

HSP Governance Report: April 2023 - March 2024

Background

The HSP Board is made up of volunteers representing a diverse range of skills, experience and backgrounds linked to the objectives set out in the [HSP Strategic Plan 2022-27](#) – see board member profiles [here](#). The board plays a vital function – to provide strategic direction and oversight, and support the staff team to achieve the Partnership’s mission: Working strategically and collaboratively to improve the lives of the people of Hertfordshire, by using the power of sport and physical activity to tackle inequality and disadvantage.

This Report provides an overview of key work of the HSP Board during the period April 2023 – March 2024.

Meetings

4 meetings were held during the period April 2023 – March 2024. In addition, board members were in attendance at key HSP events during the year:

- Clubs Conference
- Coach Education Week
- LLBiH Celebration Day
- Active Local Conference
- Annual Partner Celebration Event

Appointments & Resignations

Name	Term 1		Term 2		Role	Category	Comment	Induction
	Start	Finish	Start	Finish				
Mervyn Morgan	Sep-18	Aug-22	Sep-22	Aug-26	Chairperson; Lead for Safeguarding	Independent Member		Y
Hester Hearn	Sep-18	Aug-22	Sep-22	Aug-26	Vice-chairperson, Senior Independent Director, Lead for EDI	Independent Member		Y
Sharon Harrison-Barker	Jun-21				N/A	Ex-Officio Member, UH		Y
David Connell	Sep-18				N/A	Ex-Officio Member, UH		Y
Louise Savory	Nov-21				N/A	Ex-Officio Member, Public Health, HCC		Y
Hilary Shade	Sep-18				N/A	Ex-Officio Member, HACO		Y
Brian Worrell	Sep-18	Aug-22	Sep-22	Aug-26	N/A	Independent Member		Y
Jonathan Mather	Nov-21	Oct-25	Nov-25	Oct-29	N/A	Independent Member		Y
Jordan Williams	Jun-21	May-25	Jun-25	May-29	N/A	Independent Member		Y
Louise Smith	Sep-18	Aug-22	Sep-22	Aug-26	N/A	Independent Member		Y
Annie Brewster	Sep-18	Aug-22	Sep-22	Aug-26	N/A	Independent Member		Y
Gobi Ranganathan	Dec-22	Nov-26	Dec-26	Nov-30	N/A	Independent Member		Y

Board Skills, Diversity & Effectiveness

As part of good governance practice, and to remain compliant with the Code for Sports Governance, Board members completed 3 surveys during November 2022:

- Board Member Demographic Survey - to help develop an understanding of the diversity of the Board, and to support our efforts to develop an inclusive workforce.
- Board Skills Survey - The Board is a vital resource providing strategic oversight and advocacy to support the executive team to achieve our shared strategic objectives contained in the Strategic Plan 2022-27. This Skills Survey is a self-assessment of the knowledge, skills, and expertise that each Member feels they can offer the Board and the wider partnership. The results will be used to ensure the Board is balanced, that skills are utilised, and that suitable training is provided where required.
- Board Effectiveness Survey - This survey is anonymous and helps to assess our strengths and areas for improvement across key areas of Board business.

Overall, the results were very positive, and the reports provided a platform for discussion and to identify improvement action – see below.

The results of the Skills Survey indicates that HSP has a diverse Board in terms of knowledge, skills and experience. These areas may be worth considering for broader support or upskilling:

- Insight & Learning
- Monitoring & Evaluation
- IT/ Digital
- Active Environments & Sustainability
- Local Government

The demographics of the HSP Board is reflective of the demographics of Hertfordshire as a whole. While no action is currently recommended, if over time the Board wished to further improve its diversity and become even more reflective of our local communities, then it may benefit from consideration of the following when engaging and recruiting prospective members.

- Age: People in the 16 – 44 year bracket
- Ethnicity: Individuals from Asian/ British Asian and Mixed ethnic backgrounds
- Sexual Orientation / Gender: Individuals who identify as Non-Binary or Transgender
- Employment: Individuals who are Unemployed, Work Part-Time or are Students

Overall, the results from the Board Effectiveness Survey indicate that the members are very satisfied with the effectiveness of the HSP Board. The only minor area for consideration was the size of the Board meeting pack.

Performance & Learning System (PALS)

A new performance & learning system has been introduced which collects KPIs across the HSP business, and enables Board to monitor progress against our objectives / goals leading to improvement action where necessary.

A suite of indicators are collected across the following themes:

- Financial Sustainability

- Quality Standards
- Activity Trends
- Stakeholder Engagement & Value
- Customer Value
- Valued People
- Project Impact
- System Change
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

A PALS report is produced quarterly and shared with the Board.

HSP Board External Evaluation, Improvement Plan & Governance Framework

Along with other Sport England funded system partners, HSP is required to comply with Tier 3 of the Code for Sports Governance. As part of the Code, organisations are expected to undertake external evaluation of the Board at least every four years or at the request of Sport England. The last HSP External Board Evaluation was carried out in May 2019.

After a tendering exercise, HSP appointed Linda Freeman to carry out this work. Linda has had previous experience providing governance support to other system partners.

Linda carried out the review between September – December 2023 including reviewing HSP governance documents, interviewing members of the board and observing the December 2023 board meeting. The final report was circulated to board members in January 2024 which included a number of recommendations for improvement.

These recommendations have been transferred into the ‘HSP Governance Improvement Plan’ which is outlined as Appendix 1, and the ‘Governance Framework’ has also been updated.

Key Policy & Strategic Review

The Board plays a vital role in reviewing and approving key policies and strategic work areas. The following have been reviewed by Board between April 2023 and March 2024.

Meeting Date	Key Policy & Strategic Review
June 23	Finance Report
	Risk Register
	Governance Framework Review
	Performance & Learning System
	Review of Operational Plan (Part 2)
	Board Membership Tracker

September 23	Finance Report
	Review of EDI Plan
	Review of People Plan
	Board Membership Tracker
	Safeguarding Implementation plan
	External Board Evaluation Report
December 23	Finance Report
	Risk Register
	Performance & Learning System
	Board Membership Tracker
	Review of EDI Plan
	External Board Evaluation Report
March 24	Finance Report
	Partner Satisfaction Survey report
	External Board Evaluation Report
	Review of Operational Plan 2024-25
	Board Membership Tracker
	Staff Satisfaction Survey
	Governance Framework
	Governance Calendar
	Board Improvement Plan

HSP Activities, Improvement & Impact

HSP plays a key leadership role in creating the conditions for sport and physical activity to flourish in Hertfordshire. The [HSP Impact Report 2023-24](#) highlights the Partnership’s many successes and learning over this period as we continue to embed our role as System Partner to Sport England, supporting the delivery of Uniting the Movement. The report includes 7 inspiring impact videos and links to 24 individual Project Impact Reports.

Finances

The Board monitors the HSP finances via a financial report at every Board meeting. HSP finances are audited annually as part of the University of Hertfordshire (UH) Audit and a HSP financial



statement is included in the [UH Strategic Report & Financial Statement 2022-23](#) – see page 96. For August 2022 - July 2023 the Partnership's Income was £2,053,000 with expenditure at £2,135,000 – with a planned-for cost to reserves of £82,000.

Appendix 1 – HSP Governance Improvement Plan

Updated March 2024

This plan is based on recommendations from the HSP External Governance Evaluation carried out by Linda Freeman (Sept – Dec 2023).

Governance framework: the structure, processes, documentation and ownership of governance within an organisation.

Evaluator’s Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
Conduct annual appraisal of the Board chair if not already doing so	<p>The External Board Evaluation (sept – Dec 2023) provided a robust assessment of the Board Chair, therefore, this will be used as the annual appraisal for 2023.</p> <p>The next one will be carried out in Dec 2024.</p>	Senior Independent Member (SID)	Dec 2024	N/A
Initiate honest conversations about John’s succession planning	<p>There is a ‘Partnership Director Succession Planning section (5.9)’ in the Governance Framework that covers a comprehensive process for different scenarios.</p> <p>There is a strong SLT in place and we feel that the Partnership Director’s roles could be managed on a temporary basis, if required, before a long term replacement was found.</p> <p>The Board Leadership Group will revisit</p>	John, Mervyn & Hester	Review by March 2024	Pending

Evaluator’s Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
	this section and discuss whether further action is required.			
Consider if and how environmental sustainability could/should be more prominent on Board agendas	Environmental Sustainability Impact’ will be included on all relevant board papers alongside Safeguarding and EDI Impact.	Authors of each board paper with John overseeing	Ongoing	See relevant board papers that reference Environmentally Sustainable Impact.
	HSP will prepare an Annual Environmental Sustainability Impact Report and share with the Board.	Adrian	June each year	Pending
Review terms of reference to ensure they demonstrate/ recognise the role and remit of the Board as per the Code of Sports Governance e.g. ultimate decision making, setting strategy, maintaining clear division, no one having unfettered ability on decision making, embracing technology and innovation.	<p>We have cross-referenced our Governance Framework with the Code for Sports Governance (page 16-17 on Structure) and Linda’s recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ultimate decision making. We have updated the Framework (5.1 on page 9) making it clear that the Host is the ultimate accountable authority. - Setting Strategy – already covered on page 9 (5.1 & 5.1.1). - Maintaining clear division – covered in 5.1.1 on page 9. - No one having unfettered ability on decision making – this 	Mervyn, Hester, John	March 2024	Changes to the HSP Governance Framework have been made (see text highlighted in yellow) and an updated version submitted to Board for approval.



Evaluator’s Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
	<p>has been added to 5.1 on page 9.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - embracing technology and innovation. This is one of the ‘Enablers of Change’ in the Strategy – the Board is tasked with creating and driving the Strategy and by inference the enablers of change. However, we don’t think it is appropriate to specify this level of detail in the Governance Framework, so no action has been taken on this one. - In addition to the areas highlighted by Linda, we have also strengthened the wording relative to this requirement in the Code so it is clearer - 1.3 Each organisation must maintain an up-to-date matrix detailing the skills, experience, diversity, independence and knowledge required of its Board. The updated version is covered in 5.2.1 on page 10. 			
Update key documents that are	Noted and will action. This applies to	Adrian	Jan	Complete

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
live/final – as a few still have DRAFT watermark	the Governance Framework and Calendar.		2024	
Consider the next external Board review to include a 1:1 with all Board members, as this really added value to the evaluation process through qualitative discussions	Noted and will be considered for the next External Board Evaluation in 2028	Chair, Partnership Director and officer leading on Governance	2028	N/A
Governance Framework 5.2 Attributes of the Board p.10 mentions “Members should uphold the Safeguarding Policies of HSP” – this could be expanded to include EDI and other key policies referred to	The Governance Framework to be updated to ‘Members should uphold the Safeguarding, EDI and Environmental policies of HSP’.	Adrian	Jan 2024	Complete – see page 10
Governance Framework 5.7 states policy last reviewed June 2022 but footer states updated March 2023	Noted and will action	Adrian	Jan 2024	Complete
Child Protection policy – no out of hours/mobile number provided – should there be? (may not as Herts SP not doing direct delivery?)	The Policy includes the HSP office number, however, this diverts to the Safeguarding Lead’s mobile number during out of hours. We will update the Policy to reference this fact.	Tom Horey	March 24	Complete
Information on Board member Jordan Williams and Louise Savory needs completed on the website	Make request for bio and picture for website	Adrian	March 24	Request made in Jan 24
Safeguarding training for Board members good to formally acknowledge in minutes on need	Safeguarding will be a key agenda item annually (minimum), as part of the Governance Calendar, where policy and	*Tom Horey & Board Champion for	Sept 24	Pending

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
<p>or otherwise for Board members to attend training or not – to reflect great practise in strategy</p>	<p>plans will be reviewed and this will give us a chance to consider and minute training needs (board and staff).</p> <p>Safeguarding training for HSP board members took place in Sept 2023 delivered by CPSU and Ann Craft Trust which was well attended.</p> <p>*We will update the Safeguarding Policy to include the need for board training on safeguarding every 3 years (minimum).</p> <p>'Safeguarding impact' is included in all board papers.</p>	<p>Safeguarding.</p>		
<p>RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CAMPBELL TICKELL REPORT 2019 Board invests in improvements to its governance documents. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a Scheme of Delegations • adding committee updates as a standing item of Board agendas • actions Log • a refresh of the Terms of Reference of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and the Nominations Committee. • a governance update on the work of the Terms of Reference could 	<p>Scheme of delegation – Here is an example from YSF – see page 3-6. Roles-and-Responsibilities-March-2023-1.pdf (yorkshiresport.org)</p> <p>There is a sentence in 5.1.1 stating 'Whilst the Board will take the strategic lead and drive the development of sport, day-to-day management of HSP is not a Board function. Authority is delegated for achieving the strategic outcomes to the core staff team, together with the necessary authority to make decisions in a specified range of activities'.</p>	<p>Mervyn, Hester, John</p>	<p>March 2024</p>	<p>Pending</p>

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
<p>usefully be included as a standard item on the Board agenda</p>	<p>.....and the Board's role and remit is specified in Section 5. However, the Board may wish to add a more detailed split of delegations similar to the YST version?</p> <p>Adding committee updates as a standing item of Board agendas – the HSP committees are ad hoc linked to need. When a committee meets, the update from that committee will be reported to the following board meeting, rather than include it as a standing item on every board agenda. Therefore, no further action on this one.</p> <p>Action Log – this will be considered.</p> <p>A refresh of the Terms of Reference of the Audit, Risk and Governance Committee and the Nominations Committee – these were updated at the last Governance Framework review in 2023 and no further updates are recommended.</p> <p>A governance update on the work of the Terms of Reference could usefully be included as a standard item on the Board agenda – 'Governance Update' is</p>			

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
	<p>a standing item on the Board agenda and picks up any changes to T of R. There is a requirement to review the Governance Framework annually (which includes the Committee T of R), therefore no further action is required for this one.</p>			

Skills, competence and diversity: the composition and capabilities of the Board, its self-awareness, and how its performance is managed.

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
<p>Consider the future EDI actions for Board members that could be initiated now to ensure future success and reflect the high performing Board that you are</p>	<p>The HSP Board Member Diversity Survey was carried out and reported to board in Dec 2022.</p> <p>It reported that...</p> <p>'The demographics of the HSP Board is reflective of the demographics of Hertfordshire as a whole. Looking at evidence from the Sport England 'Diversity in Sport Governance Survey 2020', the diversity of the Board is also similar to that of governance in sport across England.</p> <p>While no action is currently recommended, if over time the Board wished to further improve its diversity and become even more reflective of</p>	<p>John, Mervyn, Hester</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
	<p>our local communities, then it may benefit from consideration of the following when engaging and recruiting prospective members.</p> <p>Age: People in the 16 – 44 year bracket Ethnicity: Individuals from Asian/ British Asian and Mixed ethnic backgrounds Gender: Individuals who identify as Non-Binary or Other gender Transgender: Individuals who identify as Trans or have a Trans History Sexual Orientation: Individuals who are not Heterosexual Employment: Individuals who are Unemployed, Work Part-Time or are Students’.</p> <p>There have been no changes to board membership since this survey, however, as turn-over happens, we will refer to these recommendations.</p>			
<p>Consider future Board skills review to include a reflection session to analyse and evaluate the gaps, and how Board members can play to each other's strengths/skills & how best to contribute to the strategy</p>	<p>Noted and will be actioned following the next HSP Board Skills Review</p>	<p>Adrian</p>	<p>March 2025</p>	<p>N/A</p>



Evaluator’s Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
e.g. enablers of change				

Strategic role: the extent to which the Board sets and owns the vision and strategic objectives for the organisation and is focused on strategic oversight, understanding the effectiveness with which the strategy is being delivered and obtaining assurance to understand how well any risks which might get in the way of delivery are being managed.

Evaluator’s Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
Consider how updates to the Board on the progress of the strategy are minuted to demonstrate impact and accountability in advance of PALS becoming live	The PALS system is now live, providing good alignment to the progress of the strategy, and updates will be reported quarterly to board.	Adrian	Quarterly	See PALS Q3 reported to March 2024 Board meeting.
Consider if further work needs to be done to raise the profile of the partnership and to celebrate the great work you are doing	<p>This is an ongoing activity which all staff and board members have a responsibility to action. Partner satisfaction rates are currently high, and we want to maintain and improve these levels all the time. We also need to get our tone right when talking about HSP as the majority of our work is done ‘in partnership’ and we need to reflect that in our communications.</p> <p>We have recently increased investment / capacity in a central marketing team, and they will take overall responsibility for leading this work.</p> <p>In the short-term progress will be</p>	Adrian	Partner Survey by April 2024	<p>The Partner Survey reported to Board in March 2024 highlights strong Partner Satisfaction scores.</p> <p>The refreshed HSP website has been launched and will be more effective in promoting our work to relevant audiences. https://sportinherts.org.uk/</p> <p>The Interim Impact Report 2023-24 has been produced and circulated highlighting our work between Mar – Dec 2023. https://sportinherts.org.uk/newsfuse/uploads/documents/2024-Jan/579-HSP-Mid-Year-Impact-Report-December-2023-Final.pdf</p>

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
	measured via our Partner Satisfaction Survey scores			

Dynamics and culture: the integrity and commitment of Board Members, the quality of working relationships and the culture created within the Boardroom.

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
No recommendations at this time				N/A

Conduct of meetings: how the Board goes about its business, including the quality of chairing, behaviours, agendas, papers and governance support.

Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
Future theming and splitting of Board agendas and Board packs into: Information/ discussion/ decision to help focus energy and demonstrate link/structure to strategy	<p>A column will be added to the board agenda clearly showing whether an item is for information, decision or discussion.</p> <p>We will also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ordering the agenda so there is a logical sequence e.g. main decision items first - adding a column to the agenda showing the link to the Strategic Plan for each agenda item. 	John, Mervyn, Hester	March 2024	<p>December 2023 Board Meeting Minutes have been adapted to reflect this.</p> <p>See new Board Agenda format which will be tested at the March 2024 Board meeting.</p>
Share the Board calendar – some people are aware, others are not	As part of the Governance update in March each year we will share the Board Calendar with board members.	Adrian	March 2024 and every March thereafter	Board Calendar included in Governance update at March 2024 meeting.



Evaluator's Recommendation	Action / Comment	Owner	By	Progress March 2024
Consider need/request from Board members for update/bulletin between board meetings to demonstrate progress being made and updates	This is already taking place and we will continue to manage this carefully linked to the relative importance of the information in question, and managing the volume of email traffic.	John	Ongoing	<p>John circulated the following updates to Board during the period since the December Board meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports Governance Academy (SGA) newsletter • Active Partnerships Members Newsletter • Forthcoming Special Events • Report - Summer Parks Programme • Final report- Fit, Fed and Read • Link to Mid-Term Impact Report.
Ensure all discussion points with actions are captured in the verbal summary by the Chair at Board meetings	Noted and this will be actioned. Will may also consider an Action Log to summarise all the actions from the Board meeting.	Minute taker	Each board meeting.	The minutes from the March board meeting will more accurately reflect the action points and we will embed this approach going forward.