

**Outcomes of the London Regional Council Meeting  
Held on Wednesday, 2nd September, 2015  
At Victoria Premier Inn, London**

**Present**

Elected Councillors;  
Peter Crawshaw (PGC) – London Council Co-Chair / Officials Portfolio  
Tony Shiret (TLS) – London Council Co-Chair / England Council Chair  
Steve Bosley (SB) – Schools Portfolio  
Lorna Boothe (LB) – Coaching Portfolio  
Tim Soutar (TJS) – Governance Portfolio

Co-opted;  
Anthony Soalla-Bell (ASB), Schools Athletics

**Apologies**

Ben Noad (BN), Elected Councillor  
Jacob Hood (JH), Elected Councillor  
Richard Pettigrew (RP), Co-opt Facilities  
Susan Cook (SC), Co-opt Disability Athletics  
Ellie Brown (EB), Co-opt  
David Ralph (DR) – Kent County AA  
Bob Smith (BS), EA London Area Manager  
Tim Howells, (TH), Run! London Project Manager

**In attendance**

Ivor Wiggett (IW), representing Chair, Middlesex County AA  
Paul Merrywest (PM- Essex), representing Chair, Essex County AA  
Tom Pollak (TP), Chair, Surrey County AA  
John Gandee (JG), representing SEAA  
Sarah Wade (SW), EA (Minutes)

**Basis of preparation:**

*Outcomes show the decisions made at London Regional Council Meetings but not the full debate at those meetings to reach those decisions. Publication of separate Minutes and Outcomes allows the Council to have a full debate for the record (Minutes) while keeping interested parties informed of important decisions reached (Outcomes). Minutes are not formally approved until the next Council Meeting. These Outcomes are based on the Draft Minutes of the Council meeting of 2<sup>nd</sup> September, 2015 which have been circulated among those present, with amendments incorporated. The London Regional Council next meets on Wednesday, 21st October 2015*

## **1. Welcome / apologies / declarations of interest**

E mails / text messages, explaining that they were unable to attend, had been received from EB, JH, DR, BS, TH and BN

## **2. Minutes of 22nd April 2015: confirmation of accuracy**

TJS pointed out that the reference to him at the beginning of item 6b should in fact be to TLS. With that amendment the minutes were agreed and signed by PGC.

## **3. Council Governance – London position for reporting to 8th September National Council (see PGC e mail of 19th August)**

PGC referred to his e-mail of 19<sup>th</sup> August as regards TLS's request to all Regional Councils for input to the planned discussion at the upcoming National Council meeting of the structure and role of Regional Councils, insofar as they contribute to the overall governance of Athletics in England. TLS had, as National Chair, asked for a short written document from each Region in advance of the 8<sup>th</sup> September NC meeting: a substantial part of the meeting was due to be given over to this. PGC's e mail had referenced the published Terms of Reference of Regional Councils and their origins in the Foster Report, as well as asking Councillors to reflect on a number of issues, including:

- Number of candidates standing for election;
- Alignment between Governance and Competition Provider's structures;
- Role of Regional Councils in determining EA funding of local initiatives.

PGC summarised the current ToR and Foster recommendation as being that the intention is for Councils be a conduit for grass roots views to be communicated up to EA Board Level via the National Council and to a lesser extent for communication of strategy and key operational decisions downwards from the top. At TLS' suggestion, the discussion also sought to gain Councillors' views on key areas of priority for the London Council which it wishes to be on the agenda for the National Council in addition to those items which are already receiving attention. Ensuring that this is right was felt to be a vital element in making the work of the Regional Council relevant.

PM stated there is in his view a difference between the various Regional Councils as to their effectiveness, which is dependent on individuals involved, particularly the Chair. PGC commented that the main criticism levelled at Regional Councils is they are mainly "talking shops" and don't really influence or effect change.

IW accepted that the points in PGC's e-mail are well worth discussion but had some concern that this would thus be quite an open ended discussion. TJS said that the four EA Areas don't obviously make a lot of sense and to adapt these geographical administration areas to align more with competition might help improve governance. TJS questioned if clubs have any understanding what Regional Councils are supposed to be doing.

TP feels there is definitely a disconnect between clubs and the Councils with clubs struggling to fulfil their role of providing sport for the community, as there are not enough volunteers and there seem to be increasing demands from the governing body. He feels too that County Associations are more aligned with clubs, but that they too had difficulty in gaining effective engagement with member clubs. To an extent this in his view reflected the difficulty that clubs themselves had in recruiting support from athletes for the activities of their own committees.

PGC referred to the London club consultation event in March and expressed frustration that there seem to be the same questions and issues (e.g. coach & officials' education) cropping up year after year. To an extent, the problem in getting meaningful answers and actions lay in the higher level structures, with policy dictated by UKA rather than EA. TLS also referenced the coach education system as there are split responsibilities between UKA and EA. EA deliver UKA courses, so if the UKA course is substandard how can the sport influence change? TP said it seems that UKA want to maintain power over sport in areas even though it is the home countries that are the main deliverers.

Overall, there was agreement that **Club engagement** is a vital issue. PGC conceded that, while a lot of effort goes into communication via the London website (London is the only Region to have its own, dedicated website), backed up by "push" notifications on social media (Twitter / Facebook) and the Run! e mail newsletter, we need to revisit this. PGC / TLS pointed out that It should however be appreciated that London Council members have no dedicated resources that can generate communications. The process must therefore be based on all Council member s influencing EA Rea staff to uses communications media to carry the messages that they wish to get across.

SB thought that the Regional Council doesn't have much impact on the day to day running of clubs and it doesn't seem relevant at the moment, so there is a challenge for EA and the council to change this. JG asked if there something common that all Regional Councils might agree to do, that clubs need to go to them as a service, e.g. Competition? PGC had referred in his briefing to the **Portfolio Holder structure**, which in theory is the route through which different Regional Councils should be working together on common themes. It was agreed that there were related issues around **Fixtures Congestion**, which linked directly to the **difficulties in recruitment of officials and other volunteers**. TP considers there appear to be some bodies, for example Run Britain, who try to justify their existence by adding to the administration burden of clubs through excessive and complicated form filling (event permits etc.). There was general agreement that NGB strategies needed to be made more transparent in these areas. [See further discussion under 5c below]

TJS asked if people at club level have much concern beyond their own clubs, which already enough to worry about. As an elected Councillor do you follow your own agenda or find out and speak to people to find out concerns to take forward? TLS agreed there is an aspect that clubs are already busy enough so it is up to the Council to follow and push clubs agendas on their behalf.

TP also referred to the **current complexity of the structure**, with Areas, Regions, Counties and Networks, which he feels is cumbersome and not coherent.

TLS reiterated that the council has an important role as a lobbying body to push EA/ UKA into listening to the interests of the grass roots. Council's definitely do have more influence than had previously. There are often aspects of confidentiality that means the Council cannot be as open as it would like when reporting successes. Without Council structure it is unlikely there would be the same access or lobbying powers for clubs to the top level of EA/UKA.

PGC felt **finances** are another issue for the Council to be interested in and wants more financial transparency for the London team and for how the financial budgets of national projects such as the NCDP are deployed at a Regional level. JG reflected that the previous structure had revenue streams for Areas, including the unaffiliated athlete levy in Road races, which has now gone. PGC pointed out that there is still money coming into the sport (currently c£300k p.a. gross of direct RunBritain costs) from Road Race promotions, in the form of **Road Race Licensing Income**, but conceded that there could be greater transparency over how that is utilised and the degree to which that fund could be

increased (without driving non-club race promoters outside the NGB scheme) or deployed more effectively at a local level.

TLS said that he is continually fighting to ensure EA/ UKA are doing all they should be. There is a big current issue with regard to Commercial rights for UKA and EA and the councils should take a role in protecting the interests of EA as this directly impacts clubs. SB observed that the loss of Sainsbury's sponsorship by UKA would have little impact on clubs as that money funded the events, none filtered down to grass roots.

LB asked if Sport England going to form a more direct financial relationship with clubs, rather than through EA? PGC answered that there is now a DCMS public consultation (open until the end of the month) which was likely to influence the funding and running of sports currently channelled by Sport England via NGBs with reference to focus to a health agenda. There is a risk that NGBs may not necessarily be the main funding partners going forward: for example, government funds could be channelled through commercial providers. TLS believes it is more efficient for Sport England to go through EA instead of directly contacting thousands of clubs. EA numbers on participation are actually pretty good, so EA is performing well, but we still cannot predict the future of sport funding at a national level, given some apparent government desire to move to a "mixed economy" model.

**Facilities** are another area of concern. TP considers it may be more difficult for clubs to access funding from London Marathon Charitable Trust going forward. TLS referred to Finsbury Park having got money to re-lay the track from LMCT. JG conceded that LMCT provides capital funding for laying tracks, but there is no funding from ongoing maintenance costs from capital projects, which is an issue.

PGC gave a short update on the Crystal Palace position, where the London Council had played a part in lobbying with the Mayor's Office: Michael Hunt wants to look at track provision in South London has requested to meet with BS and PGC to come up with a coherent strategy to go forward.

TLS believes there is a need to be more imaginative with regard to track use, as traditional track use by clubs won't get you many brownie points, there is a need to have lots of health/ participation/ school projects to get any future funding.

TJS considers that the potential indoor facility at Norman Park is more positive factor than redevelopment of CP as there is a vibrant/ busy club at its heart.

TP George Osborne statement about public spending at end of last parliament will mean huge cuts to leisure provision in UK. Facilities are at risk. This must be a role for London Council to pick up.

TLS; London council does a lot of work on facilities, it has been involved in projects such as Finsbury Park, Southwark Park and Tooting Bec. The activators and Councillors in London, are a good source of local information for the London Council to be able to react and be proactive where possible.

TP; Clubs get a lot of communication from Birmingham but not London.

TLS need to make better use of website. PGC need to get content up to date on website as it is inconsistent at the moment. PM do the Council minutes get circulated to counties? PGC; minutes are on the website for all to access, but will send minutes (link to minutes), to county reps for circulation to clubs.

**Action: PGC to summarise the key themes (highlighted in bold italics above), in terms of both governance issues and key priorities, fir the London Council into a two-page document for submission to the National Council / circulation to the London Council.**

#### 4. EA matters:

##### a. National Council update (incl. NC meetings since 22nd April meeting)

TLS outlined the main current areas of focus for the NC:

- **Officials' strategy:** review is on-going for 2015-2019. PGC felt the current statement seems more a lengthy to do list than a strategy. TLS is in a negotiation process at moment. One major area for consideration is that the success rate for course attendance to actual licensing is very low and the process of ratifying figures is still on-going. PGC has seen via June Swift some numbers going back to 2010 and seem to be reflective of the coach education problems. PGC has requested a further breakdown of figures, so that there can be focus on the position for London Region. TLS sees the need to scope out what we have got and what we need before we get bogged down in figures.
- **Coach education:** Martin Rush is now in charge of Coach education, he is getting on to UKA with regards coach course numbers and content of courses. The new Head of Strategy for UKA (Nigel Holl, currently CEO of Scottish Athletics) is also on the case of effecting change in coach education from UKA. PGC noted there is currently a review period at the end of which we will reassess and make more major changes if no improvement. The end of this period is upcoming. LB asked if coaching conferences are going to be changing from this year. She had understood that EA will be using coaches from the mentoring scheme and give them a common syllabus to deliver at conferences. Two lots of conferences will take place in November and March. There will be a focus on club level coaches, including movement and skills and then how to progress through levels. TP asked if we know the costs? A current issue is that while we look to increase numbers of coaches and officials, the cost of courses is an issue.
- **Participation:** TLS attended a meeting of the Participation Group. Sport England have asked EA to be focussed on female participation, current figures for running show a 56:44 ratio split male:female, which is good. There is a need for ideas on how to increase female participation. TLS has asked to press for more females/ BME/disability in the more senior roles in UKA/EA as it is currently not at all reflective. Sport England are also behind this push for diversity in governance.
- **YDL:** TLS commented that travel time to competitions is very difficult especially in the north and Scotland. There has been a discussion whether to split the North Upper Age Group into three divisions, North East, North West and Scotland (similar to the structure already in place for the LAG). A consultation directly to Athletes has gone out for their opinions. There has also been a call to reduce the length of senior age group matches by removing some field events. There is also thought that U17's do not get enough opportunity to compete with their own implements as mixing too much with Senior ages. There is going to be an effort to attach competition to existing open meetings. TJS believes the days are too long drawn out with not much happening at times and there is a need for more officials to make efficient: if the current changes do not have much impact then there may be a need to consider more dramatic change in 2 years' time.

##### b. Medium Term Strategy Review

PGC reminded the Council that the Board has concerned itself a bit on trying to look outside the confines of the Sport England funding cycle. The focusing of its strategy for EA is primarily concerned

with looking at the structure of the organisation and its ability to respond to changes in the overall governance of sport, not for the sport of Athletics itself. That said, the recent online consultation run by EA sought specific feedback from members on its own suggestions for key strategic priorities, The DCMS have asked for input on the way forward of sport. UKA is also developing their strategy which is at a high level.

EA has a Board subgroup running the strategy development process. This is being done in a structured way, with input from the EA SMT and other staff groups (e.g. specific input from the London Area team), and there must be a degree of confidentiality around that until the documents generated have been signed off.

**Action: PGC to see what further information can be shared with Regional Councils at this stage.**

### **c. Update on Board activities**

See above re Medium Term Strategy Review.

### **d. 2015 online Consultation**

Discussion deferred to next meeting, due to time constraints.

## **5. Report London Manager:**

### **a. London 2107 and Legacy issues / plans**

PGC referred to the announcement that Tessa Jowell has been appointed Chair for the London 2017 World Athletics Inspiration Programme (see <http://www.londonathletics.org/Dame-Tessa-Jowell-to-Chair-London-2017>). Steve Grainger, Rugby Development Director at the RFU and EA Board member, is also expected to play a key role, given his experiences with RWC 2015.

Within EA Jane Stewart (well known to London Athletics through her work on London Youth Games) has been appointed as 2017 Inspiration Programme Coordinator, reporting to Matt Birkett. PGC is seeking a meeting with Jane and Matt to see how London Clubs and volunteers can become more involved in the process. He believes that this will be a tremendous opportunity to boost the Volunteer recruitment programme, linking to other initiatives such as Join In (where several London clubs have already signed up – see below) and Team London volunteers.

TLS said that 2012 Olympics was good for London as it kick started some projects in London. If 2017 can do something similar then that will be very positive for the sport.

**Action: PGC to report back to the Council following meeting with Matt Birkett / Jane Stewart.**

### **b. Run / participation: Review of recent Newsletters**

Taken as read.

### **c. Education: coach / officials tutor recruitment / training.**

PGC has received no further numbers on courses held / attendees / licences granted from EA London staff and is pushing for answers on these questions.

PGC attended an officials education course in Newham recently that was held on 2 weekday evenings as a trial. There were 15-20 attendees, and the weekday evening during the summer season format seems worth repeating. PGC will keep a close eye on how many go on to get licensed.

PGC has contacted other London COFSecs about upcoming courses. There is an agreement on dates, now just need to get details on website. London Coach education courses are not advertised as yet.

Council asked that PGC urge the London Coach Education Manager to get courses organised and advertised, and to escalate the matter within EA as required.

***Action: PGC to press for Graeme Allan for publication of London courses and for resumption of reporting of key Coach / Officials' numbers.***

PM/SB commented that there seems to be a shortage of starters: one problem is the number of meetings that are being held at the same time. TP asked, given that meetings need to have permits, where is the regulation of issue of permits as all requested meetings seem to be permitted regardless of number or location? TP suggested that commercial events should pay for those events that provide a service for the sport. PGC agreed that an argument could be made to look at increasing commercial rate charges and increasing discounts for affiliated runners. TLS; This point could be added to the summary document to be circulated by PGC

***Action: PGC ensure that this is covered in two page issues summary under item 3 above.***

SB said that Herne Hill Harriers have had a positive response from volunteering websites such as Join In. It can be difficult to find appropriate roles to challenge/enthrall them but have had about 15 people come to the club to help for open meetings etc. SB said that the quality of recruits has been high, with people often arguably overqualified for roles, and some people have stayed with the club after helping once and are now taking officials courses etc.

***Action: SB to produce a case study document for circulation.***

## **6. Counties - update on competition plans and meetings / communications with England Athletics**

PM reiterated the lack of officials as a problem for Essex County. Female participation is also an issue across events. TLS questioned how attractive is the sport past the age of 15 and thought road running and mass participation events are more appealing.

PM said that Essex objected to the proposed age group changes. PM raised the proposed date of County Championships as a problem as it falls too close to school holidays. Essex would like it to take place at least a week before half term.

TP said that Surrey is trying to get networks and the county association together to talk about joint working. Hoping that he will make progress towards this later this month. Need to find a strategy so the county can work with networks on technical events e.g. no Surrey athletes ranked in some events. He wants a focus on event development as well as official/coach/volunteer.

TLS agreed that no one is overtly thinking about event development or encouraging athletes to diversify into different events. There is not much back up in terms of technical expertise/coaching. PGC raised this with Chris Jones a while ago but CJ emphasised coaches should remain the priority. LB felt there we need to have a balance between coaches and athletes activity and

development. TLS summary is that meaningful athlete development is not been catered for currently.

**Action: PGC ensure that this is covered in two page issues summary under item 3 above.**

IW;; Middlesex are trying to do similar as Surrey with networks and county association. A Middlesex County Athletics League is still in an embryonic stage.

PM is concerned that he Essex networks are so disjointed that it is very difficult to pull them together in a meaningful manner. TP; pointed out there is no need to stick to current network boundaries as they are no longer funded centrally from EA.

## **7. SEAA: update on competition plans and meetings / communications with England Athletics**

JG reported that the focus now on winter events at Lee valley. PGC; had been informed that there is going to be an 8 hour limit on meeting length going forward.

SEAA are still using Crystal Palace office as main base and have no plans to move.

## **8. Portfolios:**

### **a. Endurance – see enquiry from East Midlands Regional Council + discussion of additional portfolio**

PGC referred to question from East Midlands Council with regard the number of races athletes are requested to do across a season. He said that the main issue of which he had been aware in Surrey was re the Regional Schools Inter-counties event: should that be a requirement for selection for the ESAA Championships? PGC also mentioned comments made by e mail from Ben Noad in which he had advocated that County Cross-Country Championships be moved to early December, possibly combined with a League race of South / North of Thames.

**Action: TLS to ask Chris Cohen for clarity of instruction to county schools associations.**

PGC said that he had had verbal expressions of interest from Councillors regarding the Endurance portfolio.

### **b. Clubs**

SB will offer a case study on volunteers. AGM's for various leagues are upcoming, it will be interesting to see what the future is for a lot of these leagues and club events as for example the last UKWL match many clubs didn't show for last match of season. TP saw that as indicating that leagues may need to reassess their purpose to survive: league structure has fallen out of favour with open meetings are coming to the fore.

PGC pointed out that BAL are conducting a survey for ideas on how to improve the league

TLS referred to the Competition Strategy Review which is on-going with UKA. TJS, who is representing EA, said that the review has been looking very hard at leagues and there is still a hard core of people that support leagues. There is now evidence that a regional competition with maybe

one national final at the end. TP conceded that, without a league structure clubs would never want to find athletes or push event that are not popular.

SB will report back on the league AGM's for discussion.

TJS: subgroup is submitting its initial suggestions soon – report should follow.

**Actions:**

***SB to provide case study on volunteer recruitment and summary of outcomes of League AGMs.***

***TJS to provide update on UKA Competition Strategy Review.***

### **c. Schools**

ASB; said that the London Championships went well although there was the usual struggle for officials. Standard of events was pretty high. ASB; focus is on trying to encourage schools to get Athletics in to their timetables a lot earlier.

Bigger discussion is required going forward about relations between clubs and schools. SB reported that Herne Hill has been having a big push on satellite clubs this term, which is good way for clubs to reach into schools. LB said that Sutton had a negative experience with satellite clubs as there was little support or flexibility from London Sport when local issues with club setup were faced.

TP; if Individual schools or teachers do not support the idea the clubs have very little impact.

It was agreed that a fuller discussion on satellite clubs be scheduled at a subsequent meeting.

**Actions:**

***LB to provide further details of problems encountered with London Sport.***

***SB to provide more detail on HHH key success factors.***

### **9. Matters arising where not already on agenda / “Outstandings” list:**

PGC had circulated a detailed written update of these. It was agreed that any discussion of that would be deferred to the next meeting, due to time constraints.

### **10. 2015 Volunteer Awards – announcements**

PGC had circulated details of the award winners (circulation to Council members only). PGC is happy with the previous format / timing of the London awards evening. Winners will be announced shortly.

### **11. AOB**

Date of next meeting: Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> October at Premier Inn, Victoria.

IW said that he had been uncertain of the dates: PGC pointed out that these had been circulated at the beginning of the year and were on the London Athletics website, but that he would check the latter.

***Action: PGC to check Council meeting dates advertised on London Athletics website.***