

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

Thursday 28 March 2024 – Starting at 10:30

Podium meeting room, SportPark, Loughborough

**Attended:**

Andrea Chilton – Chair (AC)  
Andy Salmon (AS)  
Ally White (AW)  
Cassandra Patten (CP)  
James Gyselynck (JG)  
James Hollis (JH)  
Joan Wheeler (JW)  
Karen Gray (KG)  
Lois Jarvis (LJ)  
Neil Booth (NB)  
Marie Cooper (MC)

**Apologies:**

None

**Officers in attendance:**

Hannah Foster – Executive Operations Manager (HF)

**1. Welcome and apologies**

- 1.1 The Chair welcomed members to the meeting, and noted there were no apologies given prior to the meeting.
- 1.2 It was acknowledged that CP and JW are attending remotely.
- 1.3 The Oversight Committee members introduced themselves whilst welcoming AS to Swim England and congratulated him on his appointment as CEO.
- 1.4 The Chair outlined the agenda and the purpose of the meeting, to focus on the listening report including the next steps and approach in response to the report. Members were reminded of meeting etiquette including the ability to leave the meeting if safeguarding topics under discussion caused discomfort or distress.

**2. Minutes from previous meeting**

06 December 2023

- 2.1 The Committee agreed the minutes as a true and accurate record.

**3. Actions update**

- 3.1 The Committee discussed the progress of actions attained from previous meetings.
- 3.2 A18, 31 and 34: Marked as complete.

- 3.3 A20 – Digital update: Members discussed the remit of the Committee, and therefore agreed the action be narrowed down to show a clearer and simple navigation to the “concerns” page of the Swim England Website.
- 3.4 A21 – Appointment of consultant: AW confirmed that the Sport Development Directorate has now appointed a Head of Coaching. Once they have settled into the role, they will look into the necessity and feasibility of hiring a consultant to support work within coaching.
- 3.5 A23 – Test the adult safeguarding policy: An update was electronically received from James Diamond (National Safeguarding Manager). Currently Swim England are consulting with IMAS Inclusion in Sport group, MIND charity, and Welfare Officers across a number of regions, counties and clubs relating to the policy. Outcomes will be provided once consultation has been finalised. The time pressures of volunteers were noted and therefore an extended timeframe for of August 2024 was agreed.
- 3.6 A29 – Committee and member induction programme: MC confirmed that a review has been undertaken and the People Development Directorate have now appointed a Learning and Development Partner. It was acknowledged that there is a need to be constructive and mindful of the approach, as the induction programme should incorporate the feedback from the Listening report. The Committee are to agree a new deadline for the action once a plan in response to the Listening report has been finalised.
- 3.7 A30 – Wavepower: Complete, as the policy was circulated to the Committee. Members confirmed the policy was clear to the reader.
- 3.8 A32 – Confirmation of CPDs and mandatory training for regulations: LJ confirmed that the training is best situated within the policy document rather than legal regulations. NB endorsed the regulations. The action was noted as complete.
- 3.9 A33 – Feedback meeting: MC and KG have had a discussion centred on the pressures of SLT. SLT feel empowered and supported in the culture change led by the CEO whilst maintaining sensitivity to those who demonstrate a resistance to change. It is acknowledged that a lack of capacity across the staff remains, and the need for prioritisation is prevalent. It is recognised by the SLT that the culture work needs to be ingrained into everything within the organisation. The Committee echoed the notion that culture change was a cross-cutting theme for the entire business.

#### **4. Responses to publication of the Listening report**

- 4.1 The paper was taken as read and the Committee deliberated. Members recognised the findings of the report and the importance of serious, considered and deliberate responses to the matters raised: Members noted the importance of the right actions rather than the quickest actions, and wished to be sure that any plan of action derived from the report was properly communicated and understood by all. Members also wished to explore how the findings of the report, and the actions arising, were to be considered under the Committee’s remit. Whilst the report on the media response was useful to have, the Committee wished to focus its attention on strategies to address the findings.
- 4.2 Prior to a presentation by the CEO to outline SE’s response to the report, Members noted that several media responses to the Listening report publication appeared objective, acknowledging that articles represented Swim England to be aware of issues and want to make change. However, the Committee expressed some concern that Swim England had not had a representative available for the media, whilst acknowledging that AS was new to the post at the time of publication. This led to a discussion on the engagement plan for addressing the Listening report with smaller clubs, to ensure everyone is aware of the necessary steps to build a positive culture within aquatics. Members agreed that the Swim England Listening Report article did not provide a summary of findings of the report, therefore missing the opportunity to demonstrate that Swim England has listened.

- 4.3 **Action: SLT reflection on how the communication plan for publication went, with a summary of what has been addressed and listened to as a result of the Listening report.**
- 4.4 Committee members discussed the necessity for people to be open to the changes needed to drive a more positive culture. It was highlighted that Swim England are viewing negativity and unwillingness as an opportunity for change.
- 4.5 Enhancing the coaches' experience to support a generation of coaches in the development of their career and what could potentially be lifelong pathways in the sport, was expressed as key area to consider.
- 4.6 The Committee showed their concern for the staff of Swim England following publication of the report. It was reported that an employee engagement plan was in place following the publication and each Directorate held a meeting to give staff the opportunity to share their thoughts and explain how they felt. Mechanisms are in place for employees to receive additional support if required. A unified approach of a "reflection period" was held throughout the organisation to allow time to process how best to move forward.
- 4.7 It was reported that the Swim England staff have received various kinds of abuse since the launch of the report, affirming there is a difficult balance to go above and beyond whilst dealing with the abuse received. AS confirmed that Swim England has zero tolerance for abuse and the Board have endorsed this. In addition, AS explained that the Board has displayed recognition for the seriousness of the report, supporting to do what is right for the sport.
- 4.8 AS then shared a presentation with the Committee outlining how a cultural change programme, rather than a series of short-term actions, was to be used to create and embed new ways of working. These principles have been developed with consultation of SLT, including processes to achieve desired outcomes and outputs, and emphasised that the Listening report response is the main priority in the business. It was noted that the Board were supportive of this prioritisation and gave their feedback, which was included for delivery to the Oversight Committee during this meeting. It was communicated that the strategy needs to incorporate Swim England's values and principles, as there remains a continued listening approach. The Committee shared their support for this.
- 4.9 Members discussed the implications for employees in integrating the strategy and Listening report response into their roles and targets. KG specified that culture would develop and evolve as change occurs, but the organisation needs to remain mindful of how this emerges.
- 4.10 The Chair iterated the remit of the Committee on supporting from a cultural perspective and checking and challenging throughout. A debate took place aiming to define culture and members considered what success measures could be used to assess progress.
- 4.11 A recommendation raised in the Listening report was to appoint a Coach representative to the Oversight Committee. It was agreed at Board to recruit two coaches from diverse clubs at different levels, such as development and performance clubs.
- 4.12 The Committee discussed the proposal and noted that the Coach representatives must be credible within the industry. The importance of an open recruitment process was determined. The appointment of Coaches will be open to all disciplines, and a member of the BSCA is to be on the recruitment panel along with the Chair of the Committee.
- 4.13 **Decision: The Committee supported that Swim England appoint two Coach representatives from different levels of clubs with a BSCA recruitment panel member.**
- 4.14 The Committee then reflected on the impact of the CEO's strategy to respond to the Listening Report on the remit and Terms of Reference for the group. The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be a working group of Members to debate the best means to provide oversight for this next phase of the organisation's development. It was noted that Gymnastics had developed an effective Committee and that their terms of reference may be useful.

4.15 The Chair urged the CEO to consider the wider Board and Committee structures to support his planned actions. It was agreed that it would be helpful to understand how such changes would impact on the positioning of the Committee within the overall governance of the Association in time for the review.

4.16 **Action: CEO to update Chair in advance of the next meeting.**

## 5. HoA action plan

5.1 LJ shared the current position with Sport England. A full response was sent to Sport England and Mr Weston on 31 January.

5.2 The CEO confirmed that Swim England have received the full 12 month award with four conditions from Sport England. The Committee congratulated LJ, her department and all involved in the efforts that led to the award.

5.3 Actions were reported to the Committee that were marked as '*not on track*' within the plan.

5.4 Line 53 – Create a toolkit for both coaches and clubs promoting a positive relationship: Progress was noted as the consultation phase has been complete. Currently feedback is being analysed and the toolkit will be put together in April. The toolkit will be peer reviewed and piloted before implementation.

5.5 Line 58 – Teaching and Coaching register compliance: The data is presently being analysed and trends being examined on a monthly basis. This will be presented to SLT, Regional Chairs and SOC. The data capture can illustrate where the compliance stands within specific areas or clubs, giving the ability to address non-compliance. Reasons and explanations as to why compliance is important is to be communicated to members.

5.6 Line 61 – The optimal Athlete development framework and the optimal Coach development framework: The framework is now underway for diving. This action is being completed in conjunction with the Home Countries and Aquatics GB.

5.7 Line 73 – Launch/publish affiliation standards for clubs operated by third party organisations: At present Swim England are working across all third party organisations as opportunities arise. The Sport Development Directorate are in touch with local authorities and Loughborough University regarding this. Currently a specific timeline has not been identified.

5.8 **Action: AW to provide an update to the Committee with a specific timeline for the action on line 73 of the HoA plan.**

5.9 Members raised questions regarding the status narrative and the frequency of updates marked within the plan. They have encouraged the HoA implementation group to ensure the status narrative remains comprehensive and up to date. It was emphasised to update the plan even when there has been no progress, and to state this within the narrative.

## 6. Personal correspondence to the Chair

6.1 The Chair stated that she has received personal correspondence from a complainant, and as previously agreed, reported the correspondence to through the Oversight Committee.

6.2 The Chair confirmed she is satisfied that Swim England have followed the correct processes regarding the complaint, including the areas of concern that were raised by the complainant. However, it was noted that further regulatory/procedural change may be necessary to accommodate the type of exceptional circumstances in the individual complaint.

## 7. Simplification

7.1 Matters of simplification have been addressed through the agenda.

7.2 Members commended the Wavepower policy for being easily accessible to the user and noted any adjustment to the strategy needs to be comprehensible to all who engage with Swim England.

**8. Participant engagement**

8.1 This has been considered throughout the agenda and the Committee agreed that participant engagement has been more connected and prevalent.

**9. Cultural reflection**

9.1 Members undertook their routine cultural reflection of the meeting's conduct.

**10. AOB**

10.1 None recorded.