

**Outcomes of the London Regional Council Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2015
At Victoria Premier Inn, London**

Present

Elected Councillors;
Peter Crawshaw (PC) – London Council Co-Chair / Officials Portfolio
Tony Shiret (TLS) – London Council Co-Chair / England Council Chair

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

Apologies

Steve Bosley (SB) – Schools Portfolio
Tim Soutar (TJS) – Governance Portfolio
Bob Smith (BS), EA London Area Manager
David Ralph – Kent County AA
Susan Cook (SC), Disability Athletics
Richard Pettigrew (RP), Facilities
Ben Noad (BN)
Lorna Boothe (LB) – Coaching Portfolio
Jacob Hood (JH), Elected Councillor

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
Chris Jones (CJ), EA Chief Executive
Natalie Kavanagh-Clarke (NKC), Run! London Project Manager
Tim Howells, (TH), Run! London Project Manager
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 21st October, 2015 which have been circulated among those present, with amendments incorporated. The London Regional Council next meets on Wednesday, 17th February 2016

1. Welcome / apologies / declarations of interest

PGC welcomed CJ to the meeting.

E mails / text messages, explaining that they were unable to attend, had been received from SB, TJS, DR, LB, JH, SC, BS and BN.

2. Minutes of 2nd September 2015: confirmation of accuracy

Minutes agreed as circulated and signed by PGC

3. Council Governance – London position as reporting to 8th September National Council and National Council Response

PGC confirmed that he had submitted a paper (as circulated to London Council members), setting out a summary of the discussions of the London Council at its 2nd September meeting. Most other Regional Councils had submitted similar notes, though in differing formats. The Whole Council Conference on 10th October had also included break-out groups which had covered this area. The National Council are expected to progress this further at their next meeting.

4. EA matters:

a. Medium term strategy review and link to online consultation (Chris Jones)

CJ went through his presentation summarising EA position and strategy leading up to 2017 and beyond.

Key points from the presentation;

- UKA agreed to adapt Coach courses from January including plans to phase down and out the coaching diary.
- A key priority is to decrease dependency on Sport England funding going forward. Currently this stands at 54%, which although down from 100% in 2005/6, is still a very high proportion.
- EA now has direct responsibility/ reporting into Sport England, UKA is no longer acting as the middle man.
- DCMS consultation: EA been involved in discussions with the DCMS. Views that have been put across from EA are need to focus on school and youth strategy as EA feel there is a need for more control over what schools do with funding alongside a need to support volunteers and teachers.
- CJ thinks EA in good position going forward. EA will know more in February /March what the funding landscape will look like.
- Commercial rights were with UKA, but this agreement has now ended. EA have developed a commercial strategy with help from Sport England and EA are now actively seeking sponsorship and deals externally.
- EA remains keen to develop and maintain relationships with counties/areas
- Consultation about priorities. EA had not looked at core value/mission since the 2008/9 restructure. This has now been looked at again with a view to transitioning organisation from next Autumn. There is potential to be looking at structural and staff changes. In this current period leading up to April 2017 and the new Whole Sport Plan, whilst being a period of uncertainty, there are two priorities;
 - 1; Maintaining/following through current Whole Sport Plan
 - 2; Developing new strategy for 2017 and beyond.

Questions/discussion with London Council and CJ.

IW stated he felt some restored confidence in EA as a governing body across clubs, as it does feel like EA is closer to clubs than it has ever been before.

EB commented that 'Athletics and Running' is a change in terminology and focus. CJ pointed out that a large proportion of EA's membership are road running clubs. Majority of participation numbers come from RR so have decided to reflect this position. EB hoped to increase her clubs membership through Running.

CJ: EA has just done a study with Sheffield Hallam University, looking at relation between Athletics clubs and Park Run and what relationship there is. Evidence shows a high level of crossover with clubs and Park run with volunteers and participants.

EB asked if there is a concern that track and field will suffer with the increased focus on Running? CJ made it clear that this is not a desired outcome for EA.

IW stated that a large numbers of runners are unattached at both Park Runs and other mass participation events. Is there a policy to engage unattached runners? CJ said that EA is trying to increase awareness of the benefits of registration e.g. discount on race entry. PGC added that through Runbritain efforts were being made to come up with a package that appeals to non-affiliated bodies/ people (race standards, online entry systems &c) but larger organisation such as London Marathon and the Great Race series are big enough to not need these packages.

TH said that the Run! Project has produced a document that is trying to streamline some of the work do in London. One area being focussed on is to work with organisations that hold races and ask them to circulate relevant details to participants prior to races to give them pre/ post-race support with a view to keeping them engaged in the sport once the race/event has finished. This would include signposting and support to clubs and training. TLS thought that this is a good example of how London has developed and pushed forward a lot of ideas over recent years and this idea to engage in mass participation individuals is a good one- lots of potential participation numbers.

TLS felt that the EA mission statement is currently lacking depth, as there is specifically no information on schools, teaching teachers how to coach. TP expressed the view that Satellite clubs have not been fit for purpose in South London as there hasn't been a resulting increase of young people into clubs. Coaches have gone onto schools but if schools don't support the programme then the whole aspiration fails. TP suggests that schools are obligated to buy in to the scheme or there is no point.

CJ; Primary school teaching resource is developed. Secondary schools resource is under development. CJ; there are a lot lots of things happening but it is not coherent enough at the moment.

PM asked, on the inclusive side of things, where is the focus for track and field? Some counties/ clubs have established big hubs of activity but it is sporadic and inconsistent. JGa felt there are too many organisations to deal with, it would be easier if there was one governing body to go to.

ASB said to CJ that he had asked the IAAF how he could get involved in their "Kids Athletics" Programme: their response had been to refer him back to UKA. It seems that this programme is not being adopted in the UKA: is this a missed opportunity?

Action: CJ to look into this and get back to ASB

TP agreed that there is no shortage of runners which is fantastic, but at a recent Surrey County meeting there were discussions to take steeplechase off competition schedule as number entries so low. There seem to be problems across all technical events in terms of low numbers. Where is the strategy going to deal with this. CJ said the current technical event leads and coach mentors should have the answer. TLS added that part of the nature of problem is that no-one is accountable due to the lack of linkage between UKA and EA.

TS noted that there has been no coach event-specific education in the last 6 years, only what has been available through online courses, so numbers getting qualified are very low which hasn't helped.

TH confirmed that London team are always looking at ways to improve delivery around Satellite Clubs and technical events so let London team know any ideas London Council may have.

TP asked what impact might the potentially huge funding cuts from the comprehensive spending review have for sport. CJ is sure there will be less money for sport following the review but no-one knows where the cuts will come from. TP; local cuts are coming as well, what impact might there be on local facilities. CJ stated how it is positive how so many facilities have survived so far and many struggling authorities have actually invested in improvement.

NKC stated how the Run! project has maintained Activator positions through taking advantage of funding through the Public Health agenda.

b. National Council Update (inc. meetings since 2 September meeting)

Updates from TLS;

National Council

The proposal to change the alignment of age groups was consulted on, out of 40 responses 72% against proposed changes, 12% in favour so the council have written to UKA to voice objection. TLS has since had assurance from Niels de Vos that age groups are not going to change in the near future.

A Code of Conduct poster acetate is to be circulated to clubs stating the rules of athletics. Trying to introduce information and protect officials.

YDL; there will be a vote on the sub-regionalisation of the northern area. A motion has been put forward to split the area into 3 regions. A survey of athletes in North showed they didn't want to travel long distances to compete.

Discussion about the Council set up across the country has discussed that the portfolio system is not working, more funding would be required to make it work, particularly the case in larger regions. There was a feeling that county links were strong but club links could be improved. 35 counties represented on regional councils so high number engagement. There was also some criticism of the operational performance of regional staff across country and also inconsistency on delivery.

Whole Council Conference

30-40 people attended. Big point was a desire to move forward, there is some fatigue about constantly going on about what is not working without resolution. Councillors would like to do more development work to move things forward.

EA AGM

Feedback from EA consultation;

Area competition was as strong thing to come through and about the ongoing funding of areas. Different issues across areas.

Coach Education is inadequate and there is an identified need to move progress forward more rapidly.

With regards EA's strategic development, there is a need to focus on volunteer and athlete retention, schools and teacher training in schools and recruiting new officials.

TLS believes there is a need for Councils to have a few projects to focus on and for councils to get their teeth into going forward as the portfolio system is not working. Looking at maybe one or two programmes to get behind for 5 years. The strategy is not yet finished as doesn't define numbers or details. It is important for councils to have some influence on the delivery of the sport, especially in relation to track and field. TP felt there is also a disconnect between counties and clubs, and not just council and clubs.

c. Update on Board activities

Largely covered by CJ presentation and discussion of AGM above: no further discussion due to time constraints.

5. Report London Area Team:

a. London 2017 and Legacy issues / plans

PGC reported that he is due to meet with Matt Birkett and Jane Stewart of EA the following day. He will try to arrange a detailed update for the London Council in early 2016.

b. Run / participation: Review of recent Newsletters

TH/NKC update on Run! activity;

Communication Survey

London Athletics recently conducted a communication survey which was sent out to 500 people including club contacts and partners and organisations. Key outcomes from the survey are to keep improving social media presence and increasing traffic to the website to help communicate key messages and information. The resounding feedback was people use website to find competition opportunities, especially older age groups.

Need to better communicate information with regard coaching courses including awareness and details of the courses taking place and also funding opportunities available.

Need to look at how London Athletics can help clubs with the problem of increasing volunteers. There is a feeling that people on the ground are not getting to hear about what is going on and that key information/ messages/ opportunities are not reaching the masses. Clubs have also expressed an interest in having a say in what happens in council in terms of setting agenda's.

NKC; look at utilising the council and their contacts more to get their weight behind key messages.

Volunteering

Volunteer recruitment is a big priority.

TH talked through his e-mail summarising volunteer recruitment ideas going forwards

PGC considers there is a need to investigate new ways of recruiting volunteers as old methods are not working and/or have reached their limit. Need to make sure that if we do use new methods that need to track any resulting footfall.

TLS should there be a package developed so all volunteers get a welcome pack and is a proper role for them when they arrive at the club? Need to guide clubs on the minimum standards of how to treat volunteers and look to develop a rewards package (in kind coach courses/kit etc.). Need to keep a record of successes and share best practice.

NKC spoke about a new funding stream coming out from the GLA specifically for athletics clubs. All London clubs were notified of the opportunity but only 4 have expressed an interest. Initial feedback seems to show a lot of clubs may have been fearful of taking on more work.

EB asked TH/ NKC to please circulate any all club e-mail to the council to help with spreading the word.

Action: NKC/TH to bring copies of new Run! How can we help.... leaflets to Awards on 16 November and circulate by e-mail.

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

Starting to create a picture of what is happening across London through emerging figures, although there is still a long way to go.

TH; A career coach programme run in Newham over the summer to create qualified coaches (Lirf, assistant coach, Athlefit module). It was advertised and places were snapped up quickly and all ran full.

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

IW; Middlesex YAL is making progress, currently 80% of clubs have indicated they are in favour. There is still a long way to go, for 2016 there may be an experimental one off league to see how it progresses. Eventual idea is to replace national YDL in the area.

There is a Level 2 course organised for 1 November by Middlesex. There is a concern that another Level 2 organised for 15 November at Lee Valley may impact numbers.

TP; Surrey is trying to pull networks together across Surrey with an idea to work in weak events and also coaches/officials development. A representative is going to the competition providers forum this weekend although most people are unsure of the actual purpose. CJ; it is an opportunity for competition providers to listen to Nigel Holl (Head of Strategy for UKA) and feedback. TP felt the problem is that the UKA competition agenda is very different to that of EA, which is very different to the counties. There is an overall discord in track and field competition provision across a season. TLS; need to wait to make judgment until after hearing what Nigel Holl has to say.

PM; Essex are still finalising next year's competition schedule. There is also a concern that there do not seem to be any education courses been organised to take place in Essex.

TLS; Need to contact Becky Turford (EA) to request organisation of more courses in Essex. PM; Also would like to see EA (CCSO) representation at county meetings.

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

JG is also attending competition strategy meeting. TLS feels there is a need to try and force some change and need to maintain engagement with areas. Would like to look at best or better practice. TP thought that the agenda was looking at best pathways for athletes but there are no athletes in attendance at the meeting. TP felt competition organisers have compromised meetings by moving dates around and having clashes. PM thought there was very little checking of permits for clashes as they are issued.

JGa stated the SEAA winter programme is planned, summer dates are set except for combined events and inter-counties, which are awaiting permits.

8. Portfolios:

Discussion re Coaching and Disability portfolios deferred in the absence of LB and SC.

9. Matters arising where not already on agenda / "Outstandings" list:

PGC had circulated a document, setting out progress in respect of these, which should be largely self-explanatory. He highlighted the following (numbers quoted relate to the abovementioned document):

21 and 22 have got some numbers but there is still the need for improvement across some aspects of the reporting, so it is moving forward but slowly.

25; Crystal Palace. PGC met with Michel Hunt and Chris Mallender and have decided there is a need to look more closely at indoor facility usage and requirements in South London. There has already been a consultation with Sutton, and need to talk further to John Powell. Sutcliffe Park have got planning permission for development of indoor Facility

Norman Park still has the potential for development

Southwark Park track is nearing completion and London City Athletics Club will be moving in, probably from the new year.

27 PGC had a teleconference with Michael Hunt. Will get some information out in the new year. There is still a need to sort out communication.

42 London Marathon; have had feedback from Dean Hardman about disabled entry. It is a London Marathon issue and EA have no say.

48 Rule book. There is a weblink to a consultation to address views on issues such as the foreign athlete issue that was raised earlier this year.

50 PGC has a meeting set up with Matt Birkett and Jane Stewart to find out more on potential outcomes from 2017. Volunteers/ inclusivity are priorities.

52 Liaison with London colleges is ongoing. Have organised a course but there were a disappointing number of people put forward from college, the course ran with club representatives.

55 PGC has met with Liz Purbrick to discuss how to push this going forward.

10. 2015 Volunteer Awards – plans for 16 November

All Council attendees have been sent invites for the evening at Institute of Sport, Exercise and Health on Monday 16th November.

11. AOB

Dates of future Meetings: PGC to circulate dates / rolling agenda for 2016. He will review the possible need for a London Council teleconference prior to Christmas, dependant on matters arising from the National Council meeting due to be held towards the end of November.