



Moving on

A review of the need for change in athletics in the UK

Presented to UK Sport and Sport England

Report author: Sir Andrew Foster Date: May 2004

MOVING ON

A review of the need for change in athletics in the UK

Andrew Foster

May 2004

CONTENTS

Section One: **MAKING A START**

- The task
- Our report
- Athletics

Section Two: **CHANGE IN THE WIND**

- What has been achieved
- 'Could do better'
- What stands in the way?
- A new compact

Section Three: **A SENSE OF PURPOSE**

- What is athletics for?
- What athletics is not for

Section Four: **STRUCTURE**

- Principles
- The current position

Section Five: **THE ENGLISH ISSUE**

- Common ground and the sticking point
- English Athletics

Section Six: **ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- UK Athletics
- English Athletics
- UK Sport and Sport England
- Leadership Development

Section Seven: **CLUBS (OBJECTIVE 1)**

- Introduction
- Variety and strategy
- Our proposals

Section Eight: **SCHOOLS (OBJECTIVE 1)**

The curriculum
Teacher education
Competition
Work in progress....

Section Nine: **SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP (OBJECTIVE 1)**

Background
The athletics position
Proposals

Section Ten: **COMPETITION (OBJECTIVE 3)**

The present position
Strategic management

Section Eleven: **PERFORMANCE (OBJECTIVE 2)**

Performance Director
Performance-related issues

Section Twelve: **MANAGING CHANGE**

A new compact
Managing change
Making a decision, making a start

Section Thirteen: **SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

Section Fourteen: **GENERAL LESSONS**

'Whole system' thinking
Clarity of purpose
Aligning policy, management and resources
Modern and inclusive

APPENDIX 1: **A NOTE ABOUT THE REVIEW TEAM**

APPENDIX 2: **HOW THE TEAM WENT ABOUT ITS WORK**

Section One: **MAKING A START**

The task

Athletics is one of ten UK-wide sports asked by Sport England and UK Sport to produce a 'One Stop Plan'. The Plan will provide an overall strategic vision for athletics in the UK, from grassroots to international level, and set the context for future funding decisions. The two sports councils undertook to provide athletics with some additional external support to help with the Plan and invited me to make independent recommendations about the future direction of the sport. I have been helped by Michael Johns and David Whitaker and have greatly appreciated their wisdom and support. The three of us have enjoyed excellent technical help from our support team. Dr David Martin has worked directly with me throughout the review and made an outstanding contribution to researching and preparing our report.

We have indeed worked independently, but many people connected with athletics have contributed and we are very grateful for the time and energy they have put into this. It is right to say at the outset that the talent and commitment available to the sport of athletics, in many different forms and settings, is an impressive platform on which to build for the future.

Our report

There is no point in simply recapitulating what is well known or uncontentious. This could be done at great length but few would read it. It would even be counterproductive in our view to try and comment on every area where change and development is needed. We decided early on that we would concentrate on a number of difficult strategic problems that have to be addressed and suggest approaches that will catalyse change on a wider front.

We have focused particularly on the organisation and management of athletics. We touch on some more technical aspects of the sport - partly to salute the excellent and sometimes unsung work that is going on - but there are some important areas (coaching and facilities, for example) about which we have directly said little, although their importance is not underestimated: they will develop appropriately under the management arrangements we propose. The later sections are about achieving change and making it stick (what athletics has arguably been least good at) and we also draw out some general principles which might be relevant to other sports.

Appendix 1 is a note about the review team. Appendix 2 says how we have gone about our work.

We have had access to a great deal of background information and analysis which should be available more widely. We have assembled some key supporting documents under separate cover as annexes to our report. These will be available on request from UK Sport¹.

We make our suggestions without fear or favour, in direct terms and in as few pages as possible.

Athletics

Athletics is the oldest and perhaps the greatest of sports and the foundation for most others, and over the years the UK has produced more than its share of the world's greatest athletes. It has been a worthy stage for brilliant meetings and many memorable performances.

At the most basic level, running is the simplest and most available of sports: all you need is a decent pair of shoes and a front door. Most people can discover its pleasures if they want to.

As supporters or as participants, however talented or stumbling, athletics has given us some of the most moving and exciting moments of our lives: May 2004 is the fiftieth anniversary of one of them; fifty thousand people will experience another

when the Great North Run starts, for the twenty-third time, in Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and millions of spines will tingle this summer when the runners and walkers line up, the throwers and jumpers prepare, and a hush descends upon the stadium in Athens.

Countless lives in the UK have been touched by this old, great and truly beautiful sport. We must do everything we can to safeguard its joys for the future, for those who will watch and those who will take part. It really is worth it, but there are problems that must be tackled.

The next section conveys some of the review team's overall impressions. It recalls the recent achievements of British athletics; suggests that, significant as they have been, change is needed; and acknowledges that change is not easy and may not be universally liked.

¹ UK Sport, 40 Bernard St, London WC1N 1ST. Tel: 020 7211 5100

Section Two: **CHANGE IN THE WIND**

What has been achieved

Athletics in the UK is not in crisis.

Accurate information is hard to come by (and we return to this later) but educated estimates suggest that around 130,000 to 150,000 athletes are members of the more than 1400 affiliated athletics clubs.

Perhaps half a million young people participate in grass roots activity. At least 10,000 men and women, and perhaps many more, compete as veterans.

Something like 750,000 people participate in mass road races.

Since 1996 senior UK athletes have won 61 medals at the major international championships, including 20 gold. In under-23 championships the tally is 39 medals including 19 gold, and at under-20 76 medals including 24 gold. We had an excellent Olympic games in 2000 and the last Commonwealth games and European Championships were outstanding. Great Britain has won the men's European Cup three times in five years. In 2002, Great Britain and Northern Ireland topped the medal table at the International Paralympic Committee World Championships in Lille.

Each year more than 300 athletes compete for Great Britain - the largest representative programme in the world.

Sixty-seven athletes receive Lottery support through the World Class Performance programme, 99 through the World Class Potential programme, 31 through the World Class Disability programme and 30 through the World Class Disability Potential programme.

Investment in club facilities has grown and the development of High Performance Centres, with now more than a dozen around the country, promises great benefits.

Athletics still has the support of an unparalleled body of volunteer workers and helpers at local level.

We have with the BBC the best domestic television coverage of athletics in the world, reflecting the level of public support. This generates significant income for the sport alongside outstanding sponsorship contributions from Norwich Union in particular, Rover, Reebok and others. And many with other commercial interests in athletics, often distinguished former athletes, have served their sport well.

'Could do better'

Our view, which is very widely shared, is that despite these real achievements and developments, athletics in the UK is not doing as well as it might.

Performance in the last World Championships in Edmonton and Paris, measured by medals, was disappointing. The trend line for GB team points at World Championships and Olympic Games is downwards, and the same is true at junior levels.

We are not alone. Britain used to be one of the dominant superpowers in world athletics, along with the USA, USSR, and West and East Germany. All have experienced a decline in their medal tallies in recent years. Europe generally has seen a dramatic loss of position on the world stage as many more countries have entered the international fray: the number competing doubled between 1968 and 1996. And, further afield, the Australian Sports Commission and Athletics Australia have recently announced a major review, reflecting their own concerns.

Many people have expressed alarm about a perceived and rapid decline in the vitality of schools athletics and there is more general evidence of falling participation in sport amongst children and young people. The adult population has unprecedented leisure and sporting opportunities and athletics has to compete with them.

Athletics does not have an inalienable right

to prosper, but equally we should not be fatalistic about these adverse factors and trends; this is the dominant view that we have heard, so the sport has certainly not given in. Sweden and France have shown that it is possible to react and succeed.

Athletics here is not fulfilling its potential and it should resolve to do so. But bold, radical steps are called for. The sport may not be in crisis but it is at the crossroads.

What stands in the way?

Later in the report we set out practical steps that should be taken to make progress in the right direction. First however we need to say something about the culture of the sport: its characteristic style, customs and conflicts. It is a major factor.

Athletics is essentially an individual not a team sport. In fact it is not a single sport at all. The broadest descriptions of what it encompasses – running, jumping and throwing – conceal exceptional variety. What we have is a number of people doing widely different things on an individual basis (in contrast with rugby, for example, where a number of people do basically similar things on a team basis).

Perhaps it should not surprise us that the culture of athletics as a whole reflects

something of athletics at the individual level. Our strong impression is that the world of athletics is run by individual people and individual organisations without a strong sense of common purpose, team membership or partnership, and with an inclination to compete for dominance. This militates against unified leadership. One of our interviewees memorably told us that athletics is an archipelago not a land mass.

We have encountered some worrying manifestations of this: destructive hostility between individuals and organisations, backbiting, prejudice and blindness to the facts, disturbing resistance to change, self interest.

If athletics in the UK is to move forward this nonsense must stop: one of our key messages is that for the sake of athletes and athletics, peace must break out and some realities must be recognised.

For better or worse, athletics is no longer just an amateur affair. It is also a growing, multi-million pound international business with highly paid stars, competing for air time and resources with other sports, accountable to hundreds of thousands of participants and an ever-hopeful, informed and demanding British public. As a modern enterprise in a modern world, it requires a

modern approach to organisation and management.

That means a recognition of common cause and crystal clear strategy for the future. It means partnership thinking, an acknowledgement of interdependence between organisations. It means leadership and, just as important, an ego-effacing willingness to be led.

If athletics fails to adapt and move forward it could go into a freefall decline in this country, a real crisis from which it might struggle to recover. A cultural change is imperative and that is always difficult.

A new compact

Major investment is also needed, and it is potentially available in the shape of the £41 million 'legacy fund' set aside when the 2005 World Championships were lost to the UK². But we could not conscientiously recommend its release without seeing signs of a new mindset in the sport and specific developments in its organisation and management.

It is critically important that this resource, an opportunity that may not recur, is used strategically to pave the way to self-sufficiency. Not for a moment should it deflect the sport from maximising its long

² This fund comprises £20 million capital and £21 million revenue. Capital draw down has begun but the revenue element is uncommitted. The contemporary documents seem to make it clear that the fund is for UK-wide use, as we believe it should be, although with a needs-based bias.

term income from sponsorship and commercial ventures such as Fast Track. Renegotiations of sponsorship agreements are key opportunities, and the sport should press for transparency in its links with commercial organisations. It remains vital that the sport continues to own the rights to media coverage.³

We have a number of practical suggestions to make. They are underpinned by our belief that *investment should be linked to progress* through a new ‘compact’ between the sport itself and those who fund it. We will suggest an early injection of pump priming funds to get things moving in an agreed direction, and then significant further investment once a number of key ‘must do’ objectives have been met.

There has been a great deal of talk about change. But, as Hamlet tells us, enterprises of great moment often lose the name of action. We want to catalyse decisive and rapid improvement through our proposals, as many have urged us to, and that is why we pay so much attention to change management.

³ There is an important strategic debate to be had about the long term future funding of athletics. What will the funding model look like twenty years from now? The debate should be inclusive of active commercial and sponsorship interests.

Section Three: **A SENSE OF PURPOSE**

What is athletics for?

Beneath the conflicts lie differences in what people think athletics is for. Our view, which we think many share, is that the sport of athletics should sign up to three core purposes:

- Objective 1: encouraging and enabling as many as possible to *participate* in athletics, in grassroots and mass settings, for the sake of their own mental and physical wellbeing and pleasure, and to promote public health.
- Objective 2: enabling those with high athletic talent to *develop and fulfill their potential*
- Objective 3: creating opportunities for those who seek to do this to *demonstrate and celebrate their talent in competition*, in the company of their peers from this and other countries

The challenge here is to achieve a clear and common view. Those involved in administering or publicly representing athletics must agree that different objectives are in play, that they are not mutually inconsistent and that they are equally legitimate. This consensus is then the bedrock on which policies are founded.

As in most enterprises, it will never be possible to do everything and detailed priorities will have to be determined. The threshold for 'talent' will have to be adjusted in the light of realities; some event disciplines may have to be given precedence.....and so on. But the three core purposes should nevertheless be pursued as evenly as possible and linked together coherently: they are not mutually exclusive but serve each other. So athletics is not only about high performance and medals, and it is not only about participation, health and wellbeing.

Yet we have found that many individuals and even some organisations do in reality favour one set of aims over others.

What athletics is not for

The silent implication of this purpose statement is what athletics is not about. We believe passionately that it is not for the benefit of any of the individuals or organisations who are involved in administering athletics, in whatever capacity. *They* are for the benefit of *athletics*, with a duty to work together as efficiently and effectively as possible to achieve their common purposes. Whether people choose to work for the sport voluntarily, with the satisfactions that must bring, or as paid employees, does not

change the case. Each must recognise and value the contribution of the other.

The organisation and administration of athletics must facilitate achievement and reflect good practice. This management objective, different in kind from the core purposes proposed above, is addressed next.

Section Four: **ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT**

Principles

When this project started we did not particularly want to plunge straight into the ‘structural problem’. But it is reinforcing conflict and blighting development. It sits like a black cloud over the sport and has to be sorted out.

Disputes are best resolved on the basis of principles and we have kept the following in mind⁴:

‘Whole system’ thinking

- Athletics should be viewed and managed as a ‘whole system’ with all its parts contributing to both success and failure. Anyone who believes they contribute only to success is almost certainly mistaken. Solutions to problems are therefore likely to involve change to all parts of the system.

Devolution

- Responsibility, authority and accountability should be devolved to the appropriate level closest to the point at which the sport is delivered.

Flat structure

- There should be as few levels in the structure as possible.

Clear separation of functions

- There must be maximum clarity about the purpose, roles and responsibilities of each organisation, with minimum duplication or overlap. Each must be clear about its functions, and stick to them. The role of ‘central’ or ‘senior’ organisations is to provide leadership, policy frameworks, resources and a favourable environment within which those delivering practical things have the latitude to decide how they do it.

Inclusion

- There should be clear and widely understood arrangements to ensure that individual athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, regular spectators, club administrators and others can have a ‘shout’ on policy issues and monitor and influence the way the sport is managed.

Authority matched to responsibility

- At the same time those with responsibilities for which they are accountable must have the authority to make decisions.

Alignment

- Throughout the system, purposes, individual behaviour and the use of financial resources must be aligned so

⁴ We elaborate these principles in Section 14 because we feel they have relevance to other sports.

that they pull in the same direction and do not work against each other.

insufficiently devolved, especially in England.

Pluralism and diversity

- The sport as a whole must continue to value the wide mix of people who participate, support and administer it, on whatever paid or unpaid basis they do so. Its 'pluralism' is one of its strengths.
- The whole system should be underpinned by respect for diversity in all its senses - age, race, nationality, ability/disability, gender, sexual preference, religion.....

UK Athletics produced proposals for change in April last year and counterproposals and revisions flew around for several months. There has been acrimony and mistrust, and at least two instances of what we shall call 'men behaving badly'. We have read the paperwork in detail and some of it is not edifying.

In recent months, however, three important things seem to have happened:

- the proposals have become more refined as a result of careful analysis
- the extent of agreement has widened and some basic principles are more or less universally accepted
- the sticking point has been isolated.

The current position

We are not the first to suggest that, when measured against sound management principles, the present structure of athletics falls short (see *Investing in Change*, Deloitte Touche, 2003). The challenge is to bring about actual, sustainable change.

Several of the principles set out above are violated by present arrangements, but the key problems are that:

- eight *independent* organisations⁵ have a hand in administering the sport
- there is duplication, inconsistency and a lack of clarity
- decision making and resources are

⁵ UK Athletics, Scottish Athletics, the Athletics Association of Wales, the Northern Ireland Athletic Federation, the AAA of England, the North of England Athletic Association, the Midlands Counties Athletic Association and the South of England Athletic Association. UK Sport and Sport England also have important roles to play.

Section Five: **THE ENGLISH ISSUE**

Common ground and the sticking point

A key focus of agreement is the creation of nine English ‘hubs’ (we will call them ‘regions’⁶) as single points of contact for clubs, schools, athletes, officials, volunteers, county associations: the place to which they will go for information, advice, resources and services. Regional teams will be facilitative, supportive and empowering in style rather than controlling, but they will be charged with the local interpretation and implementation of UK strategy. It is to this level that key management responsibilities and resources will be devolved. The Annex document gives more detail.

The sticking point is the question of how and by whom the regions should be managed. The current assumption goes no further than that ‘all English hub staff will work for a single organisation, either an English or UK body’. The main options in play are assumed to be UK Athletics and the AAA of England.

We cannot see that the impasse will be resolved by those it affects most (other than perhaps with a dysfunctional compromise) and an external and independent recommendation might be helpful.

English Athletics

It is time for a fresh start. In line with the general principles outlined in the last section, our proposal in summary is that the English regions should be managed by a new England-level body - English Athletics. The new organisation would have a compact central office, and most activity would be devolved firmly to the regional level.

Constitutionally, English Athletics should be no more closely linked to UK Athletics than the existing home country bodies: they are not subsidiaries and neither should it be. It should be a freestanding organisation with its own governance responsibilities and arrangements.

UK Athletics should cease to be the de facto England home country entity and concentrate on its pan-UK strategic leadership roles. It should remain the internationally recognised governing body for athletics in the UK.

The AAA of England and the three English territorial athletics associations should be invited to play a very full part in designing and establishing the new organisation, which would assume full responsibility for delivering athletics in England through its nine regions.

⁶ They will be coterminous with the English development and administrative regions.

It is very important that the sport of athletics harnesses all the talents available to it. The opportunity must be there for individuals within the AAA of England and the English territorial associations, both paid and voluntary, to play a full part in the new body so that their skills, energy and commitment are retained. We very much want them to take it and to make a new beginning, a new organisation, proud of the past but suited to the modern world and built on a modern approach to management. This is the way to success.

Subject to the strategic work we propose in Section Ten, we hope that the English territorial associations might continue to support English Athletics and its regions in delivering supra-regional competition within a reformed competition structure.

The next section describes the proposed roles and relationships of the bodies involved in more detail, focusing mainly on England as the most complex zone.

Section Six: **ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS**

UK Athletics

Strategic leadership role

Under these proposals the role of UK Athletics would change, becoming less diffuse. Its current responsibilities as the de facto England body would be assumed by the new organisation. It would remain as an essential pan-UK leadership organisation with key roles:

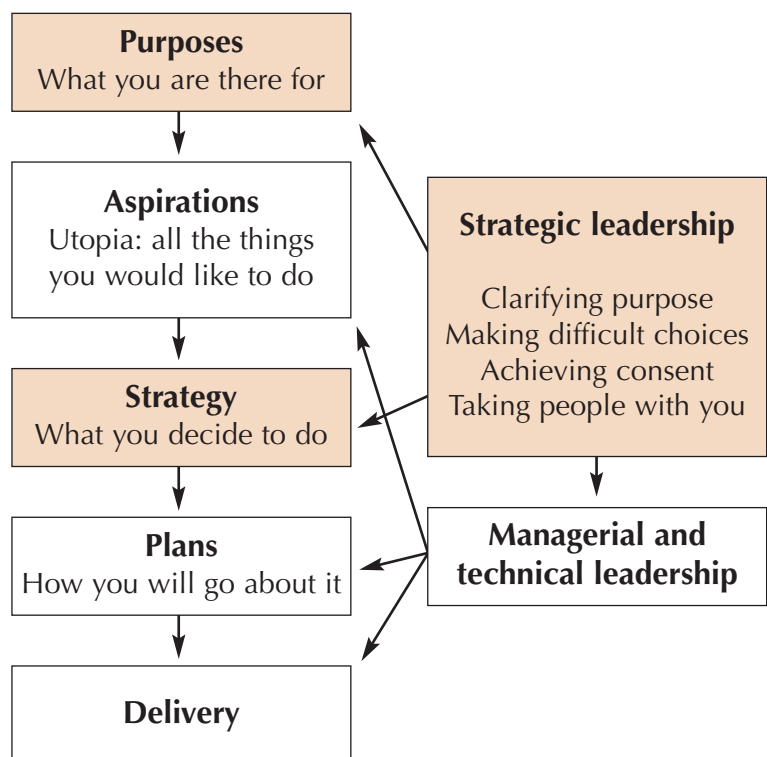
- promoting and achieving a clear and shared sense of purpose, integrating the sport's core objectives
- setting overall domestic strategy for the home country bodies
- securing and deploying major funding in support of strategy
- tasking the four home country 'delivery' organisations and holding them to account
- advising on and supporting their development
- coordinating UK-wide dimensions of athletics in the UK
- in particular, managing elite athletes and anti-doping work
- coordinating international dimensions of athletics for the UK
- promoting the position and reputation of athletics.

This more strategic, higher-level role is very

important and will be extremely influential.

We believe it will be performed more effectively if the organisation is freed through devolution from delivery responsibilities and some of its detailed development work.

Strategy and leadership



It may be helpful to say something about what strategy and leadership involve in this context. We feel that the sport now lacks a clear strategic as opposed to aspirational framework and that leadership has been diluted by confused organisational structure.

The strategic leadership role that UK Athletics should play, as the diagram suggests, would involve:

- making choices and difficult decisions when it is impossible to do everything that athletics needs or would like
- brokering consent, if not consensus, amongst essential colleagues and constituencies, some of whom may have argued for different choices
- motivating people to follow the lead that has been given.

We suggest that UK Athletics should establish an Athletics Strategy Group, including the sports councils, representatives of the home country bodies and other key stakeholders⁷ to support this role. It should meet two or three times a year with the aim of reviewing and learning from past achievement, advising on forward plans and receiving reports on progress in-year. Its meetings should be scheduled carefully around key points in the performance cycle. Strictly speaking this would be an advisory body but the legitimacy of UK Athletics would come in part from the way it involved key stakeholders in its work and recognised its broad accountability to the athletics community.

Becoming a genuinely strategic body would obviously have implications for the size, structure and staffing of UK Athletics. What it now does with an England focus would be devolved to English Athletics and its regions, and this would have implications for the composition of the top team and the Board.

Excellent communications management would be a key success factor. We have been told repeatedly that this is a problem area and that more attention should be given to ensuring freer flows of information. UK Athletics should enhance its communications capacity.

The appointment of a new Performance Director, as a key member of the UK Athletics top team, is highly important and we come back to this later.

Making it work

Strategic bodies can exercise immense influence. Some of this flows from the personal leadership qualities of the most senior people and the authority of their knowledge and policy thinking, which will often be original, innovative and persuasive. Experience suggests that personal relationships, confidence and trust, and a consultative and supportive approach to strategic management, play an important

⁷ Who might include prominent former athletes, making a continued contribution to their sport.

part in success. But certain practical arrangements also help.

- In the athletics context, funding should as far as possible flow through UK Athletics to the home country bodies and the sport in general. The sports councils should not fund ‘initiatives’ which by-pass UK Athletics. This will require some re-engineering of funding flows. The special case of revenue from membership schemes is discussed later in the report.
- UK Athletics should have an external assessor role as of right in senior and other key appointments made by the home country bodies, including English Athletics in its formative stage, and we strongly suggest this should include a binding power not to ‘pick’ but to veto.
- It should have access as of right to all athletics data held by the home country bodies, including membership data.
- UK Athletics should negotiate annual management agreements with the home country bodies and review performance against them in a systematic, cyclical way. The agreements should encompass an ‘envelope’ of attainable *objectives* derived from UK Athletics strategy, *resources* with which to achieve them

and indicators of *performance*. There should be a clear understanding that funding is linked to faithful implementation of strategy.

These four key ingredients – funding, appointments, data and performance management – should be enshrined in new arrangements for UK Athletics to which the sports councils and the four national bodies would be party.

UK Athletics and English Athletics would not need to be sited together for the relationship to work appropriately. However we understand that shared offices may be inevitable given existing accommodation commitments. The leadership of the two organisations would have to be careful to observe appropriate rules of engagement: UK Athletics would shape the work of English Athletics through their management agreement but it would not manage it on a day-to-day basis.

English Athletics

Light touch

We are proposing a new and streamlined organisation to oversee athletics in England. The balance between headquarters and the nine regions would be its defining feature. Everything appropriately possible should be

devolved to the regional level. The centre of English Athletics should have a 'light touch' relationship with its regions: providing frameworks of objectives, resources and support; and letting those who manage the regions get on and do so with a minimum of interference and flexibility to develop suitable local arrangements. Local responsiveness - locally sensitive implementation of overall strategy and plans - would be a key requirement of the regional teams.

Core purposes

English Athletics would be responsible for delivering athletics in England (Planning and Delivery, in the earlier diagram), working at the grassroots with clubs, schools, colleges, universities, local authorities, other partners and the public at large to:

- encourage and enable as many as possible to participate in athletics
- enable those with high athletic talent to develop and fulfill their potential
- create competition opportunities for those who wish to demonstrate and celebrate their talent.

The organisation would have operational responsibility for all aspects of athletics in England except the management of elite

athletes and anti-doping work. In other words they would be directly responsible for what in athletics is generally called 'development'. They would also contribute to 'performance' work with top athletes, working in partnership with the UK Athletics Performance Director.

Staffing

We suggest that the English Athletics senior team should comprise a Director of Athletics as Chief Officer, a Finance Director and management representatives of the nine regions. The most recent papers (see Annexes) propose that 'multi-hubs' should be the level at which regional managers operate. Four managers running two or three regions each, as proposed, is seen to be affordable whereas nine is not. The challenge here would be to ensure that individual regions had appropriate influence on the senior team, and that the areas covered by the four managers did not come to be seen as management entities in their own right.

There should be a new system of wider local involvement. The latest papers propose Regional Forums. These would involve those engaged locally in athletics in unpaid capacities in advising and supporting the regional teams. It is suggested here, in addition, that the

chairmen of the Regional Forums should link to the national structure as members of an Advisory Board supporting English Athletics. The Regional Forums and the national Advisory Board would provide an inclusive and vibrant framework for grassroots influence.

The sports councils and home country bodies

Our view is that athletics has benefited from the guidance and investment it has received from all the sports councils, particularly in the Lottery funding era. There are reasonable working relationships but a sense that the full potential of the partnership has not been realised. The proposed structural changes are an opportunity to review arrangements.

Values

UK Sport, Sport England and UK Athletics have been thinking about this and there has been some useful analysis. A range of 'values' has been proposed to underpin the relationship, including:

- *Equality*: recognising that the roles of sports councils and national governing bodies are in many ways complementary rather than hierarchical – but without compromising the objective setting and

'holding to account' role that the sports councils must play.

- *Consistency and continuity*: sports councils can help athletics by ensuring consistency in their decision making, over time and amongst themselves.
- *Discretion*: all three parties should respect the reputation of their partners and work towards a 'no surprises' approach to public communications.
- *Support*: often much more valuable than criticism.
- *Understanding*: the three bodies must ensure they are as well informed about each other's work and environment as possible.
- *Proactivity and prevention*: better to get ahead of problems and sort them out than have to handle fallout.

Some specific suggestions have been made by UK Athletics, not rehearsed here, and we have two of our own.

Proposals

First, we suggest that the sports councils and UK Athletics should devote some further time, as a project, to developing a

'concordat' which sets down how they propose to work together. It should cover values, behavioural conventions and practical organisational arrangements (including the operation of the Athletics Strategy Group outlined above).

Secondly, in order to reduce duplication of effort and increase consistency, we recommend that UK Sport and Sport England form:

- a senior Joint Athletics Team, to meet once or twice a year, probably with UK Athletics in attendance, to agree the high level objectives and associated performance indicators that UK Athletics should be held to account for as the basis for funding, and
- a virtual athletics unit to support the Joint Athletics Team and act as a conduit for as much as possible of the business that the sports councils have to do with the sport.

It will not always be appropriate or achievable, but UK Athletics should experience the sports councils as far as possible as single and seamless in terms of strategic aims and funding approaches.

Leadership development

This might be a good point at which to suggest that athletics should pay more attention to developing the management skills of those who work in the sport. There is no doubt that good leaders and managers are going to be needed: people who really understand and are socialised to a modern management culture and its associated behaviours⁸. Those who have been excellent athletes may or may not make excellent managers (exactly as in other spheres).

In the short term, promising people should be offered opportunities to participate in existing programmes at leading management centres such as Cranfield, Ashridge and Henley, including programmes with a focus on transformational management. In the medium to longer term we suggest it might be sensible to work with one or more centres to develop a customised management development programme for athletics.

⁸ For example, the way in which strategic bodies should be focused on defining purposes and tracking performance, enabling or facilitating the work of delivery organisations but giving them the authority and space to get on with their work.

Section Seven: CLUBS (OBJECTIVE 1⁹)

Introduction

Clubs are the heart of athletics, some say. Certainly they have played a historic role and we hope they will continue, as the heart, to beat strongly.

This, with schools, is the key level of grassroots participation which the sport as a whole must support and develop. Clubs make a massive contribution to each of the three core objectives outlined in Section 3: success at club level in looking after good young athletes, in promoting competition and as a focus for wide participation is essential. Clubs are the main focus of governing body liaison with the sport.

Variety and strategy

The most striking features of clubs are their number and variety. There are more than 1400 of them. Some cater for a spectrum of event disciplines and activities, others are very specialised. Between them they cover track and field, road running, cross country, hill and fell running, and race walking. Some are large and well developed; some work in close partnership with other sports and bodies; many are well managed, though others are struggling; some embrace change, others resist it with all their might.

Because clubs are so important, the sport as

a whole must do what it can to ensure they contribute effectively to its health at regional and national levels. Two linked things should be happening: the sport systematically supports and develops clubs, responding to their local agenda where it can; in exchange, clubs allow themselves to be influenced so that they make the best contribution to a wider strategic agenda.

Many contributors to this review have said there are too many clubs and that alliances and amalgamations are needed. 'Performance clubs' have been suggested, with a focus on talented athletes. Some have said that multi-clubs should be formed in partnership with other sports, as in some European countries.

We agree that change is needed but argue for an overall strategic approach rather than piecemeal development. The Clubs:Future programme developed by UK Athletics (see Annexes) makes an excellent and valued contribution and it should expand and continue to improve¹⁰; but it does not seem to be driven by the kind of *strategic vision* we would like to see of what is needed – of how club structure should look in years to come.

Our proposals

We have three suggestions here. The first is

⁹ See objectives in Section 3.

¹⁰ We are aware of the very welcome new investment in Clubs:Future by the Foundation for Sport and the Arts.

that UK Athletics should articulate (or relaunch) a set of broad strategic aims for the club level.¹¹ This should include statements about:

- the importance of using *resources* including human resources efficiently, raising the possibility of reducing the number of clubs
- the potential for further *specialisation*, for example in nurturing talent
- the potential benefits of *partnership development* with other athletics clubs, other sports clubs, local authorities, schools, universities and other local bodies
- specifically, the need to preserve the vital and much-valued level of *volunteer support* for athletics: the sport urgently needs radical, innovative thinking about different styles of voluntary contribution, and about who might be attracted to become involved (and how); many have said to us that the availability of willing people is precarious and the impact of not renewing the pool alarming.

The second is that the English regions¹² and the Celtic home countries should be asked, through guidance associated with the UK Athletics strategic statement, to bring

forward ‘club development plans’ which are consistent with it. These should be informed and influenced by consultation. The plans might deal with functions, focus and aspirations; links to High Performance Centres, other links to performance athletics, commitment to national athlete development pathways; people issues, including work with volunteers; facilities, structure and partnerships....and no doubt other issues too. The key point is that the overall plan should include plans for individual clubs but also comprise a coherent plan for the club level *as a whole*, consistent with strategy.

Our third proposal is that this planning process should be backed by a new revenue Club Development Fund, formed by releasing some of the currently unused legacy funding. Some of this would be available in advance to cover the planning process itself and (more importantly) to fund some early developments amongst clubs, with further investment contingent on achieving improvement. Clubs would have short and medium term incentives for participating in the planning and development process.

¹¹ Legitimate activity in either its present or its proposed future role.

¹² Through English Athletics when it comes into being.

Section Eight: **SCHOOLS (OBJECTIVE 1)**

With clubs there is an issue about their configuration; with schools the issue is about what they do.

Athletics is a key element in the Government's plans to expand school sport. Yet most schools limit athletics to a diminishing summer term and several people who wrote or spoke to us were very worried that the sport is losing ground to others and has lost much of its former vitality.

It is clearly essential to ensure a healthy future for athletics in schools and some good technical development work has been going on through inter-organisational groups.¹³

The curriculum

The curriculum is seen to be part of the problem and UK Athletics has been working with others to revise it. It is planned to produce new curriculum resources by September this year which are 'child-centred, developmental, progressive and inclusive'¹⁴. They are expected to have quick effects and there are specific and measurable targets (see Annexes).

We strongly support this but can see that the curriculum initiative will need a positive kick-start to ensure it makes an early

difference and becomes embedded in practice.

We understand that the projected cost is something over £600,000 over five years and that the funding has not yet been identified. We recommend this as a further area for early legacy funding, with a sum for pump priming made available as soon as possible this year, and further support delivered on the basis of achievement after, say, eighteen months.

Teacher education

Part of the problem is that many teachers lack confidence in teaching athletics. They are concerned about safety issues, which have grown in profile for schools in the wake of high profile accidents (generally not in athletics), and perceive it as dependent on specialised facilities and equipment.

Again there are clear plans to improve athletics teaching skills by working directly with existing PE teachers and PE teachers in training. The aim is 'high quality teaching, delivered by knowledgeable teachers with exciting new resources', and there are measurable targets (see Annexes).

The investment involved is around £300,000 over five years. Again we propose sufficient early investment to get things

¹³ We are aware of the parallel thinking that has gone into developing athletics in colleges and universities. This Section of the report focuses on the younger groups in educational settings. We think they are particularly important but hope to see systematic and funded development in the settings to which many young athletes go when they leave school.

¹⁴ In many schools athletics revolves around sports day, often encouraging an 'elite' approach that excludes many children.

moving and then further resources contingent on performance.

Competition

Without excluding others, it is important that talented youngsters can compete and develop, and the home countries school championships are the highly valued pinnacle of that. Yet they struggle to attract sponsorship and remain viable. There are discrete plans for reforming school level competition but we would expect them to be embraced by the actions we propose for UK Athletics in Section 10.

Work in progress....

These strategic programmes will deliver substantial change, but it would be wrong not to also mention some of the successful discrete initiatives that have been taken: star:track, the successful annual mass participation event for children which last year attracted 25,000 participants; and the sports:hall, Fun in Athletics and agility:challenge initiatives, all mounted by UK Athletics with characteristically enthusiastic Norwich Union support.

Section Nine: **SUPPORTING THE GRASSROOTS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP (OBJECTIVE 1)**

Background

Sport membership schemes can bring great benefits in terms of planning and monitoring, tracking talent, attracting sponsorship, empowering members and providing member services. Many UK sports have membership schemes and they are valued and taken for granted.

Benefits to members commonly include insurance, discounts on goods and tickets, entry to events, information including a website, access to medical and other advice, a sense of belonging. The aim is to offer what someone called a 'strong and compelling package of real added value benefits'

The athletics position

There are now five separate membership schemes within British athletics, in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the North of England and the Midlands (see Annexes). The clubs in the South of England recently rejected proposals to introduce a membership scheme.

Membership details collected by the English territorial athletics associations are submitted to the AAA of England who then maintain their own membership database. In effect therefore there are six membership databases. UK Athletics does not have

formal access to any of them.

Of the schemes in place those in Scotland and Wales are probably the most developed, but the overall situation is clearly inefficient and uncoordinated. Data quality is poor and the potential benefits of a comprehensive approach are not realised. Modern organisations should be driven by strategy not data, but strong information resources are vital in developing informed strategy, designing implementation and tracking results. Athletics in the UK is weak on data, with implications for its ability to form and implement strategy and monitor achievement. UK Athletics in particular must in future have access to first class information in order to do its job.

The athletics Policy Forum has agreed that there should be 'one membership scheme delivered in a corporate fashion throughout the UK, that recognises local identity issues, but with common charges, administrative structures and benefits'. We support the general principle but as a longer term aim.

Proposals

There is a question about how widely membership should be offered and the existing schemes have different approaches. In order to make the most of a scheme we suggest that the benefits package should be

made attractive to as wide an audience as possible. A generic package provided to all could be supplemented by differentiated 'modules' for specific groups – track and field athletes, road runners, cross-country and fell runners, coaches, officials, volunteers, spectators.

There should be an early market research project to establish what different groups would like a subscription membership scheme to deliver for them.

A key issue is whether the approach should be administered at UK, home country or regional level. A single centralised database administered by UK Athletics would ensure economies of scale and high data integrity. But it could be perceived as disruptive by those, particularly in Scotland and Wales, who already have decent schemes in place.

A decentralised model might be pragmatically sensible for the present, with each home country running its own scheme (ie a single scheme for England) and submitting UK-wide minimum data, and a percentage of income raised, to UK Athletics. We suggested earlier that funding streams should generally pass through UK Athletics to the sport; membership scheme revenue is the main exception, at least for the present.

We believe that a single comprehensive membership scheme should be introduced in England as a priority, alongside the developing schemes in the other home countries. Sufficient legacy funding should be released to conduct market research on membership services and to design and develop a scheme. It should be introduced quickly with tangible benefits flowing to members as soon as possible. UK Athletics should manage this process with a view to handing a working and obviously self-financing scheme over to English Athletics within eighteen months.

Section Ten: **COMPETITION (OBJECTIVE 3)**

The present position

Competition has been described as ‘the focal point for all aspects of athletics, providing the shop window necessary to market the sport to potential participants, spectators, sponsors and funders’. Many who shared their views with the review team emphasised that this is heartland business.

The organisation of competition, in its detail, is essentially technical and we do not presume to make substantive suggestions about exactly what should change and how. But there is an overarching management issue here which we do want to touch upon.

These are some of the comments we received:

‘The competitive structure is traditional and no longer meets modern demands. Regional and county championships do not offer what young athletes require....Many this year had events without a single entry.’

‘There is an over-abundance of track and field leagues.’

‘Some traditionalists feel that, whatever the cost, they have to protect championship events introduced in the 19th century

although they are not now relevant to the 21st century, and will be even less so with the introduction of the hubs concept.’

There seems to be wide agreement, although not complete consensus, that:

- the present competition structure is unsatisfactory and must be modernised
- the regions in England will have key roles to play
- it is a core role for UK Athletics to set the direction and manage change.

There is less agreement about what exactly should replace the present structure.

Our sense is that there has been a good deal of analysis around competition arrangements but less decision and action.¹⁵ UK Athletics conducted a two year review beginning in 1998. Subsequently a competition modernisation group produced proposals early in 2003. But it seems at the time of writing that progress has been disappointing and we are aware that this is causing some frustration.

Strategic management

To return to an earlier theme, reform of the competition structure is a classic arena for

¹⁵ The Annexes give some of the background detail.

high level strategic management and resource commitment. The issues are very important and most people accept the need for change, but there is no consensus about what should be done. Someone has to grasp the nettle and set the direction, and use influence, 'permitting' powers and leverage to drive change. Even those who do not particularly like the direction of travel may be grateful that something is happening!

This is a role for UK Athletics in its pan-UK mode. The delivery of change will involve the three Celtic home country bodies, and English Athletics¹⁶ and the English regions – hopefully supported by the territorial associations (see Section 5). But the leadership must come from UK Athletics, who cannot rely on achieving a supportive consensus in this case. It has published (and is revising) a Competition Strategy but its implementation has largely foundered on the rocks of underfunding and resistance to change.

We suggest this is an issue that will not wait, and we require UK Athletics to take a strong lead, supported by sufficient early investment of legacy funding to begin to drive change through.

¹⁶ In the short term, UK Athletics in its England-focused role.

Section Eleven: **PERFORMANCE (OBJECTIVE 2)**

Performance Director

This key post, located as it should continue to be with UK Athletics, is shortly to fall vacant on the planned retirement of the present Director. We strongly recommend that it should be filled as a matter of urgency through international search with the help of appropriate recruitment consultants. The aim should be to secure the services of the best available person in the world. The person appointed will need to have leadership qualities of the highest order and profound knowledge of the sport, and will probably be well known and well regarded internationally. The road from Athens to Beijing is not very long and the new Performance Director will be expected to guide British athletics along it, with exceptional personal skill and resolve, to a successful Olympic experience.

We suggest that the recruitment process should be open, competitive, transparent and conducted in accordance with international best practice.

We are aware that alternative job models are under discussion. There are concerns that a single person may not be found who can handle both the leadership and technical aspects of the role. One suggested way of dividing the role might be to appoint a Director and, separately, a Head Coach

accountable to the Director.

The proposal we make is not that there should or should not be a Head Coach. We have suggested an urgent all-out campaign to recruit the best individual the world has to offer and that money can buy. It would be extraordinary, especially for us, to start prescribing specifically what he or she should do. We propose that the new appointee should have maximum latitude and authority to act. Different models and approaches would however be legitimate territory for discussion with candidates.

Performance-related issues

This is perhaps where athletics is at its most technical. Perhaps we could simply say that the quality of thinking about long term athlete development, and about coaching and coach development, has impressed us. Two observations and two further recommendations only:

- Conceiving of a nationally integrated, athlete-centred, pathway-based system for identifying, motivating and developing talent is not the same as making it happen in practice. This is a tough assignment because it cuts across and requires cooperation between different parts of the business.

- There is a tension between those who think pathways or development templates should be adhered to fairly closely and others who hold dear the athlete's discretion to choose the route and the coach they feel are best for them. Our inclination, partly informed by parallels in other fields, is towards the former: there should be a degree of flexibility and customisation, but athlete development must be evidence-based, and the instincts of young people are sometimes not. The flow of funds to support athletes, especially performance awards, presumably imparts some leverage over what they do: several people have suggested to us that greater discipline should be exercised alongside financial support.
- We suggest that an amount of legacy funding should be released to develop coaches and coaching, and there are plenty of good ideas about how to do so. However we anticipate that the newly appointed Director will have strong views on the way forward, at all levels, and would like to see major investment guided by the person appointed. We recommend that he or she should be asked to bring forward detailed proposals for strengthening coaching within six to nine months of appointment. This does not preclude some earlier expenditure on developments that command a wide consensus and would produce early benefits. This should be discussed through the change management arrangements described in the next section.
- We similarly urge that the new Performance Director should give early strategic attention to (a) aligning the availability of athletics facilities with levels of regional need for them, and (b) the availability of first class medical and other clinical advice to good athletes.

Section Twelve: **MANAGING CHANGE**

A new compact

As we said at the outset, athletics in the UK needs investment, and significant resources are potentially available in the shape of legacy funding. However we said we would not feel comfortable about recommending its release to the sport without seeing signs of a cultural change and developments in its organisation and management.

We have made a number of practical suggestions, all summarised in the next section of the report.

We propose that investment should be linked, through a new ‘compact’ between the sport itself and those who fund it, to rapid progress in implementing these recommendations.

We attach particular importance to the following proposals:

English Athletics

- The English regions should be managed by a new body - English Athletics – with operational responsibility for delivering all aspects of athletics in England except the management of elite athletes and anti-doping work. The balance between its streamlined central office and the nine regions should be its defining feature,

with everything devolved to the regional level that appropriately can be.

Club development

- The English regions and the Celtic home countries should be asked to bring forward ‘club development plans’ consistent with UK Athletics strategy. This process should be backed by a new revenue Club Development Fund, formed by releasing some of the currently unused legacy funding. Some of this should be available in advance to fund early developments amongst clubs, with further investment contingent on improvement.

Schools development

- It is planned to produce new curriculum resources for schools by September this year which are ‘child-centred, developmental, progressive and inclusive’; we recommend this as a further area for early legacy funding, with a sum for pump priming made available as soon as possible this year, and further support delivered on the basis of achievement after, say, eighteen months.

Teacher training

- Developments are needed and planned in teacher training. Again we propose sufficient early investment to get things

moving and then further resources contingent on performance.

The aim should be to secure the services of the best available person in the world.

Membership schemes

- A single comprehensive membership scheme should be introduced in England as a priority, alongside the developing schemes in the other home countries. Sufficient legacy funding should be released to conduct market research on membership services and to design and develop a scheme. It should be introduced quickly with tangible benefits flowing to members as soon as possible. UK Athletics should manage this process with a view to handing a working and obviously self-financing scheme over to English Athletics within eighteen months.

Competition structure

- The competition structure needs reform and we require UK Athletics to take a strong lead, supported by sufficient early investment of legacy funding to begin to drive change through.

Performance Director

- The key post of Performance Director is shortly to fall vacant. We strongly recommend that it should be filled through international search with the help of appropriate recruitment consultants.

Managing change

It is essential that change is managed in a modern and determined way: driven by the incentive of major investment, led by those who are committed to the direction of policy, and paced so as to achieve significant improvements quickly. As we said earlier, the road from Athens to Beijing is not long.

We suggest a tried and tested project management approach to achieving the desired changes.

There should be a Project Board, preferably comprising representatives of UK Sport, Sport England, UK Athletics, the AAA of England and the Celtic home country bodies. Membership should however be predicated on assent to the priority recommendations of this report. There should be an independent chair. The Project Board should have oversight of the change process and, over a project lifespan of eighteen months, make firm recommendations about the release of legacy funding contingent on progress that it would monitor and seek to drive through. Note that it is a temporary body: it is emphasised that project arrangements

should be time limited and designed to enable organisations to be self governing.

A full time Project Director should be appointed for an eighteen month period, possibly but not necessarily on secondment from one of the organisations. We are clear that this should be a Director-level appointment. The Project Director would be accountable to the Project Board for delivering change, with its support, in a timely and sustainable way.

The Director should have the support of a Project Team to facilitate this, comprising representatives of the involved organisations - but again with membership dependent on agreement with the broad direction of policy. The role of members would be to deliver the commitment, resources and expertise of their parent bodies. The Director should also have dedicated help from a Project Manager, possibly part-time, and administrative assistance.

An early priority task would be to design a detailed workplan and agree it with the Board. This should be geared to deliver all our priority recommendations and as many as possible of our other proposals over the project lifespan of eighteen months. The sport itself must work on and own the details of implementation.

The change management process itself would clearly involve cost and this should be met from legacy funding.

The pace of work should be fast. We suggest that the Project Board should be ready and able to draw down pump priming legacy funds within six months to support developments in clubs, schools, membership, competition and possibly coaching; and to demonstrate the achievement of key objectives, and significant progress with others, as justification for later, more substantial investment.

At the risk of labouring the point, there must be a clear understanding that legacy funding should cover project costs and an injection of pump priming to achieve selected practical benefits quickly, but that the larger part of the resources available should be released only against demonstrable progress in implementing comprehensive and sustainable change. This is the new compact.

Making a decision, making a start

We can only make recommendations: who decides? UK Athletics and the AAA of England, and the territorial associations, should not be expected to do so. We

propose that UK Sport and Sport England take the lead jointly, receiving our report, consulting *briefly* with key stakeholders and appointing to the Project Board and Team those who are content to go down the chosen road. The Project Director and Project Manager posts should be advertised as soon as UK Sport and Sport England have considered our report.

Section Thirteen: SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

These are our proposals. The key ‘must do’ recommendations are emboldened.

1 We propose that investment should be linked to progress through a new ‘compact’ between the sport itself and those who fund it. We suggest an early injection of pump priming funds to get things moving in an agreed direction, and then significant further investment once a number of key ‘must do’ objectives have been met.

2 The English regions should be managed by a new body - English Athletics - with operational responsibility for delivering all aspects of athletics in England except the management of elite athletes and anti-doping work. The balance between its streamlined central office and the nine regions should be its defining feature, with everything devolved to the regional level that appropriately can be.

3 This should be a freestanding organisation with its own governance responsibilities and arrangements.

4 UK Athletics should cease to be the de facto England home country entity and concentrate on its pan-UK strategic leadership roles. It should remain the internationally recognised governing body for athletics in the UK.

5 The AAA of England and the three English territorial athletics associations should be invited to play a very full part in designing and establishing the new organisation, which would assume full responsibility for delivering athletics in England through its nine regions.

6 It is important that the sport of athletics harnesses all the talents available to it. The opportunity must be there for individuals within the AAA of England and the English territorial associations, both paid and voluntary, to play a full part in the new body so that their skills, energy and commitment are retained.

7 UK Athletics should establish an Athletics Strategy Group, including the sports councils, representatives of the home country bodies and other key stakeholders to support its revised strategic role.

8 Funding should as far as possible flow through UK Athletics to the home country bodies and the sport in general. The sports councils should not fund ‘initiatives’ which by-pass UK Athletics. This will require some re-engineering of funding flows.

9 UK Athletics should have a role as of right in senior and other key appointments

- made by the home country bodies, including English Athletics in its formative stage, and we strongly suggest this should include a binding power of veto.
- 10 It should have access as of right to all athletics data held by the home country bodies.
- 11 UK Athletics should negotiate annual management agreements with the home country bodies and review performance against them in a systematic, cyclical way.
- 12 The four key ingredients of funding, appointments, data and performance management should be enshrined in new arrangements for UK Athletics to which the sports councils and the four national bodies would be party.
- 13 There should be a new system of wider local involvement. Regional Forums are proposed and their nine chairmen should link to the national structure as members of an Advisory Board supporting English Athletics.
- 14 The sports councils and UK Athletics should develop a 'concordat' which sets down how they propose to work together; it should cover values, behavioural conventions and practical organisational arrangements.
- 15 In order to reduce duplication of effort and increase consistency, UK Sport and Sport England should form a senior Joint Athletics Team, to meet once or twice a year, probably with UK Athletics in attendance, to agree the high level objectives and associated performance indicators that UK Athletics should work to.
- 16 They should also form a virtual athletics unit to support the Joint Athletics Team and act as a conduit for as much as possible of the business that the sports councils have to do with the sport. UK athletics should be able to experience the sports council, as far as possible, as single and seamless.
- 17 Athletics should pay more attention to developing the management skills of those who work in the sport, offering opportunities to participate in programmes at leading management centres.
- 18 UK Athletics should articulate or relaunch a set of broad strategic aims for the club level.
- 19 **The English regions and the Celtic home**

countries should be asked to bring forward 'club development plans' consistent with UK Athletics strategy. This process should be backed by a new revenue Club Development Fund, formed by releasing some of the currently unused legacy funding. Some of this should be available in advance to fund early developments amongst clubs, with further investment contingent on achieving improvement.

- 20 It is planned to produce new curriculum resources for schools by September this year which are 'child-centred, developmental, progressive and inclusive'; we recommend this as a further area for early legacy funding, with a sum for pump priming made available as soon as possible this year, and further support delivered on the basis of achievement after, say, eighteen months.
- 21 Developments are needed and planned in teacher training. Again we propose sufficient early investment to get things moving and then further resources contingent on performance.
- 22 A single comprehensive membership scheme should be introduced in England as a priority, alongside the

developing schemes in the other home countries. Sufficient legacy funding should be released to conduct market research on membership services and to design and develop a scheme. It should be introduced quickly with tangible benefits flowing to members as soon as possible. UK Athletics should manage this process with a view to handing a working and obviously self-financing scheme over to English Athletics within eighteen months.

- 23 The competition structure needs reform and we require UK Athletics to take a strong lead, supported by sufficient early investment of legacy funding to begin to drive change through.
- 24 The key post of Performance Director is shortly to fall vacant. We strongly recommend that it should be filled through international search with the help of appropriate recruitment consultants. The aim should be to secure the services of the best available person in the world.
- 25 We suggest a tried and tested project management approach to achieving the desired changes.

- 26 There should be a time-limited Project Board, preferably comprising representatives of UK Sport, Sport England, UK Athletics, the AAA of England and the Celtic home country bodies. Membership should however be predicated on assent to the priority recommendations of this report. There is a case for an independent chair. The Project Board would have oversight of the change process and, over a project lifespan of eighteen months, make firm recommendations about the release of legacy funding contingent on progress that it would monitor and seek to drive through.
- 27 A full time Project Director should be appointed for an eighteen month period. This should be a Director-level appointment. The Project Director would be accountable to the Project Board for delivering change, with its support, in a timely and sustainable way.
- 28 The Director should have the support of a Project Team to facilitate this, comprising representatives of the involved organisations - but again with membership dependent on agreement with the broad policy direction.
- 29 The Director should also have dedicated help from a Project Manager, possibly part-time, and administrative assistance.
- 30 An early priority task would be to design a detailed workplan and agree it with the Board.
- 31 The change management process itself would clearly involve cost and this should be met from legacy funding.
- 32 The Project Board should be ready and able to draw down pump priming legacy funds within six months to support developments in clubs, schools, membership, competition and possibly coaching; and to demonstrate the achievement of key objectives, and significant progress with others, as justification for later, more substantial investment.
- 33 We propose that UK Sport and Sport England take the lead jointly, receiving our report, consulting *briefly* with key stakeholders and appointing to the time limited Project Board and Team those who are content to go down the chosen road. The Project Director and Project Manager posts should be advertised as soon as UK Sport and Sport England have considered our report.

Section Fourteen: **GENERAL LESSONS**

It seems to us that some of the issues we have encountered and the principles behind our recommendations may have a degree of universality about them. It may be helpful to other sports and future review teams to capture them.

'Whole system' thinking

Modern sports are highly complex enterprises. Many organisations, quite possibly thousands, play a part. They do so at different levels, on different scales and in different ways. But generally they interconnect strongly and depend on each other. They form a complex system of aims, resources and effort and it is the system that produces the results. If the results are bad results, the system has merely produced what it is designed to produce. Problems are rarely due to bad apples, much more often to bad systems. So when trying to put something right it will usually be necessary to look at the whole system and recognise that all its parts contribute to both success and failure. Sustained solutions to problems will often involve changing all parts of the system, as it will with athletics.

Clarity of purpose

Athletics is not alone in juggling different objectives simultaneously. Most sports have to balance the aspirations surrounding elite

performance with the benefits of widespread participation. The challenge is to achieve clarity and commonality, so that those involved in administering or representing a sport agree that different objectives are in play, that they are not mutually inconsistent and that they are equally legitimate. This consensus is then the bedrock on which policies are founded. It naturally invites thinking about the interdependence of objectives and programmes: the ways in which they serve each other, the pathways that connect them.

If key organisations and influential individuals favour one set of objectives over others the risk is that legitimate purposes will be undermined and the synergies between purposes unrealised - to the detriment of the sport as a whole. The aims need to be out in the open, understood, accepted and connected.

Aligning policy, management and resources

Achieving improvement in sport, as in most enterprises, means ensuring that financial resources, structure and management effort are aligned with its objectives. Funding bodies should be strategy-led not preoccupied with piecemeal initiatives: funds, including lottery funds, should be managed systematically so that they serve

all the interlocking objectives of a sport. The functions of individual organisations should be clear and separate: overlaps and duplication, gaps, uncertainty and inconsistency are the enemies of sustained performance. The systematic devolution of responsibility to the lowest appropriate level is a sound, principled way of shaking out such problems. Organisations involved in the management of sport must be clear about their functions and stick to them. Accountability systems at both organisational and individual levels should trade in explicit desired outcomes, and performance indicators derived from key purposes.

Many of our suggestions about athletics are underpinned by these themes and we would be very surprised if other sports did not face similar challenges.

Modern and inclusive

Many sports, like athletics, have to face the fact that the old ideals of amateurism are no longer sufficient. The world has changed and sport with it. Professional sportsmen and sportswomen, professional managers, paid officials and commercial engagement are here to stay.

But woe betide a sport that forgets or belittles the contribution of volunteers. As

with basic objectives, the way forward involves balance: recognising that voluntary and paid work for a sport are equally valid and complementary and facilitating collaboration and harmony between them; valuing the wide mix of people who participate in, support and administer a sport. Sports should be looking to develop attractive and innovative ways of engaging voluntary contributions.

Appendix 1: A NOTE ABOUT THE REVIEW TEAM

Sir Andrew Foster was Director of Social Services in Greenwich and then North Yorkshire. He was Chief Executive of the Yorkshire Regional Health Authority and then Deputy Chief Executive of the National Health Service. For ten years he worked as Controller of the Audit Commission with wide ranging responsibilities for promoting improvement in public services. He was knighted in 2002 for services to local government and the NHS. He has had a lifelong passion for sport as a participant, supporter and spectator.

Michael Johns is a solicitor and a senior partner of Ashurst. He has been a non-executive director of several listed companies. He has long been interested in athletics having won blues for cross country at Oxford in the 1960s and run the London Marathon three times in the 1990s

David Whitaker OBE trained as a teacher and spent fifteen years as a Head of Department in secondary education. He played international hockey for England and Great Britain, winning 100 international caps. In 1980 he became coach to the senior England and GB teams, taking them to Olympic Bronze in 1984, World and European Silver medals in 1986 and 1987 and Olympic Gold in 1988. He spent three years as Director of Coaching to the English

Hockey Association before setting up a business consultancy promoting high quality performance and leadership. He is Chair of Sports Coach UK.

Appendix 2: HOW THE TEAM WENT ABOUT ITS WORK

Consultation

We consulted widely. The consultation process gave individuals a number of opportunities to let us know their views. These included:

- one-to-one meetings
- small forums of like groups (eg the Commercial Forum, the Athletics Media Forum)
- meetings with athletics associations (eg UK Athletics, the AAA of England, the English territorial associations, the home country athletic associations, the UK Counties Athletic Union)
- informal interaction at selected athletics events.

Our particular focus was the athletic organisations and associations that manage the sport and athletes themselves, both active and retired.

Consultation invitations were sent to approximately 100 individuals believed to represent a broad range of roles within athletics and a diverse range of views. They included current and former athletes, coaches, senior officials and volunteers. A list of those formally consulted, identified as far as possible under organisational affiliation, is given below:

Organisation

UKA Council

UKA Board

UKA Staff

AAA of England

North of England AA

Participating individuals

Lynn Davies, Mike Winch, Michael Squires

David Moorcroft, Adam Walker, Helen Jacobs, Max Jones, Ian Fox, John Taylor, Roger Simons, Bryan Smith

Ken Kelly, Zara Hyde Peters, Graham Knight, Maggie Still, David Dix, Helen Wyeth, Debbie Koster, Richard Moore, Andy Paul, Rob Kerry, Rob Borthwick

David Cropper, Keith Atkins, Ann Johnson, Ken Oakley, John Vernon, George Bunner, Sir Rodney Walker, Alison Wyeth

Barry Parker, Roger Lawton, Pat Green, Lawson Duerdon

South of England AA	John Gebbels, Chris Carter
Midland Counties AA	Graham Heeley, Richard Float, Geoff Durbin
Scottish Athletics Ltd	David Joy
AA of Wales	Lynette Harries, Steve Brace
Northern Ireland Athletics Federation	Bobby Rea, Roy Corry, John Allen, David Reid, Jackie McKernan
UK Counties Athletics Union	Cliff Robinson, John Lister
British Athletics League	David Jeacock, Walter Nicholls
International Group	Gwenda Ward, David Littlewood, David Bedford, Danny Hughes, Malcolm Campbell, Bridget Cushen, James Habershon, Peter Marlow, Cherry Alexander
Sport England	Patrick Carter, Roger Draper, Hamish McInnes, Linda Freeman
UK Sport	Sue Campbell, Liz Nicholl, Mike Whittingham, Vikki McPherson, Paul Gustin
Sports Council Northern Ireland	Stephen McGeehan
Norwich Union	Alistair Marks
Fast Track	Alan Pascoe, Jon Ridgeon
BBC	Dave Gordon, Martin Webster
London Marathon	David Bedford, Nick Bitel
Media Forum	Pat Butcher, Paul Dickenson, Jason Henderson, Alan Hubbard, Tom Knight, Richard Lewis, Duncan Mackay, Vicki Orvice, David Powell, John Rawling
Individuals	Keith Davies, John Anderson, John Bicourt, Frank Dick, Charles Gains, Sir Eddie Kulikundis, Peter Masters, Tom McNab, Geoff Morphitis, Tanni Grey-Thompson, Steve Cram, Karena Vleck, David Hemery, Chris Tomlinson

Throughout the review period, others have requested an opportunity to share their views and we have arranged this wherever possible.

Written submissions

Written submissions were invited through Athletics Weekly and everyone we wrote to directly was offered the same opportunity. More than sixty submissions were received and considered by the review team.

Documents reviewed

A starting point for the review was to assemble and study relevant existing documentation. The most significant papers are listed below:

Athletics in the UK Strategic Plan. UK Athletics (2003).

UK: Athletics World Class Performance Plan 2005-09 (various drafts). UK Athletics, 2004).

British Athletics WC Performance Plan 1998-2004 – Lottery Submission. UK Athletics (1998).

WC Potential/Start Programmes - Monitoring and Evaluation. K Hickey & N Tunnicliffe (2003).

WC Performance Programme - Interim Evaluation. Performance 1 Consultants (2002).

WC Performance Programme - Monitoring and Evaluation. Genesis Consultants (2000).

WC Paralympic Performance Programme - Monitoring and Evaluation. Genesis Consultants (2001).

WC Paralympic Performance Programme – Monitoring and Evaluation. P A Hirst & B Davies (2003).

WC Performance Sports Science Review. S. Lawrence (2000).

WC Performance Sports Medicine Review: Provision of Medical Services to Elite Athletes. K Fitch (2001).

Structure and Organisation of other UK sports and European Athletics Organisations. McKinsey Consultants (1998).

Management Audit – UK Athletics and Performance Athlete Services Limited. Littlejohn Frazer (2002, 2003).

Financial Statements and Auditor Reports - Athletics and Performance Athlete Services Limited. Deloitte & Touche (1999-2003)

UK: Athletics Competition Review 2000-2005. UK Athletics (1999).

LTAD: ASA Long Term Athlete Development Model. Amateur Swimming Association (2003).

WC Performance Planning Tool. UK Sport (2003).

Briefing documents

At our request, briefing documents on specific issues were specially prepared by Sports Council and UK Athletics officers. These were exceptionally helpful and we have made the most important ones available under separate cover, from UK Sport, as supporting documentation.

