

Meeting of the Oversight Committee of the Amateur Swimming Association (Swim England) Limited

Thursday 6 July 2023 – Starting at 13:00

SportPark, Loughborough

Attended:

Andrea Chilton – Chair (AC)
Karen Gray (KG)
James Gyselynck (JG)
James Hollis (JH)
Neil Booth (NB)
Lois Jarvis (LJ)

Apologies:

Cassandra Patten (CP)
Joan Wheeler (JW)

Officers in attendance:

Hannah Foster - Executive Operations Manager (HF)
Emma Griffin - Chief Operating Officer (EG)
Kerry Watkiss - Head of Insight (KW)

1. Welcome and introductions

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed all members to the Committee.
- 1.2 It was acknowledged that Cassandra Patten and Joan Wheeler had sent their apologies prior to the meeting.
- 1.3 The meeting commenced with introductions from all members, who outlined their backgrounds and interests and expertise in serving on the Committee.
- 1.4 The Chair provided an overview of the Committee and noted the Committee procedures and etiquette.
- 1.5 The agenda was outlined and purpose of the meeting declared.

2. Terms of Reference

- 2.01 Members deliberated the terms of reference for the Committee.
- 2.02 The alignment between the Swim England Board and the Oversight Committee was queried. Members were advised that the Oversight Committee reported to the Board in terms of providing updates and reports but that the Committee can hold the Board to account if concerns are identified at that level.
- 2.03 It was noted that any amendments the Oversight Committee deem necessary to the terms of reference can be addressed through the Chair to the Board.

- 2.04 **Action: LJ to amend the terms of reference to clarify the relationship with the Board and to ensure that the Committee is shown as an independent entity on the organisational chart.**
- 2.05 The link to the Board was discussed further, including the means by which the Committee was able to address the Board and/or the SLT directly, where necessary, in accordance with good governance practice.
- 2.06 LJ confirmed that the Committee could request meetings with all members of the organisation for reporting purposes, including the CEO. Members were reminded that line management for individual performance matters remained within Swim England management.
- 2.07 The Committee clarified the resolutions and voting. LJ was confirmed as a non-voting member.
- 2.08 The Committee sought confirmation that the minutes of its meeting would be published on the website in the interests of transparency, in accordance with committee protocols, and this confirmation was provided.
- 2.1 Conflicts of Interest**
- 2.1.1 Members confirmed that they had signed and sent the declarations of interest form to HF. All confirmed their understanding of conflicts of interest and conflicts of loyalty.
- 3. Agree schedule and locations for 2023 meetings**
- 3.1 The Committee deliberated the proposed meeting dates for the remainder of 2023.
- 3.2 An alternative meeting date was discussed and suggested for the next meeting.
- 3.3 **Decision: The confirmed dates for the next meetings are:**
- **Thursday 5 October, 11am – 4pm in person**
 - **Wednesday 6 December, 11am – 4pm in person**
- 3.4 An additional meeting, provisionally set for 14 August at 11am, was to be arranged if Swim England were in receipt of a response from Sport England by that date.
- 3.5 **Action: HF to arrange provisional meeting for 14 August.**
- 4. Sport Resolutions report (progress to date and outstanding clarifications required)**
- 4.1 LJ provided the Committee with context of the Sport Resolutions report and gave an update on Swim England's changes to its safeguarding and disciplinary procedures since the report's publication. LJ also explained Sport England's funding partner agreement, which related to matters identified within the report, to the Committee.
- 4.2 Sport England had commissioned Sport Resolutions to undertake a review into Swim England's handling of three complaints. Within the report, Mr. L Weston, appointed to conduct the review, made nine recommendations which Swim England fully accepted. Swim England had already begun a programme of change prior to recommendations being made: for example, elements of Swim England's safeguarding regulations and judicial regulations were changed at Board prior to Swim England's receipt of the report. In January, Swim England compiled their response to the report, outlining steps to achieve the principles of Weston's recommendations.
- 4.3 It was agreed that it was essential that the Committee had sight of Sport England's correspondence to date between Swim England and Sport England which related to the recommendations.
- 4.4 **Action: LJ to share correspondence between Swim England and Sport England by end July.**

5. Listening Exercise

5.1 The Chair welcomed KW, project lead for the “Listening Programme”, to the meeting. The Listening Programme was considered a key element of the Heart of Aquatics plan.

5.2 An overview of the Listening exercise was provided:-
The exercise had four aims:

- What are the current experiences
- What are the past experiences
- What is the community’s hope for the future
- What are people’s view on Swim England

Independent experts had been appointed through a panel consisting of Senior Leadership Team members, KW as Head of Insight, and KG as the representative from the Oversight Committee.

5.3 An expert agency, the Behavioural Architects, had been hired to ensure the Listening Programme was independent and robust.

The proposal from the Behavioural Architects was provided:

1. Foundation – project kick off and set up including aligning on strategy for communicating the research and inviting participation.
2. Mass learning with audience - Anonymous survey open to individuals for 6 weeks.
3. Qualitative deep-dive with key groups.
4. Quantitative benchmarking survey with club members.
5. Strategic debrief and activation.

5.4 The timelines and expectations of the project were shared.

5.5 The role of the Oversight Committee within the programme was discussed.

5.6 The area of research classified as “swimming” was confirmed to include both para-swimming and open water swimming. This raised concerns about the voice of para athletes as well as other potentially under-represented groups in swimming. It was agreed to review the position on receipt of the interim report to understand if any group has been under-represented and what additional or alternative means for ensuring a broad and diverse response base was achieved might be necessary.

5.7 **Action: KW to review any under-representation from the aquatic community once in receipt of the interim report and report back to the Committee.**

6. Heart of Aquatics action plan

6.1 The Chair welcomed EG to the meeting.

6.2 EG provided an overview of the Heart of Aquatics (HoA) implementation working group infrastructure and functionality, and outlined the development of the 2023 action plan. The Committee sought clarification on the rationale for the working group, its membership, its remit and its impact to date.

6.3 The role of the Oversight Committee was suggested to work in conjunction with the HoA implementation group to ensure a robust and rigorous action plan was in place for 2024, and then to hold Swim England to account to ensure that the plan achieved its intended impact.

6.4 The Committee were keen to ensure that clarity and alignment could be created between Swim England Strategy into and beyond 2024, and Swim England HoA Plan 2024.

6.5 The Committee acknowledged that the HoA implementation group appeared to be a good way for the organisation to drive positive change, given its breadth and membership, but that the

test would be how effectively the actions impacted on participants in the sport. Maintaining the listening exercises would be essential in understanding impact and on testing sustainability.

- 6.6 Committee members were keen to understand how actions from the working group were “normalised” into business practice so that the intended impact was sustained. The Committee advised Swim England to monitor the impact of actions once they move from the working group and embed into operational teams.
- 6.7 **Action: The HoA implementation working group to monitor the impact of transitioned actions.**
- 6.8 The Committee agreed that it needed sight of the overall HoA plan in the first instance, and then reporting by exception could follow on the basis of: actions that are high risk, actions that are not progressing to plan, actions that were going well and what could be learnt, and the ongoing impact.
- 6.9 The Committee reserved the right to explore any action on the plan, particularly where actions were added from the Sports Resolutions report.
- 6.10 **Action: EG to share HoA plan with the Committee by end July.**
- 7. **AOB**
- 7.1 The Chair invited Committee members’ reflections on the meeting.
- 7.2 Members reflected whether the Committee’s cultural brief had been given adequate consideration through the meeting and noting that culture was set by the Board and the SLT, determined that observation of both groups would be helpful in assessing how best to support and encourage cultural change.
- 7.3 **Action: NB to request at the next meeting of the Swim England Board that a member of the Oversight Committee can observe Board and SLT meetings, and then report back.**