ENGLAND ATHLETICS BOARD MEETING OUTCOMES

Thursday 31st July 2025
London and Teams

Present:
Gary Shaughnessy, Board Chair (GS)
Adetunji Akintokun, SID (AA)
Jim Buckle (JB)
Matthew Dalton (MD)
Adrian Day (AD)
Janyce Holmes (JH) (Items 1 to 13)
Chris Jones (CJ)
Helen Kendall (HK)
Marilyn Okoro, via Teams (MO)
Clive Poyner, via Teams (CP)

In attendance
Gabriel Akin-Odujobi, Board Observer (GA)
Sarah Benson, Talent & Performance Director (SB), (from Item 3), via Teams
Gemma Gillespie, Head of Finance (GG), (from Item 3), via Teams
Dan Isherwood, Operations Director (DI), (from Item 3)
Sam O'Shea, Board & NED Secretary (SO)

Part attendance
Nichola Skedgel, Head of Competition & Partnerships (NS) (Item 13), via Teams

External attendees
Dean Hardman, (DH) (Items 6.2 and 6.3 only), via Teams

Apologies
Lorna Boothe (LB)
Emma Davenport, Clubs & Development Director (ED)
Connie Henry (CH)
Gill Jones, HR & People Development Manager (for Items 7 and 8)

1. Welcome and apologies
Apologies were noted.

2. Board evaluation
[Attended by Board members only. Minute also shared with SLT]

2.1 GS was pleased to note the positive board evaluation, particularly the relationship between the Board and Executive team. The Board discussed the feedback and comments relating to commercial and stakeholder engagement. They agreed that to remain strategically focussed, operational queries can be handled outside of the Board meetings. Actions will be brought to a future meeting for review.

2.2 Within the paper circulated the following recommendations were made and these were approved by the Board
1. To introduce a 1/2 hour or 1-hour non-Exec only session at the end of alternate Board meetings.
2. GS to step down from the UKA Members forum to be replaced by Matthew Dalton (Chair of England Council) who has more direct and relevant expertise.

Dan Isherwood, Sarah Benson and Gemma Gillespie joined the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

There were none.

4. Draft minutes of the previous meetings

Resolved and Actions:
1.) The Board agreed the minutes were a true reflection of the meetings.

5. Actions/matters arising

- The outstanding actions were reviewed and closed where applicable. The Board also noted the actions already marked to be closed.

6. Dashboard and CEO report

6.1 <u>Dashboard</u>
A sustainability metric (likely to be dual) will be developed for the dashboard. A proposal relating to our IT infrastructure will be developed as part of the Operational Plan for 26/27 and this will include technology for officials.

Dean Hardman joined the meeting

6.2 <u>ESAA</u>
The latest letter to ESAA was included in the Board pack and CJ informed the Board of the next discussion that was set for 5th September.

6.3 <u>Age groups and Track & Field review update</u>

- DH updated the Board on the Funetics Multi Challenge pilots that are taking place at clubs, supported by Regional Councils. Momentum is building and the Youth Competition Manager post (see item 12.3), will bring real benefit.

- The vision group is working very well and meets again in September. The Charter for Change will be produced and socialised within the wider sport. One of the aims is to achieve widespread agreement to adopt some fundamental improvement principles.
- The research will provide some essential data for the Board to ensure that we are investing in the right areas.
- DI confirmed that the 2026 competition survey has closed, and the team was working on the full analysis. The immediate findings are as expected.

Dean Hardman left the meeting

6.4 Health & Safety report
A concern was raised that although the number of reported near misses are down, accidents are increasing, which could imply that something is failing in the reporting of near misses. DI offered to pick this up with UKA.

6.5 Safeguarding, welfare and compliance update
CJ highlighted that safeguarding processes are moving in a positive direction, with welfare officer forums being set up across the country.

7. People Plan

DI informed the Board that some minor amendments have been made to reflect structural changes and to include sustainability. Progress will be monitored and reported via a clear framework. The majority of the activity within the Plan is already being actioned, but there were some new inclusions, for example bringing together the heads of departments more frequently.

Resolved and Actions:
1.) The Board approved the People Plan

8. Annual Staff Survey results

8.1 CJ highlighted some key points from the survey which had a 90% response rate. The SWOT analysis shows the strengths are culture, autonomy and flexibility. The lower scoring area of reward has been addressed to some extent by the recent levelling up work.

8.2 The Board was pleased to note that 91% of staff would recommend EA as a place to work, along with the positive one-word descriptors of EA culture.

Resolved and Actions:
1.) The Board noted the Annual Staff Survey results

9. Nominations & Remuneration Committee

Resolved and Actions:

1.) The Board approved the Board Observer role profile and advert.

2.) The Board noted the updated Skills Matrix.

10. Member Elected Director vacancy documentation

Voting for the appointee will be carried out at the November AGM.

Resolved and Actions:

1.) The Board approved the member elected director vacancy documents.

11. Draft Audit & Accounts for comment

11.1 GG confirmed that after the May Board some adjustments were carried out. The 24-25 audit clearance meeting took place on Tuesday, and this went well with no concerns from the auditors. The final accounts (including the management response) will be brought to the September meeting for approval.

11.2 DI added that this year an animated video was being produced to highlight our achievements as part of a wider communication of the annual report.

Resolved and Actions:

1.) The Board reviewed the Audit and Accounts and provided feedback.

12. Finance report

12.1 25-26 progress: GG summarised the key financials from the paper circulated. A robust reforecast was currently being carried out.

12.2 RUN:EA

DI updated the Board that the feedback from users has been incorporated into the recent platform improvements, including a new landing page. He provided a detailed update on the progress, financials and next steps. A discussion took place and Board members shared their views.

12.3 Youth Competition Manager

DI explained that this new role will focus on the U10 and U12 competition, working closely with Sportshall and Funetics Multi Challenge (FMC) The Board agreed that this role would benefit stakeholder engagement by bringing leaders together.

Resolved and Actions:

1.) **The Board approved the recruitment of a Youth Competition Manager with immediate effect.**

Nichola Skedgel joined the meeting.

13. Competition funding model from 2026

13.1 SB introduced the proposed new funding model which has the support of England Council. A small Task & Finish group will work with NS on the detail prior to the launch. SB extended the invitation to Board members.

NS shared some slides explaining funding through the years and what changes are planned to align with the talent pathway, EA strategic objectives and Sport England requirements. It will also be informed by the outcomes of the Track & Field review.

13.2 The funding criteria has been developed to ensure that providers host the best competitions which offer an excellent and safe experience for the athletes. The ultimate aim is for the providers to succeed, grow and be financially self-sufficient. Although the applications will be tailored to suit the level of funding being requested, there will be some non-negotiables.

All those that already receive funding were informed of the proposed changes at their mid-term reviews. The new model will be announced at the end of August in time for most providers' AGMs.

Resolved and Actions:
1.) The Board supported the draft competition funding model.

Nichola Skedgel and Janyce Holmes left the meeting.

14. Clean Sport / UKAD framework: update on progress

The paper circulated was authored by SB and JH.
UKAD have confirmed that EA has achieved the assurance framework for 2024. We are continuing to roll out the framework to athletes in the pathway and, although not mandatory, we are also looking at rolling out through clubs.

Resolved and Actions:
1.) The Board noted the Clean Sport update.