



MINUTES

Community Board Meeting

Location:	Microsoft Teams	Date:	Wednesday 17th February 2021
		Time:	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Invited to Attend:	Sqn Ldr Damian Clayton MBE, Fred Baker, Neil Ashton, Peter Moran, Trevor Hunt, Stuart Prior, Sue Taylor, Jan Robinson, Steve Curtis, Lois Forsell, Lee Mitchell, Neil Kelly	Chair Person:	Sandy Lindsay MBE
RFL Officers in Attendance:	Marc Lovering, Kelly Barrett		
Apologies:			

Item No.	Agenda Item	ACTION
1.0	Welcomes & Apologies Ms Lindsay opened the meeting and welcomed Lee Mitchell to his first meeting as the Foundation representative.	
2.0	Minutes of the December meeting The minutes of the 9 th of December were agreed as a true record of the meeting.	
3.0	Matters Arising Action Tracker review was shared with the meeting. Ms Barrett presented for each individual action. 1) Whole Game Board – Ms Barrett stated that the next meeting was due to take place on the 24 th of February, the previous minutes would then be placed on SharePoint. Ms Barrett reiterated that the Whole Game Board is a forum and not a decision-making body, any items that required approval would be placed on a Community Board agenda. 2) Offers and Tools for Participants to get involved – The Ages and Stages of Rugby League resource are 90% complete and will be released in March.	Ms Barrett

	<p>3) Primary Rugby League Rules – Has been carried forward to 2021. Youth and Junior Leagues to be updated at their meeting on the 27th of February.</p> <p>4) Game Wide Review Tracker – All actions from the Game Wide Review have been picked up in Community Strategy Work for 2021 onwards.</p> <p>5) RLWC Legacy – This will be an agenda item for the next meeting.</p> <p>Mr Moran asked if the various Board members have had their authorities extended and have the legitimate right to be a representative on the Board. Mr Moran gave an example of the NCL undertaking a mandate from the Clubs to continue in post for another year.</p> <p>Ms Barrett responded by stating that Mr Moran and Mr Hunt were not in attendance representing the NCL. All Members of the Community Board had been voted on in accordance with the Community Board terms of reference. Mrs Barrett went on to say that at the next meeting we need to review the terms of reference.</p>	<p>Ms Robinson</p> <p>Ms Barrett</p> <p>Ms Barrett</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Community Strategy</p> <p>Mr Lovering presented on the 21-25 Community Strategy. A copy of the presentation will be placed on SharePoint for people to review.</p> <p>Mr Lovering explained that previous strategy documents have been tied in to, and driven by, Sport England funding cycles. It was felt that there was a need to develop a Community Strategy not limited to the Sport England Funds along with a desire to be more transparent and accountable to the wider Community Game stakeholders. This involves reporting on the work going on in the Community Game beyond the existing reporting structures at Board and Council levels. The strategy would contain clear goals, milestones, and interventions that will be reviewed annually for greater accountability. This will be combined with a longer-term view which, whilst challenging due to uncertainty around future funding, will frame the longer-term goals for across the Community Game and define a comprehensive strategy for the rest of the decade.</p> <p>Mr Lovering elaborated on the strategy process to date, as outlined in slide 5. In Autumn 2019, there was a positive review regarding the progress made in the first three years of the funding cycle, with particularly strong growth in the Women’s and Girls and Disability Sport areas of the Community Game being highlighted. Off the field, it was during these three years that the competition management system LeagueNet was introduced, and the OurLearning Zone platform was developed.</p> <p>Following a meeting with Sport England in February 2020, the message was ‘evolution not revolution’. The RFL were on the right track and had plenty of scope for further positive developments in a lot of areas. Then, in March 2020, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit, impacting everything, including Sport England’s own strategy, and diverting focus towards areas such as supporting Community Clubs and focusing on sustainability.</p> <p>In December 2020, there was a further meeting with Sport England, to outline achievement goals for 2021. The new funding cycle, due to begin in March 2021, was delayed by a year however, certainty around 2021 funding was provided by Sport England. At a follow-up meeting in January 2021 the RFL</p>	<p>Ms Barrett</p>

provided Sport England with an update on the strategy work, in the form of a similar presentation to that given to the Community Board. Feedback on the presentation and the general direction of the strategy was positive. Work on the strategy is ongoing and will continue through the next few months.

There were several key considerations that have helped inform the thoughts and direction of the strategy. The RFL Strategy 2015-21 acted as a starting point and discussions at the RFL Board level around the wider business strategy helped steer thoughts so that the strategies align where possible. The feedback from the Your Game, Your Say review and report of the Tackle It Action Plan have further influenced thoughts on the strategy.

Mr Lovering went on to outline further influences on the strategy. The Rugby League Dividend framed the economic and social value of Rugby League, a theme that will run throughout the strategy. The Our League Life project, which has been presented on previously, is picked up within the strategy.

The current 'Towards an Active Nation' and new 'Uniting the Movement' Sport England strategies have inevitably influenced thinking around the strategy, as the Community Game's largest funder. Finally, with the strategy beginning in 2021 and moving beyond, the Rugby League World Cup 2021 has been incorporated to ensure we maximise the benefits of the tournament.

Mr Lovering highlighted the challenges to planning a strategy presented by the changing funding landscape. There has been significant government support secured throughout the pandemic, in the realm of £28 million up to now. We need to be mindful that it is expected broadcast income will reduce which will impact on areas including Sky Try, which provided substantial investment for the Community Game. Sport England funding levels beyond 2022 are uncertain, so there is a need for the RFL to become less reliant on public funding and diversify income streams. This is already in motion, with the Inspiring Futures fund, which has seen £500k go to Foundations to deliver the programme and the membership scheme, to be discussed later in the meeting.

The new Sport England strategy, Uniting the Movement, was discussed, as it directly influences our strategy to secure funding streams. This focuses on providing opportunities to people and communities traditionally left behind by sport, such as, LGBTQ+, BAME and female participants.

Sport England have identified five big issues: Physical Wellbeing, Mental Wellbeing, Social & Community Development, Economic Development, and Individual Development. These relate directly to the same government outcomes and you will see them run as themes throughout the Community Game strategy.

Mr Lovering continued by highlighting the framework that will sit behind the strategy. On an external, public-facing, level there will be an overarching Community Rugby League strategy document that highlights headline figures and key targets, examples of graphics can be seen on slide 13. This headline document will be supported by 25 framework documents, example of the Inclusion framework on slide 14, which will have more focus and detail on specific areas, providing goals and targets that the RFL can be held accountable for.

Internally, there is a working document which is used daily and drills down into specific details, setting out a roadmap and operational plan for moving through the strategy period, PDRL example on slide 15. The document sets out

specific steps and interventions required to achieve the targets and goals that will be highlighted in the framework documentation, as well as focusing on how we can work towards the vision for 2030. Sport England is keen that the RFL take real insight and learnings from the strategy work, which they can then apply to other sports if applicable.

2021 is the first year of the strategy and a big one for the sport, with the World Cup at the end of the year. With this in mind, we have six key focuses for 2021:

- 1) Sustainability – Ensure we support Clubs, Foundations, and other stakeholders to get to the start line when we can return to play.
- 2) Engage - Keeping people engaged before activity returns. The Foundations and Clubs have been doing work on this, making sure that they stay in contact with their participants, to increase the likelihood of participants returning.
- 3) Reactive - We must be reactive as well; the current situation is very fluid, and we need to be positioned to react as efficiently as possible to any changes in the landscape. There is lots of background work underway to ensure we are where we need to be with DCMS and our Clinical Advisory Group.
- 4) Reintroduce – Whilst we ran some activity in autumn last year however, we need to get Competition Structure back as soon as we can.
- 5) Maximise – Maximise the benefit of the World Cup.
- 6) Rebuild – It has been a tough 18 months and, as the season resumes, we will be able to see who has not made it back. It is then key that we engage with stakeholders and focus on how we can support and help Clubs to rebuild.

Mr Lovering explained that the strategy would focus on key areas:

- Core Community
- Education & Resilience Pathway
- Colleges & Universities
- Social Impact

The Board were taken through what would be covered in these areas (See slides 20-31)

Mr Lovering explained that we are due to sit down with Sport England towards the end of the Summer, at that point we would like to have our final RFL Strategy & Vision 2030 and full suite of Framework Documents in place. As we have the World Cup this year, we are pushing Sport England for confirmation on our funding allocation so we can ensure we can maximise the benefit of the World Cup.

Mr Lovering concluded the presentation and stated that we would start to pick up with members of the Community Board on their relevant areas.

Mr Baker asked if the list and names of the framework documents could be shared with the Community Board.

Mr Lovering said he was very close to having a final version of the Community Strategy document which would be ready for the next meeting.

Mr Moran asked from a political point of view how we were including or referencing “Levelling up” as we are a Northern sport playing in deprived

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	<p>areas. Mr Lovering responded that this would flow through in the social impact section as this is around supporting underrepresented groups and we do constantly refer that Levelling Up is real. He went on to say that we still expect 75% of our resource to flow into our more established areas, but there is nevertheless the need for a strategy in the South as we do need to grow those areas of the sport as well. There will be a North strategy picking up Cumbria and the North East so there will be support for those other areas proportionately.</p> <p>Mr Moran expressed concerns that the Sky Try programme may disappear with a drop to current funding and asked if attempts were being made to 'ring fence' funding to ensure a continuation of the programme. Mr Lovering responded that there are differences between the foundations and their reliance on the funding.</p> <p>Mr Moran asked if we were targeting Primary Schools on their school pupil premiums. Mr Lovering invited Mr Mitchell to respond. Mr Mitchell said that a lot of Foundations are tapping into the pupil premium money. From a Warrington perspective, they have used Sky Try to build the strong relationships with the schools and then as soon as possible they will engage in discussions with schools on what the offer will look like in terms of delivery. Other Foundations have done partner school programmes outside of the Sky Try ages.</p> <p>Mr Moran asked that from a central point of view should we not have a more fundamental approach, rather than leaving it to each individual Foundation. Mr Lovering responded that we have previously looked at the possibility of a national programme however it is something we are keen to review.</p> <p>Mr Prior stated that he believed we had a fair argument to go back to Government or Sport England to ask for funding. With Sky Try removed we have already had the inactivity of children for 18 months and, with obesity on the rise, we should be able to demonstrate that the loss of Sky Try will impact further on our recovery plan. Mr Lovering said that we are in discussions with Sport England and Public Health England around what funding is available. Mr Prior said there must be a way of turning up and playing without the need for all the regulations. Mr Lovering said this is part of the Player Development concept.</p> <p>Mr Hunt asked what about the people that run the Clubs and activity and the education of these. Mr Lovering responded that there will be a new workforce strategy that will run alongside the Community Strategy. RLWC are running a programme to get 250 volunteers at Clubs before the RLWC. We are currently asking a lot more of volunteers, so it is important that we do support and lighten the load on volunteers. Our Learning Zone could be used to provide education. Mr Hunt said we need to engage with younger volunteers to get them involved.</p>	
<p>5.0</p>	<p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>Ms Lindsay said a lot of work has been undertaken in the background since we last spoke about this, we have been looking at the tech system and modelling work on the numbers and people. Ms Lindsay said she was excited and feels that we are making some real progress. It has been agreed that the messaging on this is about the sustainability of the Community Game. Professional Players will not be required to take membership but will be</p>	

	<p>encouraged to do so. Match Officials are still being considered.</p> <p>There will be a working group which Stuart, Fred and Trevor have volunteered to be part of from a Community Board perspective, this will also include League, Club, Coaches and Player representatives. We want to get all these people to have an open dialogue, and this needs to commence in late March/early April, so we can expedite for the launch in the autumn for next year. We will also be doing some one-on-one sessions with Media so that we can make sure we are ready for when we launch, as we only get one opportunity to get this right and it's vital for the game. This has also gone to the RFL Board several times as we know this is of utmost importance.</p> <p>Mr Moran said he had noticed that Our League had started monetising itself and wondered if it was going to go to a general income stream and if so where is the money going to go to? Mr Lovering said that some of the games that are streamed by Championship and League 1 games would generate income, less the costs, which would go direct to the respective Clubs. Mr Moran suggested that Our League Members who have access to live streaming could be charged and this could bring a significant amount of money into the sport. Ms Lindsay said this is being looked at, as a sport we must be more sustainable.</p>	
<p>6.0</p>	<p>Post RLWC2021 Activity</p> <p>Ms Lindsay stated that Tracey Power will be joining us at our next meeting in June as will Katy Richie, Director of Development, from England Netball so they can share their views on how we maximise the benefit of the World Cup.</p> <p>This will be a prominent agenda item in June, together with Return to Play.</p>	
<p>7.0</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Coach Education Courses - Ms Barrett stated that as we are currently in lockdown and no courses have been able to be delivered, we have granted a temporary exemption to those coaches awaiting a course. We will require all Coaches to register on LeagueNet and they must have undertaken the Coach Right Course. The exemption is until the end of June, when they will then be required to have registered for an upcoming course. Communication will be issued to Coaches, Clubs and Leagues in the next week.</p> <p>Mr Prior mentioned the passing of Cameron Taylor from Kells and asked that this was acknowledged by the Community Board, which was done.</p> <p>Mr Clayton asked when we can expect the next return to play protocols to be out. Mr Lovering stated that we are reviewing these now and will be resubmitting to government. There will be a heavy reliance on compliance and the need for us to show we are dealing with any issues.</p>	<p>ALL</p>
<p>8.0</p>	<p>Meeting Close The meeting closed at 8.00pm.</p>	