Nigel Wood OBE. Its other members were Abi Ekoku, Dermot Power, Emma Rosewarne MBE, Joanna Coates, Lord Jonathan Caine and Martin Coyd OBE. The Secretary to the Group was Robert Hicks.

The central philosophy in delivering the findings has been one of consultation with, and inclusion of, all major stakeholders, where appropriate.

To that end, meetings of parties from the various levels of the sport have taken place throughout the process, as well as meetings with individuals and companies who were able to make an expert contribution.

## **Consultees**

In completing this whole-game review, the Group has attempted to include all areas of the professional game (including club owners, CEOs, players, coaches and match officials) and each area has been extensively involved in the process, along with relevant stakeholder groups including the All-Party Parliamentary Group, broadcast partners, commercial and strategic partners and the Community Board.

## **Basis of work undertaken**

It is important to stress that this report constitutes a Strategic Review. It is not a Strategic Plan. The production of such a plan is the next logical step, if and when the recommendations contained within the review are adopted. It should be for the RFL Board of Directors and the Executive to undertake the work to create the Strategic Plan and associated strategies. This should be completed in consultation with all stakeholders and presented by the new Board as soon as possible and certainly by no later than December 2026.

It should also be noted that a number of the recommendations have already been put in place by agreement with the clubs, e.g. expansion of Super League to 14 clubs and a merged Championship. Many other recommendations will crystallise in the coming months when current sensitive areas of major income become known. This will allow for key strategic decisions to be taken.

The intention behind the recommendations is to do the most good for well-run and appointed businesses. The aim should be that the economics of the sport are organised in such a way that well-run clubs playing in well-appointed stadia can achieve sufficient revenues to achieve break-even without over-dependency on benefactor income.

The next steps will be to seek approval at RFL Council. If and when approved, the Executive under Board supervision will work on a new Strategy to be shared by the RFL Council meeting in December 2026.

## **Executive Summary**

The Review presents a comprehensive and ambitious blueprint for transforming Rugby League in the UK into a modern, investable and commercially driven sport with appropriate governance, attractive competitions and a sustainable talent pipeline.

Its overarching aims are:

- 1 To create a financially stable and sustainable sport, and clubs that together are capable of attracting inward investment.
- 2 To restore the reputation of the sport to be the most innovative, creative and cutting-edge sport, particularly in the areas of digital promotion, marketing and media engagement, so that public awareness of the sport's stars, and their wider profile, is increased.
- 3 To provide appropriate playing and wider participation opportunities for all communities where the sport could be a force for good, and to build on the reputation and work done in social impact.

## **Recommendations**

Throughout the Review, many stakeholders have made clear their views and observations about the state of the sport. These have been converted into 144 separate recommendations within the Review. Clearly, some of the observations, and therefore the recommendations, are commercially sensitive matters which primarily are management issues for the RFL Board of Directors. It is not proposed to publish such issues.

It is, however, proposed to publish findings on the following areas of major interest:

- A Governance**
- B Super League**
- C Tier 2 competitions**
- D Women's Rugby League**
- E Challenge Cup**
- F Wheelchair Rugby League**
- G Community Game**
- H Player production**
- I The contest, broadcast product and season schedule**
- J Commercial, digital and media**
- K France, strategically significant markets and assets**
- L International relations**
- M Finance and recapitalisation**

In making the following recommendations, the Group have taken into account the following primary objective:

**To produce a transparent strategic business plan that will make the sport an investable, sustainable and economically viable sporting competition by conducting a wide-ranging, fully encompassing, in-depth whole-of-game strategic review.**

## How

The new strategy for Northern Hemisphere Rugby League should focus on the creation of plans for:

- Proactive media management and the creation of more compelling digital content and the better use of new forms of media;
- Well-presented big and new events that create image and talking points that build profile and generate increased income;
- Cost control without stifling growth;
- International club and country matches that drive global revenue;
- Great contests with meaningful prizes.

Creating narratives showcasing the best of Rugby League values, including the culture and history of the sport, the affection and respect people have for it, and how it brings communities together.

Together, these narratives will showcase that Rugby League is much more than just a sport.

# A Governance

The Group's aim is to create a single unified system of governance and management, free from conflicts of interest, based upon competency, commitment and expertise that also ensures compliance with the Code of Governance. Core values of Independence, Impartiality and Integrity should be writ large in the RFL's Constitution.

Summary of recommendations:

- 1 The sport should realign the RFL and RL Commercial, keeping both corporate entities to enable there to be appropriate alignment in function and including a corporate body that could be used as an investment vehicle. This should create a corporate Group structure that keeps all three current companies, the major change being that Super League (Europe) Ltd will remain only as a corporate vehicle to hold the Super League clubs' share in RL Commercial and to distribute funds to those clubs.
- 2 The RFL should at all times be compliant with the Code of Sport Governance and should ensure relevant community strategies align with the wider vision and strategy of Government.
- 3 The RFL must reaffirm its commitment to all relevant criteria for independence so that individuals who possess skills and experience that can add value to the sport are not inadvertently excluded from central roles.
- 4 No Board of Directors should feature any individual who has an active relationship with any club.
- 5 The RFL Board should continue to set high-level vision and strategy for the game. It should provide strong leadership and clarity of direction and ensure stakeholder views are heard and understood.
- 6 The sport should recruit and appoint a Group Chair and a Group Chief Executive.
- 7 All three companies should have commonality of Directors. A diagram of the proposed structure is appended. These should be recruited through open and transparent processes and be based on a matrix covering the following skillset:
  - Knowledge of the sport (Rugby League) and its ecosystem;
  - Strategic business leadership;
  - Governance, finance, legal and compliance expertise;
  - Experience in funding, investment, commercial rights and broadcast/sponsorships;
  - Stakeholder engagement (clubs, states, Governments, community);
  - Understanding of high-performance, sport-development pathways and community/grassroots sport.
- 8 All three companies should be serviced by the same employed Company Secretary.
- 9 The Super League Board should comprise three Directors: Chair, Chief Executive and one independent Non-Executive Director.
- 10 The RFL and RL Commercial Boards should broadly comprise Chair, Chief Executive and between four and six Non-Executive Directors. There should be some (but not all) common Directors.

- 11 The Board size should be flexible to meet the ongoing needs of the sport, but its make-up should be restricted to a minimum of one, and maximum of three, Executive Directors, and minimum of three and maximum of six Non-Executive Directors. The Board should be flexed when there is a need due to a skills/experience deficiency.
- 12 Non-Executive Directors should be appointed on terms of between 1 and 4 years (ideally 2 years) with a Non-Executive Director only able to serve a maximum of 9 years in total.
- 13 Remuneration for the Board should be linked to the overall financial performance of the sport.
- 14 Board and Executive attendance at Rugby League matches, meetings and events should be recorded and available to stakeholders.
- 15 There should be a common Executive across the sport that is streamlined to reflect the needs of the business across four key areas: central services, regulation, commercial revenue, and on-field activity. Its main focus should be on the commerciality of the sport.
- 16 RL Commercial should have greater input into professional game regulations, laws and on-field product.
- 17 Membership of the RFL for the Community Game should be amended to reflect the scope and size of the Community Board to enable true representation on the RFL Council. Consideration should also be given to representation of a players' association, of match officials and of the youth board. Such membership alterations should not alter the current relationship between, and status of, Super League and the Championship.
- 18 Professional club membership of the RFL should remain as currently constituted but there is a need for the RFL Board to consider an appropriate time to impose membership change and representation at Council for women and wheelchair Super League clubs that are not part of the same legal entity as a current member. Any membership changes must not alter the current relationship between Super League members and the rest of the professional pyramid.
- 19 The Articles should allow the Chair and/or Chief Executive to be dismissed on notice should the members vote by Special Resolution to do so at a properly convened Council meeting.
- 20 The sport should limit the decision-making powers of the Super League clubs to matters which only affect that competition. These decisions should be based on the criteria below and require specific levels of approval:
  - a. Top-tier primary broadcast contract and title partner (simple majority);
  - b. Salary Cap Regulations where the Cap is not covered by central distribution (simple majority);
  - c. Number of overseas clubs (two in any 14 without veto) (by majority of 60/40).
- 21 All influential persons should sign up to an agreed Code of Conduct. The definition of influential person should be reviewed and ensure it covers people with some form of control or influence on the business affairs of a club whether on the board or not. The new Code and tests should ensure stronger and tighter governance.
- 22 There should be regular sector-specific meetings held in every year and two full meetings of Council. For every meeting, a Director shall act as Chair and the format should include:

- a. A clear agenda stating which items require decisions to be made;
- b. Papers being sent out one week in advance to ensure adequate time for consultation with key personnel within club;
- c. Clubs to send a fully briefed representative or representatives (to a maximum of two) who can make a decision. Clubs also to agree to stand by the decisions made at the meetings.

23 There should be a review of all Board sub-groups both in terms of appointments and scope. In addition to usual corporate sub-groups of Remuneration, Nomination and Audit and Risk, there should be seven sub-groups created for (i) Commercial and Marketing; (ii) Competition Structure and Regulation; (iii) Laws and Innovation; (iv) Brain Health (which should widen its scope to athlete health and welfare); (v) Clinical Advice; (vi) Player Development and Performance; (vii) Inclusion; and (viii) the Community Board. Some of these Groups may in time be merged to operate as one.

24 All Boards and sub-groups should wherever possible have clear, consistent terms of reference that set out a clear purpose, scope and include accountability, decision-making thresholds and limits on authority.

25 The sport should ensure that significant changes to regulation are proposed and agreed prior to the start of the previous season before they are enforced to allow stakeholders time to prepare and amend their club's strategies. However, there is a need to ensure flexibility in this to allow for emergency unforeseen issues that may arise.

26 Consideration should be given to amending the roles of President, Vice-President and Life Membership to ensure the sport can properly utilise the experience and expertise of exceptional individuals who have provided meritorious service to the sport and who hold positions of influence and authority.

27 All Company Articles of Association should account for transitional arrangements when the membership loses confidence in any member of the Board, the Chair or the CEO to ensure stability and prevent a power vacuum.

28 The relevant Company Articles of Association, the Framework Agreement and associated legal documents be amended to reflect a new aligned corporate structure.

## **B Super League**

The Group's aim is to ensure that the top tier of the sport is the driver for income generation and growth by creating plans and strategies that expand audiences, grow revenue and more effectively manage the cost base.

Summary of recommendations:

- 29 Super League should be open to any number of full-time clubs, based on financial viability and player supply.
- 30 Any club playing in Super League must be financially and operationally sustainable through the course of their own business operations.
- 31 The league should comprise 14 teams but there should be a long-term plan to increase the number of clubs. This should only happen when the sport can financially and operationally sustain such growth - including player supply - and where it will not negatively affect the current financial distribution to clubs.
- 32 The league format should aim for as close to a home-and-away format as possible.
- 33 The play-offs should become a Top 8 format until such time as the league moves beyond 16 clubs. Consideration should be given as to how to innovate the play-off format to ensure more talking points are created. Any format change should be based on data and insight from partners and result in increased revenue.
- 34 Overseas clubs should continue to be included in the competition, provided that the commercial terms are fair and there should be income generation targets imposed on the territory from which those clubs play that benefit the wider sport strategy.
- 35 Consideration should be given to updating the grading model to put greater weight on club's on-field performance, while still enforcing clear minimum standards for top-tier participation. An element of central distribution could be allocated to the grading outcomes to drive standards. Clubs should be widely consulted on what any amended system looks like.
- 36 The sport should consider 'on the road matches' in new locations around the UK and the world. These fixtures should align with the sport's wider strategy. Where a club wishes to consider taking a home match on the road, it should first consult with the governing body before commencing planning.
- 37 Super League should be the primary commercial driver with all clubs agreeing to invest in off-the-field storytelling to deepen fan engagement, immerse audiences in the action and attract new and younger supporters.
- 38 A Super League Business Operations Unit should be created and used as a central resource to improve the quality of commercial output across the competition. This will need to be appropriately funded.
- 39 The dedicated Super League OTT channel should receive further investment with the aim of making it the 'go to' source of daily Rugby League content and information.
- 40 Consideration should be given to investing in new technology to improve the on-field product and to enhance levels of player welfare.

- 41 The Super League needs to remain open to innovation through new formats, events and locations that can unlock growth and expand the competition's reach. This should be a strategic priority but should only occur after due diligence and research has indicated there is a potential financial gain for the sport.
- 42 The Salary Cap should be simplified to ensure all actual costs relating to players are covered within the scope of the regulations. It should be policed. The level of the cap should be correlated with the levels of central distribution.
- 43 The sport should consider re-introducing a live Salary Cap system once all commercial and investment matters are known. This should link to a strategic plan for player costs.
- 44 Clubs should be able to sign a maximum of two marquee players as per the current regulations, but such players must be made available to work with RL Commercial on commercial, media and other engagements.

## C Tier 2 competitions

The Group's aim is to create a sustainable second tier for the sport that allows well-run businesses to grow in order to underpin the growth of Tier 1, whilst providing all clubs with the most compelling fixture list to become financially and operationally sustainable through growing revenues and managing the cost base.

Summary of recommendations:

- 45 The second and third tiers of the sport should merge to create one part-time division for the sport;
- 46 The format should create the most compelling fixture list possible. There should be the right balance between clubs of appropriate levels playing each other but also ensuring the key local derbies are played where possible;
- 47 There should be a Top 10 play-off with the winners receiving a meaningful prize (if they are not eligible for promotion);
- 48 There should be a tighter Salary Cap linked to the club's turnover. Clubs who wish to spend above the cap should provide guarantees and a personal underwrite to fund that season's player costs;
- 49 There should be a knock-out competition for Tier 2 clubs;
- 50 Consideration should be given to deregulation of Tier 2 where possible whilst ensuring player safety remains a priority;
- 51 There is a need to update the Facility Standards for the Championship to reflect the merged competition and to reflect the needs of that level of competition.

## **D Women's Rugby League**

The Group's aim is to improve standards both on and off the field to make the Women's Super League a sustainable business capable of investment. Further, to ensure the sector is provided with dedicated resource and Executive support to operationalise and grow the sector.

Summary of recommendations:

- 52 There should be a dedicated expert group appointed to improve the financial sustainability and player supply for Women's RL;
- 53 In time and when ready, consideration should be given to creating a dedicated company for the Women's Super League with a dedicated Executive lead who will be part of the wider Executive;
- 54 The competition structure should not be restricted to current clubs that run men's professional teams;
- 55 The Women's Super League should be the commercial driver for growth within the women's sector. It should be free to follow its own bespoke commercial plan and be run by a dedicated team;
- 56 The Women's Super League should be open to as many well-appointed businesses based on the financial viability of those clubs and there being an appropriate player supply;
- 57 Consideration should be given to regional clubs;
- 58 There is a need for clubs competing at Women's Super League to meet minimum standards and be able to invest in plans for a bespoke broadcast product;
- 59 There is a need to improve the standard of player and athlete welfare offered in the Women's Super League;
- 60 There is a need for new formats, events and locations that can unlock growth and expand the league's reach;
- 61 Consideration should be given to a player payment framework and, at the appropriate time, the introduction of a live Salary Cap. The sector needs to identify its own fiscal rules and standards before allowing a formal player payment framework;
- 62 At the appropriate moment, consideration should be given to formalising membership of the RFL Council for Women's Super League clubs.

## **E Challenge Cup**

The Group's aim is to rejuvenate the Challenge Cup to improve its commerciality and increase revenues for all clubs.

Summary of recommendations:

- 63 The Men's Challenge Cup should be rationalised and where appropriate regionalised;
- 64 Men's Super League clubs should enter at the round of 32. They should be seeded and drawn away from home;
- 65 Prior to Men's Super League involvement, the competition should be regionalised;
- 66 Across the centre and at clubs, more thought, budget and resource is needed to promote the Challenge Cup;
- 67 Consideration should be given to the creation of a 'Magic Weekend-style' round of the Challenge Cup to truly put the magic back into the competition. This would ideally be the Round of 16, creating a new event and broadcast product;
- 68 There is a need to consider allowing the Challenge Cup to have a point of difference from the regular season competition;
- 69 There should be a fixed date in the calendar for the final;
- 70 The sport should consider a new venue for the final;
- 71 A plan linked to the new women's strategy should be created to make the Women's Challenge Cup final a standalone event.

## **F Wheelchair**

The Group's aim is to build on the good work already being done in this sector and to support continued expansion of Wheelchair RL by introducing the sport to new audiences through new products and commercial opportunities.

Summary of recommendations:

- 72 There should be a dedicated expert group appointed to improve the financial sustainability of, and player supply for the wheelchair sector;
- 73 The competition structure should not be restricted to current clubs that run men's professional teams;
- 74 Consideration should be given to creating a development strategy that creates a national footprint where Wheelchair Rugby League is accessible for all within 90 minutes journey from home;
- 75 Consideration should be given to creating a new wheelchair rugby premier league played in winter to produce a new broadcast and commercial product;
- 76 Work should be undertaken with other sports and governing body requests to produce a more rounded product;
- 77 Consideration should be given to improving dialogue with the RFU around the opportunity for a unified wheelchair game and global expansion.

# **G Community Game**

The Group's aim is to reinvigorate the community game via a new competition framework and calendar that delivers long-term sustainable growth whilst ensuring Rugby League continues to foster the values of inclusivity, respect and community.

Summary of recommendations:

- 78 The current Community Game Strategy is solid and should continue to be managed by the RFL and delivered by RFL staff in partnership with community-based volunteers and professional club foundations;
- 79 The creation of the National Community Rugby League (NCRL) will deliver a unified national pyramid with clear progression between the tiers for all community clubs. The new structure should foster growth, retention and long-term participation;
- 80 Consideration should be given to the creation of a new National Cup competition, regional cups and Representative Teams for Tier 3;
- 81 There is need for a rebalanced season calendar aligned with the RFL calendar, player and volunteer lifestyles and club sustainability;
- 82 Any new structure should be overseen by the RFL with strategic assistance provided by the Community Board. NCRL Management Groups should provide operational oversight and competition groups should administer the competition;
- 83 The current RFL Volunteer Strategy should be embraced and empowered;
- 84 Anti-social touchline behaviour should be dealt with strongly to foster welcoming and inclusive environments;
- 85 There should be a new match official strategy that improves the quality of officiating and meets the needs of players and officials. It should include ways to retain, develop and improve all officials and ensure that sufficient officials are recruited to cover all matches;
- 86 The use of body cameras should become mandatory for all match officials at Community level.

# H Player production

The Group's aim is to open up player supply, improve performance environments and improve the quality of coaching and support to improve the quality of the national teams and Super League.

Summary of recommendations:

- 87 There should be consistency of application of Primary Rugby League rules across the sport.  
The ethos of fun, enjoyment and development should be reinforced;
- 88 A new unified competition structure in youth and junior Rugby League that focuses on player and coach development should be put in place. The new structure should ensure that skills are age appropriate and provide players with opportunities to play no matter what level of ability;
- 89 There should be an enhanced coach development programme for all coaches, and specifically community coaches;
- 90 There should be better links between professional and community clubs with a stronger focus on upskilling coaches and providing younger players with better coaching opportunities earlier in their career;
- 91 Consideration should be given to reducing the number of elite Academies playing in the professional structure. These clubs should have to meet strict standards of player development and output and be properly staffed and funded;
- 92 Encouragement should be given to regional Academies being set up between consenting clubs to improve the offer to young players and to widen player pools;
- 93 There should be a delay in the age at which decisions on players' futures are taken (at all stages) and there should be suitable competitions to ensure players continue to develop both physically and emotionally before first team Rugby League;
- 94 There is a need to create a performance strategy for the medium to long term development of players to improve the output into the professional game.
- 95 In the short term, there should be increased access to overseas talent pools;
- 96 There should be further deregulation of player movement rules to allow for greater temporary movement of players;
- 97 There should be a review of the current welfare and support functions for players. A strategy to better fund welfare and provide a Player Association function paid for by those that use it should be developed and operationalised. This should be primarily funded by the players themselves or through commercial fundraising activity. A plan should include medical provision, welfare and wellbeing, and could act for players on contractual matters.

# **The contest, broadcast, product and season schedule**

The Group's aim is to make the sport of Rugby League faster, expose and promote its USPs and provide fans with the drama and excitement they want in an authentic sporting manner.

Summary of recommendations:

- 98 There should be new events and broadcast packages created to improve broadcast revenues;
- 99 Consideration should be given to events that showcase different attributes of players including Rugby League 9s and other linked sports provided such events are strategically delivered and financially sustainable in the medium term;
- 100 The sport should consider starting the season with a match between the Challenge Cup winners and the Grand Final winners to raise money for the sport's charity, Rugby League Cares;
- 101 Any new event should be about more than the fixture(s) being played and should have at its core experiences for fans which provide entertainment for all;
- 102 The sport must ensure there is a balance between free to air, subscription TV and streaming broadcast rights;
- 103 There should be innovations in broadcast to showcase the sport through different lenses using different ways of production, commentary, AI and camera angles;
- 104 There should be better use of Super League Plus to make it the home of British and French Rugby League and be the one-stop shop for fans;
- 105 There should be a new strategy for Super League Plus to make the sport a 24/7 accessible product and showcase additional matches from other Rugby League competitions, podcasts and other shoulder content, including press conferences, disciplinary hearings and other behind-the-scenes material. This should include using the platform to showcase players as fully-rounded people, celebrate history and traditions of the sport and create new programmes for younger audiences;
- 106 The calendar should be redrafted to create peaks for the sport and ensure that data is used to place important matches at times of peak viewership. The calendar should also avoid clashes with other significant sporting or public events;
- 107 Tier 2 should consider amending its season so that it has a period in the calendar where that competition has all Rugby League eyes focused on it;
- 108 Changes to the contest should only occur if they are aimed at improving the spectacle for the fans and viewers and/or to improve player safety. Simplifying rules and policy should be the key to changes;
- 109 Laws and Policy should aim to speed up the contest both in actual time and the speed at which it is played, and should attempt to make the collision as physical as possible whilst maintaining player safety;

- 110 Laws and Policy should also reduce the delays caused by the use of video technology;
- 111 Laws and Policy should look at ways in which the decision and judgments of referees can become less influential;
- 112 Work should be done with broadcast and commercial partners to use technology and data during and after the contest to bring the sport closer to the fans, tell more insightful stories and drive new and better revenue streams;
- 113 Changes to disciplinary regulations should be implemented with the aim to keep more players on the field whilst punishing repeat infringers and protecting players from serious foul play. The purpose of the disciplinary panels and processes should not be to re-referee each incident.

# **J Commercial, digital and media**

The Group's aim is to find strategies and resource to increase awareness in the sport by using modern techniques to make the sport more relevant.

Summary of recommendations:

- 114 There should be a refreshed vision for how the sport is presented to move to a more entertainment-focused position, making the athletes more than just players;
- 115 Roles should be redefined at the centre to ensure commercial, marketing and digital strategies are aligned with growth and market expansion. There needs to be greater cross-departmental emphasis on the commerciality of decision-making, and all roles should have an element of focus on the need to grow the sport and increase revenue;
- 116 There should be greater emphasis on storytelling, rivalry, the gladiatorial nature of the sport and personalities whilst also celebrating the community side of the sport;
- 117 The current Star Player Strategy needs to be reviewed, refreshed and invested in;
- 118 The sport needs to be connected better from grassroots to international with a strategy to reward those involved in the community through better commercial offerings to encourage them to attend as many matches as possible;
- 119 The current Digital Strategy needs to be reinforced with funding devoted to it in order to drive increased growth;
- 120 There needs to be an uncoupling of current assets and products to maximise commercial opportunities;
- 121 There should be dedicated teams assigned to drive new revenue from Tier 2, women, wheelchair and social impact;
- 122 There should be greater emphasis on event merchandise sales for all clubs and the England teams.

## **K France, strategically significant markets and assets**

The Group's aim is to create specific strategies to widen the commercial appeal of Rugby League and provide new events and opportunities to increase revenue.

Summary of recommendations:

- 123 There should be a specific Commercial Resource and Strategy for France that engages with the French Federation to maximise broadcast and commercial opportunities;
- 124 There should be greater collaboration between the French Super League clubs and the centre;
- 125 There should be a renegotiation of the terms of participation in Super League for French clubs to incentivise all parties to grow the sport;
- 126 There should be greater collaboration between the RFL and the French Federation to ensure that international playing opportunities are available for age-restricted players, senior men, women and wheelchair players provided that such matches are competitive;
- 127 Consideration should be given to an Anglo-French Cup played between Tier 2 in the UK and the French Rugby League Championship;
- 128 The RFL should consider whether the European Rugby League Federation remains the best strategic and corporate vehicle to organise Northern Hemisphere Rugby League;
- 129 A plan should be created to grow the footprint of Rugby League in London, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. This should be led by the RFL but done collaboratively with the relevant governing bodies in those countries;
- 130 Major events should be taken on the road and hosts asked to bid for the right to stage them.

## **L International relations**

The Group's aim is to find ways to improve international relations so that the international game can thrive and be played regularly in the Northern Hemisphere.

Summary of recommendations:

- 131 A plan to seek regular autumn international series events in the Northern Hemisphere against Tier 1 nations and/or major tournaments played involving England men should be created;
- 132 Work should be done with the NRL and IRL to understand where there is strategic alignment and mutual interest that could improve the commerciality of the sport;
- 133 There should be a strategy for creating meaningful international series for the women and wheelchair teams;
- 134 There should be annual matches between the best NRL and Super League clubs. These should be standalone assets and played around the world;
- 135 England should play a significant role alongside the NRL in driving global interest and investment in Rugby League and growing the International Rugby League calendar;
- 136 Consideration should be given to how England can best support other Rugby League-playing nations in the Northern Hemisphere to open up new markets of fans, players and competition;
- 137 A plan to host a World Cup or other major international tournaments should be created and operationalised which should link to a wider re-capitalisation project.

# **M Finance and recapitalisation**

The Group's aim is to create a plan to manage cost, improve revenue and allow the sport to have funds to invest in the right areas to grow.

Summary of recommendations:

- 138 Central decision making should prioritise easing club operations while maintaining the sport's safety and insurability;
- 139 There must be a Board-appointed independent team to further negotiations with interested third party investors. That group will need to hold full club meetings to update on progress and ensure club views are known before progressing each stage of a negotiation;
- 140 There is a need for clear internal financial controls and powers of authority. There should be sign-off limits for all relevant line reports and internal controls to prevent overreaching of power;
- 141 There should be a refreshed, more rigorous Influential Persons Test;
- 142 Special Measures Regulations need to be reviewed, strengthened and rolled out for all levels;
- 143 There should be a strategy that creates an investment approach to ensure the sport is modernised and best-placed operationally and financially to deliver a plan for re-capitalisation;
- 144 Efficiencies in spending should be found to re-prioritise to areas that can drive growth and investment.

Appendix One  
Draft Corporate Structure

