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## MINUTES OF THE SPRINT PERFORMANCE STRATEGY GROUP MEETING #1

### 22ND MAY 2020

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#### Group Members Present

David Joy (DJ)	CEO & Chair of the Group
Imogen Collins (IC)	England Talent Coach/SRC member
James Clark (JC)	Club/Independent
Brian Cunliffe (BC)	EIS Head of Performance Support
Paul Dimmock (PD)	International Panel/independent – <i>Partial Attendance</i>
Rene Olsen (RO)	Sprint Head Coach WCP staff
David Parsons (DP)	Independent Expert
Paul Ratcliffe (PR)	Performance Director
Jon Schofield (JS)	Head of Performance and Pathways SCA
Ian Wynne (IW)	SRC member/Independent
Laura Duffin (LD)	WCP staff

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#### 1. Welcome and Introductions

- 1.1 DJ welcomed members to the meeting and thanked them for agreeing to be part of the Strategy Group. He invited members to introduce themselves, and noted that most of the Group members were known to each other already.
- 1.2 DJ encouraged members to enter freely into discussion to check and challenge views, despite meeting virtually. He hoped this group would be very interactive and encouraged a discursive approach to the meeting.

#### 2. Introducing the Performance Sprint Strategy

- 2.1 DJ introduced the Performance Sprint Strategy. He confirmed that this is a Performance Strategy focused on the Talent Pathway from Club level through to Podium and it would need to be underpinned by a plan to increase participation. He also confirmed it is a plan developed for British Canoeing and is not a plan owned by UK Sport, although it will clearly inform the funding submission to UK Sport for the Paris cycle and the key aims around podium success. For it to be successful it would need to be developed, owned and delivered by stakeholders across the UK. These groups include;

- Those Clubs and coaches involved in the development and delivery of Sprint racing
- The National Association Talent Programmes
- The International Panel
- The Sprint Racing Committee (SRC) - and Marathon Racing Committee (MRC)

- The Regatta Committee
- The World Class Programme (WCP)

**2.2** DJ suggested that the work ahead was seeking to join up the work of key stakeholders in a way that had not been attempted or achieved previously. He confirmed this would encompass talent systems in Clubs and how this joined up with the National Association Talent Programmes and the World Class Programme (WCP). He agreed that work was also required to look at increasing participation and schools links into Clubs and this needed to be joined up to this Strategy although may not be a focus for the working groups who needed to stay focused on the talent pathway.

**2.3** A group member emphasised the importance of the schools and participation programme and DJ agreed that this work needed to get up and running to align with the Performance Strategy.

**Action:** DJ to explore with colleagues about how best to develop this work.

**2.4** A group member spoke about the importance of not making the mistakes of the past and ensuring that the whole sport worked together behind a single plan. PR built on the same point and the importance of having a clear 12 year vision for the sport with everyone wanting to play their part to deliver against it.

**2.5** DJ reminded the Group that work needed to be progressed so that the Strategy could inform the UK Sport funding submission in October 2020. The indicative figures British Canoeing had received would see a reduction in funding of 50% for the Paris cycle. This level of reduction in funding would have a significant impact on the programme.

**Decision:** The Group approved the positioning of the Sprint Performance Strategy.

### **3. The Sprint Performance Project Plan and Group membership**

**3.1** DJ spoke about how the proposed Groups had been drafted and noted that this was a topic of conversation. The process had started following the feedback sessions around the Sprint Situational Analysis and the invitation for individuals to step forward to be part of the next stage of the process. This had been an 'opt in process'. A lot of people had stepped forward. In identifying members of the Strategy Group the following had been considered;

- Expertise and experience required in coaching, performance, athlete understanding, programme management, strategy
- Those with vision to see better, to see difference and ready to embrace change
- The range of Stakeholder involvement; Clubs, National Association members, Discipline Committees, staff, EIS
- Gender balance
- Size of the group needed to stay manageable
- External check and challenge

**3.2** The Board had requested that DJ should Chair this Group and oversee this process, empowering him as CEO to take the necessary decisions to set up the strategy and ensure full stakeholder engagement.

**3.3** The Group felt strongly that the gender balance within the group was inappropriate and all agreed that this needed to be addressed before the next meeting. There was discussion around why more women had not come forward to take part in this process and how we might

better present similar opportunities in the future. It was noted that there are too few women involved in coaching and this also needs to be addressed over the next few years.

- 3.4** A group member advised that we need to think about how we recruit people, and that we don't necessarily need to have canoeing people, and it could be valuable to have people who have been through a similar process.

A group member felt that there were others in the community who perhaps had not been confident to put themselves forward.

**Action; All/DJ** - It was agreed that Group members should identify at least 2 new female members of the Strategy Group as soon as possible.

- 3.5** It was agreed that a Women's Consultation Group should be established as part of the structure and that all key proposals should be considered by the Group as part of consultation.

**Action: DJ, DP & IC** to explore next steps to establish this.

- 3.6** A group member asked why the President was not involved in the Group. DJ advised that the President had been involved in the Situational Analysis work and had clearly been an advocate for change. The Chair of British Canoeing and the President had since discussed the President's involvement in the process. It had been agreed that the President and Chair would form a scrutiny Group as part of this process and meet monthly to discuss progress.

- 3.7** It was agreed the Strategy Group would continue to meet virtually and that meetings would usually be around 3 hours with breaks scheduled. Agenda and papers would be circulated in advance.

- 3.8** The proposed membership of the Task and Finish Groups were also noted and it was recognised some changes may still occur in these groups as they become established. A group member expressed concern that some people were on more than one group. PR confirmed that others from the community may be required as the work begins to unfold and sub groups are set up.

- 3.9** It was noted that the groups may be missing representation from elite club paddlers who are not in the WCP but competing at a high level.

**Action:** Group to feedback thoughts to PR and DJ on who from this group may wish to be involved.

**Decisions:** Subject to the comments above, the Group structure was approved.

#### **4. Terms of Reference for the Sprint Strategy Group**

- 4.1** DJ introduced the Terms of Reference (ToR) which had been circulated.

- 4.2** It was emphasised that although the Group was accountable to the Board it was important that Group Members had independence of thought and this ought to be included within the ToR.

- 4.3** It was proposed that a definitions page be added to clarify acronyms, or they should be replaced with names in full.

- 4.4** It was noted that the Minutes including key actions would be recorded and published on the website.
- 4.5** It was also agreed that a short report should be issued to key stakeholders after each meeting to ensure all stakeholders are informed of developments.
- 4.6** It was agreed that the Task and Finish groups would be empowered to drive their individual areas of work.

**Decision:** The Terms of Reference were approved subject to minor amendments and would be presented for approval at the next meeting.

**5. What do the Group want to see at the end of this process and what do we need to do to get this right?**

- 5.1** DP had asked the Group prior to the meeting what they would like to see at the end of the process and how we would measure success. The headline feedback had been consistently around the following key points;

- There would be in place a long-term plan for the sport
- The strategy would be owned and shared by the whole sport
- The strategy would make sense and be clearly understood by all
- There would be a sense of excitement and optimism

- 5.2** There was general discussion around the topic, summarised below;

It was proposed that the majority of flat water paddlers consider sprint and marathon to be intertwined and so both disciplines need to be involved in this process.

It was noted that there were lots of avenues into racing so there is a need to consider the whole sport, whereby every pathway is valid. A group member suggested that we need to emphasise the positives in cross over. It was recognised that we need to be open to and support non-standard and non-club based routes to the pathway. Athletes may come through lots of different routes.

It was proposed that there is a big responsibility to involve Volunteers, Clubs and Coaches across the disciplines. DJ emphasised the importance of creating a plan that is owned and shared. The plan should be joined up in the long term.

- 5.3** DP had also asked the group beforehand what we need to do to get this right. The headline feedback had been consistently around the following key points;

- Focus on solutions
- Adopt a strengths-based approach
- Be well-informed
- Involve the wider community
- Work smartly
- Be bold
- Challenge respectfully
- Keep it simple
- Self-reflect honestly

- Be 'athlete centred'

5.4 A group member spoke about the needs to be values driven.

5.5 The Group spoke about the importance of 'keep it simple' although the task was relatively complex. It was agreed that the strategy needed to be relatable for everyone involved in the sport.

5.6 It was agreed to share within the Group, the detailed feedback that had been received. The Group agreed that these were good principles to inform the Group's ways of working.

## 6. To consider and approve the Mission and Vision

### The Vision

6.1 PR introduced the Vision to 2032 confirming that it had already been out to consultation but it wasn't final and needed to be revisited or refined through this process. He invited comments on it;

*'A united high performance system which engages clubs, coaches and volunteers to support and empower more athletes to achieve World, Olympic and Paralympic success and inspires the paddlesport community'.*

6.2 Consideration of the Vision for the Strategy led the group to reconsider if this is a Performance Strategy or a Strategy for Sprint Racing and where the 'other' parts of the Strategy would sit if this was not a whole sport strategy. The focus was certainly intended to be a talent and performance strategy, but a whole plan would need to be joined up. This matter would be fully considered at the next meeting. The group liked the word 'empower' and agreed that 'Success' would need to be defined.

6.3 It was proposed that the Vision needed to better reflect everyone's success, not just the athletes. Many felt it needed simplifying and one group member suggested that 'high performance' could be removed. The Group felt the Vision needed revisiting to be more inspiring and to better help everyone feel connected to it.

**Action:** DJ requested that detailed comments be shared with PR prior to the next meeting.

**Mission statements** - PR introduced the draft Missions for 2024, 2028 and 2032.

6.4 There was discussion around whether the medal totals were aspirational enough and whether the statements were inspiring or clear enough.

6.5 PR spoke about the challenge of setting targets that were ambitious but not unrealistic and noted that there had been criticism of this in the Analysis.

6.6 There was discussion around UK Sport and funding expectations. It was recognised that this would include medals targets and that it was important to see progression. UK Sport were wanting to see a step change in our depth of talent as well as medal success including more finalists and medal prospects. Members raised questions and felt it important to explore how the strategy could also include process and behaviour measures, as well as the necessary outcome (medal) measures.

**6.7** DJ emphasised the importance of relating our Vision and Missions to our actual potential and this would need to be developed in line with the strategy. We would need to establish an early version but be willing to amend it through the process of developing the Strategy.

**6.8** It was noted that the Task and Finish Groups would develop the Strategic Goals which sit at the next level down and they would be given a strategic framework to assist them in this work. This would be shared with the Strategy Group prior to the next meeting.

**7. Dates of next and future meetings**

**7.1** Next meeting 12th June (15:30-18:30)

**7.2 Future Meetings**

10th July 2020 (15:30-18:30)

7th August 2020 (15:30-18:30)

28th August 2020 (15:30-18:30)