
MINUTES OF THE PERFORMANCE SPRINT STRATEGY GROUP MEETING #2

Group members present

David Joy (DJ)	CEO and Chair of the Group
Imogen Collins (IC)	England Talent Coach/SRC member
James Clark (JC)	Club/Independent
Brian Cuniffe (BC)	EIS Head of Performance Support
Paul Dimmock (PD)	International Panel/independent
Abi Edmonds (AE)	Independent ex WCP athlete
Hayleigh Mason (HM)	International Panel/Independent
Rene Olsen (RO)	Sprint Head Coach WCP staff
Paul Ratcliffe (PR)	Performance Director
Jon Schofield (JS)	Head of Performance and Pathways SCA
Ian Wynne (IW)	SRC member/Independent
David Parsons (DP)	Independent Expert
Laura Duffin (LD)	WCP staff
Andy McSweeney (AMcS)	UK Sport Performance Advisor

1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1** DJ welcomed everyone to the meeting. He welcomed the new members; Abi Edmonds, Hayleigh Mason and Andy McSweeney, who introduced themselves to the group.
- 1.2** DJ reminded the group that the last meeting had been focused on; the Terms of Reference for the group, the project plan, the scope of the Sprint Performance Strategy and the Vision and Missions. He noted that the agenda indicated the need to revisit to finalise some of these topics, together with an introduction to the funding of the Strategy. Future meetings will have more of a focus on the work emerging from the Task and Finish Groups.

2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising

- 2.1** DJ explained the rationale for format of the minutes and asked the group if they were satisfied with the detail within the minutes. The minutes would capture the essence of discussion as well as any key actions, but not record discussions verbatim. He confirmed the intention to circulate a draft to the group for comment. They will then be amended, and presented to the next meeting for approval. The minutes of each meeting will be circulated and presented on the British Canoeing web site. The minutes from the meeting of 22 May were reviewed.

2.2 Decision: Minutes from the first meeting approved.

3. Approve the Terms of Reference and composition for the Sprint Strategy Group and the timelines and consultation process for the Strategy

3.1 The Terms of Reference had been recirculated as a 2nd draft after the last meeting. Changes included a clarification that group members were bringing stakeholder knowledge but not representation and also that although the accountability of the Group was to the Board, independence of view was encouraged and there was no 'party line' on discussions.

Decision: Terms of Reference approved

3.2 Discussion took place about the timeframes to complete the work and in particular, consideration given to the UK Sport Phase 3 Paris submission date in October. It was noted that this was a fixed date and the work required to submit a strong application for funding needed to be complete by that date. Other detail could be developed beyond that date and that the final Strategy would be completed in early 2021. Work is taking place to define what has to be completed by October. The WITTTW model will be central to this.

3.3 It was noted that the Strategic Framework will be required by mid-July. This will provide the 'skeleton' of the strategy including; draft vision, draft mission, strategic goals in each task and finish area and funding headlines.

3.4 It was noted that this would be considered by the focus groups and be circulated widely for consultation within the whole community

3.5 The timelines for each stage were presented and approved. It was agreed to present and share this within a gantt chart.

3.6 A member of the group expressed concerns about the funding submission date and the danger of making a funding submission before we were sure of what we actually wanted and that we had to be sure that the assumptions were well founded and could be carried forward and built upon later in the process. DJ reiterated that the date was not of our making and was fixed, but that submission will be relatively high level. He advised that we needed to work towards being in a position to present the content required by UK Sport in sufficient detail to secure the funding. This will be very focused on the strategic framework and WITTTW, the analysis of athletes within the system, the financial modelling and staffing. It will not require detail around the competition, clubs and coaching plans which can come later.

3.7 It was noted that UK Sport are currently working to secure their funding for the Paris cycle, and that this was more difficult than previously because of the pandemic. It was also noted that we have received planning figures based on a reduction of athlete places from 22 to 10 and a 50% reduction on staffing and programme costs. It was

noted that a Draft Funding submission would be shared with UK Sport in August/September.

- 3.8** The phase 3 submission is the final opportunity in the Paris cycle to demonstrate that there are more than 10 athletes with medal potential in Paris and LA and that the system can support the athletes to achieve podium success.
- 3.9** The group discussed the importance of the Strategy being right for the sport and that it must lead to a greater depth in talent not just winning medals. This would be reflected in the vision, mission and the strategy.
- 3.10** It was also discussed that the talent funding in each Home Country also needs to align with the Strategy.

4. The forward plan for Strategy Group meetings

- 4.1** The forward plan of meetings was discussed and the importance of providing the maximum amount of time to develop the first Draft Strategy for presentation to the Board. It was proposed that the dates of the Strategy Group meeting should be moved back a week. Dates to be circulated.

Action LD: Dates to be circulated and Group member's feedback if these new dates are problematic

- 4.2** The focus of this Strategy Group in the next few meetings will be to consider the emerging themes that come out of Task & Finish groups and to agree the Strategic Framework for consultation. The Group will also explore in its next meeting how volunteers and British Canoeing staff may work best together, who does what and what are the roles for volunteer committees within the Sprint Strategy. These matters will also need detailed discussions with the committees and through the wider consultation.

5. Setting up focus groups

- 5.1** DJ spoke about the work ahead to establish the various Focus Groups which would be key to consultation. There had been progress made in establishing a women's focus group to review the strategy. Some women had expressed disappointment that it should be required whilst others felt the focus might be helpful and that it would be positive to check and challenge the emerging strategy from a female gender balance perspective. It was noted that the Situational Analysis had made comments that the World Class Programme need to address issues of how it could be more encouraging and supportive of female athletes and female coaches. It was noted that the Strategy should also seek to encourage greater ethnic and socio-economic diversity within the talent pool.
- 5.2** In addition to the Women's Focus Groups the following other Focus Groups would also be established;

- Sprint staff within British Canoeing
- Club coaches
- Sprint athletes group
- Sprint Racing, Marathon Racing and Regatta Committees

5.3 The scope and positioning of the strategy

- 5.4** The scope and positioning of the Strategy was discussed, to agree what it is and what it isn't. The Strategy is not a whole sport plan for sprint canoe but is a Performance Strategy for the sport. It will include the talent pathways in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the work in clubs to recruit and develop talent in clubs through the various stages of development. This will need to be explored within the What it Takes to Progress and the Talent Club Task and Finish Group.

Action PR/DP: To ensure the talent pool work and link between clubs and schools is explored in Club Task & Finish Group

6. The funding principles for delivery of the strategy

- 6.1** DJ spoke to a funding paper. It outlined how for the Strategy to succeed, all stakeholders will need to allocate funding resources to it in a coordinated way. It will also be important to see external fund to local and national delivery. Funding needs align to it, especially think about public funding, there are always strings attached to fulfil the funder aims too.
- 6.2** It is planned that British Canoeing Committees and clubs will follow the same principles and invest in the Strategy.
- 6.3** The group discussed the public funding streams available. These include UK Sport which is a 4 year funding agreement and sharply focused on the next Games, although with some funding available for the next wave of athletes for the Games 8 years away. Sport England, Sport Scotland, Sport Wales and Sport NI investment was focused more on the next group of athletes who maybe 12 years or more away from senior international success. It was recognised that UK Sport is encouraging sports to develop and present their vision to 2032 and in the next submission show clearly how they will move to it over the next 4-8 years and to identify clearly the major strategic shifts it intends to make.
- 6.4** The group discussed how we might become more independent of funding bodies and more self-reliant and source other funding such as from schools, clubs and universities. This all needs to be explored within the strategy.
- 6.5** The group discussed how on occasions funding can create tensions in the athlete group on trips. Should it be that we establish a philosophy of funding any nationally selected athlete? For example next cycle there could possibly only be ten funded athletes but a team of 20 athletes. This is something to consider.

7. Consider the draft Vision and Mission

- 7.1** The group considered the draft Vision and Missions. There has been some feedback on the Sprint Vision and Mission for 2024-2032. Common words that describe what is wanted within the Vision statement include; united, engaged, inspiring the paddlesport community, connected, supporting athletes, athlete centred, engaging wider community and inclusive of all team members. The group considered several versions of a potential vision for the strategy.
- 7.2** Shorter versions were preferred. The word 'system' depersonalises and no one typically wants to be part of a system. High performance culture, clubs, team or family 'athletes' is more desirable as everyone can get behind athletes. 'Supporting athletes to strive for' was considered a strong start. Inspire and support are good words. Thought best not to try to list the parts of the system, the stakeholders and some will inevitably be left out.

Action PR/DP: further draft of the Vision to be presented to the next meeting

- 7.3** The Mission statements need to be objective, measurable, time limited and actioned focused. They do need to include medal target ranges as part of UK Sport submission. Should not include upper medal ranges so as not to restrict ambition.

Action PR/DP: further draft of the Missions to be presented to the next meeting

8. Consider initial feedback from the Task and Finish Groups

- 8.1** Within future Strategy meetings, consideration of proposals emerging from the task and finish group work will be a substantive item. The Strategy Group will deep dive into 1 or 2 areas in each meeting as work emerges from Task and Finish Groups. All groups are up and running, but moving at different paces and most are at a stage of exploring early thinking. The next 4-5 weeks are important so as to produce the Strategic Framework. The Chairs' group is proving valuable to keep reinforcing process, requirements and timelines.
- 8.2** Within the **Clubs and Talented Athlete Development Group** discussions are focused in four areas; Role of clubs; Relationship between clubs and British Canoeing; Participation base; Support & reward for clubs. The group have been divided into sub groups to explore those four questions. They are actively exploring the models within other sports. A key question was narrowed down to 'how can they create pressure in the pathway and create competition'. Is this more clubs, is it geographical and so on. Key point that came out was that the medal focus didn't feel relevant or particularly pertinent to the clubs who are focussed on other areas and other goals.
- 8.3** The **Competitions Group** have discussed the need for more competitions which would include a tiered system or structure. The group has been asked to consider 'why'

competition is important. The group is diverse in membership and includes a good club perspective.

- 8.4 No assumptions have been made yet on the amount or format of races or regattas. The group are looking at the needs of all groups/ abilities and ages. The only assumption made is the need to increase participation through competition.
- 8.5 The **Facilities Group** very much see this area as an enabler to the other areas. There will be cross working needed with the Competitions Group. The group is breaking down into three sub groups which include; Nottingham as an Elite Training Centre; the club/ hub model; and what international training venues look like. The group listed up what is an essential criteria and what is a desirable criteria in each setting.
- 8.6 The **What it Takes to Win Group** have identified a lot of different topics that need exploring in this group including; benchmarking, athlete development and what the athlete journey looks like. They are also getting into technical development and technical frameworks.
- 8.7 **Athlete Development Group** needs to define what the vision and mission is as well as define what success is. There is a realisation that 'happy' and 'motivated' people are needed in order to achieve. They have started to talk about centralisation and looked at benefits of different systems. They have looked at the challenges and changes for athletes through pathway. A lot of changes for 18/19 year olds currently coming into the World Class Programme. They have also started to look at the culture of high challenge and high support and how that works best. They are looking at how to open up the elite paddler road map and what it looks like as well as connectivity and human element.
- 8.8 The **Coach Development group** are looking at athlete development and relationships with coaches.

9. Open discussion; Progress to date, satisfaction, concerns and identification of potential de-railers

- 9.1 There is a realisation that there is currently wide engagement in this strategy with people that want to make a change. There is an understanding that volunteers are giving up a lot of their time for this and the engagement from all different stakeholders has not happened in the sport in a long time. It was remarked by UK Sport that this is a very thorough and inclusive approach, which is not taken by many other sports.
- 9.2 Concerns have been raised that the composition of some of the groups are staff heavy. Strategy Group members feel the whole process will be engaging of all key stakeholders and that the composition of the groups is reasonable but if some minor changes need to be made then it would be wise to do so.
- 9.3 The group believe that there is a need to look at other successful nations in the sport to see if they can take any learnings.

- 9.4** There is belief from the group that the mission and vision has to be clear. How the strategy is brought to life is also important, it's all about how it comes into practice that allows change to happen. A lot was never realised or delivered in the last strategy. We have to ruthlessly pursue what is important. Seem to have a lot of different consensus from different pockets and communities, we need some commonality that we all live and breathe.
- 9.5** DJ suggested that now was a good time to make this shift. British Canoeing is a different organisation now than it was 4 years ago. The strategic plan *Stronger Together* was shaped through consultation, is being delivered and successes are emerging. 4 years strategies in areas such as membership and coaching are being successfully delivered There is no reason why this should not be the same. Need to create the change we know we need and keep engaging and consulting.
- 9.6** It is agreed that this is a well-connected group that should maintain its offline and online personal connections.

10. Dates of future meetings

17 th July 2020	1530-1830
14 th August 2020	1530-1830
7 th September 2020	1530-1830

END

Draft. 30 June 2020