

ENGLAND COUNCIL (EC) MEETING OUTCOMES

Wednesday 16th July 2025

York and via Teams

Present:

Matthew Dalton, Chair, (East) (MD)
Lynn Cooper, (North East) (LC)
Adrian Day, (London), via Teams, (AD)
John Deaton (Southwest, in Chair's absence), via Teams (JD)
Stuart Horwood, (Southeast, in chair's absence) via Teams (SH)
Ian Martin, (Yorks & Humberside) (IM)
Stuart Paul, (West Midlands), via Teams (SP)
Gary Shaughnessy, Board Chair, via Teams (until 12:45) (GS)
Terry Timmis (East Midlands – Vice Chair), via Teams (TT)

In attendance:

Sarah Benson, Talent & Performance Director (until 14:30), via Teams (SB)
Heidi Bradley, CSM Yorkshire & Humberside, Observer (HB)
Emma Davenport, Clubs & Development Director (ED)
Jen Granger, England Council Secretary, via Teams (JG)
Dan Isherwood, Operations Director, via Teams (DI)
Chris Jones, CEO (CJ)

Part Attendance

Nichola Skedgel, Head of Competition and Partnerships (Item 6 only) (NS)

External Attendee

None.

Apologies:

Jon Clarke, (Northwest), (JC)
Paul D'Arcy, (South West, John Deaton attended in his place), via Teams (PD)
Neil Dawson, (East Mids, Vice Chair attended in his place), (ND)
James de Vivenot, (South East, Stuart Horwood attended in his place) (JdV)

1. Apologies

Apologies were noted. MD confirmed that Beck Bennett was not able to attend.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. EC Chair's report

MD referred to some points within his paper circulated.

Resolved and Actions:

1.) None

4. Board Chair report

GS updated EC on the positive working relationship between EA and UKA. However, there are still some complexities around the various roles, that need to be simplified and clarified.

Some key points to note were:

- The European Champs in Birmingham will be the first event which is underwritten by Athletic Ventures.
- UKA are hopeful that government funding will be available for the 2029 World Championships. CJ added that London Marathon have been pivotal in supporting UKA in their World Champs bid.
- As part of the recent staffing changes, a new Head of Safeguarding has been appointed.
- EA continues to work with UKA regarding the IT shared infrastructure.

5. Dashboard and CEO report

5.1 CJ Dashboard has been distributed in the paper pack and highlighted the following points.

- 6k athletes ahead so far. 158,000 affiliations and numbers look particularly strong in the over 50s and 60s.
- Number of Level 1 officials that are qualifying has increased however need more moving through the pathway. 10-point coach education plan, trying to implement including the advanced coach programme.
- Coach and Officials – home countries with England leading. Others are slower to move at pace with changes, particularly in coaching.
- England will be trailblazer for the piloting of the advance coach module via our talent pathway programmes in the Autumn and Winter.
- RUN: EA numbers are down against plan however this is being reviewed on an ongoing basis, and we have a contingency approach for this delivery and financially.
- Great performances early season from English Athletes on the domestic and international stage. CG planning is going well ahead of 2026.
- Sponsorship pipeline is very healthy – we will be present with existing and prospective partners at the London Diamond League on Saturday 19th July.

- EDI manager been recruited – Georgina Best who starts in August. New sustainability lead Ellie Wardell in place.

5.2 SB gave update on the three main headlines.

- Changing of the rules, with rules group and UKA. Draft rules drawn up and then a period of reviewing. UKA Board has agreed wording in rule book specific to age group changes.
- Second area is comms plan that is starting to be formed. Linking in with head of Comms, plans through championships and E Coms – thorough comms campaign.
- Final area, individual athlete support, focusing on age group change. Webinars, events and support.

5.3 U10/U12 age group changes

- Looking to recruit into the Youth competition manager role subject to Board approval in late July
- Working to create a yearlong round plan for U10 & U12 with a consistent approach – pilot event for Funetics Multi Challenge taking place in Norwich on 2nd August and in other parts of the country.
- Government creating school sport partnerships with aligned investment. DI and CJ invited to a round table discussion by DCMS to help shape this work. This is important in the context of local club-school links and improving participation amongst young people in athletics in schools.
- CJ & SB have a further call scheduled about English Schools in mid-July – they are not adopting age group changes from April onwards. Council has copy of the letters sent to ESAA so far.
- EA cannot support and fund an unlicensed competition – it is unclear whether ESAA will receive a dispensation from the UKA rules via UKA and to date they haven't approached UKA on this.
- GS stated that we want to work together to make it successful as possible.
- Cross Country will adopt the age group changes. English Schools will be the only body not changing as things stand.

5.4 ED updated the group regarding change culture with safeguarding now, working closely. UKA are light in staffing but have recruited and are onboarding currently.

5.5 RUN: EA

DI provided an update outlining the following key points to note.

- Run rate is positive and website traffic remains high. Digital campaign is working well.
- Also looking at the key features of the products – looking at exactly what people want the product to look like and making them valuable. Working with key brands trying to build more value.
- Broadening out the events discounts for RUN: EA members.

6. Competition funding model

SB introduced the proposed new competition funding model which. was open to any provider, (including an affiliated club) depending on the competition purpose. SB stated that more detail will be added to ensure clarity, including a flow chart.

MD confirmed that the proposal will go to Board and be brought back to EC with the grassroots detail. A small working group will be formed throughout August for consultation purposes.

Gary Shaughnessy left the meeting, 12:50pm

7. 2026-27 Affiliation fees: RC consultation

This was an opportunity for EC to give any feedback about the increase in fees. There is much to deliver across all areas of the sport with limited resources. One proposal to bring in the necessary funds is to increase the athlete registration fee.

The options I provided in the paper confirmed the level of income that would be generated.

A discussion took place and England Council provided their feedback.

- England Council was not supportive of fixing the fee for a period of time
- Provide one club affiliation option of a £5 increase
- Provide a sliding scale option for athlete registration of between £1-£5 increases, along with an indication of where that additional income could be invested.

Resolved and Actions:

- 1.) DI to present England Council's feedback to the regional councils for consideration. Action: DI

8. Draft minutes of previous meeting

Resolved and Actions:

- 1.) EC agreed the minutes were a true reflection of the meeting.

9. Actions

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England Council reviewed and discussed the outstanding actions and noted those that were to be closed.

10. Athlete Panel – verbal update

As Beck Bennett had sent her apologies, SB provided an update for EC. The Athlete Panel was in agreement to retaining the current U15 and U17 age groups for the 2026 Indoor Champs. The Athlete Panel have had discussions relating to increasing their visibility. A Comms Plan is being established and other plans being considered are a logo and a stall at the championships.

11. Finance report – verbal update

- DI explained the latest position of 2024/25 year-end pre-audit position
- In line with the budget so far for the 2025/2026 quarter one, a report will be provided after Board meeting at the end of July.

12. Club standard 6 – verbal update

ED updated EC on the positive news that all affiliated clubs have welfare standard 6 in place. Going forward, a quarterly list will be produced for all clubs that do not meet the standard and the CSM team support the clubs through any issues. The CSM team were now working with clubs to ensure full compliance of all seven standards.

There will also now be random club sample checks to understand any issues and themes so that guidance and support can be improved.

Resolved and Actions:

- 1.) None

13. EC Diversity Lead

MD informed EC that Paul Miller (London Council) has expressed an interest in becoming the EC Diversity Lead. AD confirmed his recommendation of Paul.

Resolved and Actions:

- 1.) EC approved the appointment of Paul Miller as EC Diversity Lead.

14. Regional Club forums – verbal update

HB updated EC on the plans for the nine regional club forums, run by the CSMs and RCs. Suggested themes of the sessions will relate to the club offer and networking with other clubs, but the themes could be tweaked to suit

each region. Emma Hurst will attend 4th August call to provide a further update.

15. AOB

- 16.2 EC call: MD reminded EC of the upcoming call. Affiliation fees will be the main topic of this meeting, so it's important for RC chairs to have the discussion with their councils in advance of this meeting.