

ECB 2022 / 2023 Annual Governance Statement

May 2023

Executive Summary

2022/23 has been a period of significant reflection and change for the ECB – from the positive on-field revolution for the England Men’s Test Team, to the deep reflection and response to the discrimination in cricket brought to light by Azeem Rafiq and others. This period of change has extended to the ECB’s governance – both at a personnel and structural level.

Over the past year, the ECB has transitioned from the interim leadership of Martin Darlow (Chair) and Clare Connor (CEO) to new, permanent leadership of Richard Thompson (Chair) and Richard Gould (CEO). The wider Board has also seen significant personnel change with six new Directors appointed at our AGM on May 10th.

The ECB has also seen changes to elements of its underlying governance framework, partially in response to the Portas Governance & Regulation Review carried out in summer 2022.

This statement intends to summarise the key governance work and changes at the ECB over the past 12 months.

ECB Scope and Purpose

ECB continues to operate as the national governing body for the entire sport of cricket in England and Wales, with a remit that oversees international, professional and recreational cricket. The ECB is now three years into its five-year strategy, Inspiring Generations – our plan to inspire a generation to say “cricket is a game for me”.

ECB Governance Framework

The ECB’s core governance framework remains unchanged. The ECB is a company limited by guarantee, and our 41 Members consist of the chairs of each of the 18 First Class County Cricket Clubs, the 21 County Cricket Boards of the non-First-Class Counties, the National Counties Cricket Association and the Marylebone Cricket Club. These members have a series of reserved powers as defined in Company Law and the ECB’s Articles of Association.

The workings of the ECB are governed by the ECB Board of Directors, headed by the Chair. The Board oversees the day-to-day running of the ECB, which is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the Executive leadership team. The Board also delegates authority to a series of Sub-Committees who are responsible for specific aspects of ECB Governance. Following recent reforms (see Portas Review below), the ECB’s Sub-Committees consist of:

ECB Corporate Sub-Committees:

- Finance, Audit and Risk Sub-Committee
- Nominations Committee
- Remuneration Committee

ECB Cricket Sub-Committees:

- Performance Cricket Committee – to oversee the performance and development of England international teams and the talent pathway.
- Professional Game Committee – to oversee the delivery and growth of Men’s and Women’s professional domestic cricket. This is a newly established Sub-Committee.
- Recreational Game Committee – to oversee the delivery and growth of recreational cricket. This is a newly established Sub-Committee

ECB Integrity Sub-Committees:

- Regulatory Committee – an arm’s length body responsible for overseeing the ECB’s rules, regulations and investigatory procedures for integrity matters i.e. anti-doping, anti-corruption, discipline etc.
- Cricket Discipline Commission – an arm’s length body responsible for hearing cases brought by the ECB Regulatory Committee under the ECB Regulations.

Key Governance Activity 2022/23

ECB Board

The ECB Board has undergone recent personnel changes. We thank and acknowledge the excellent work of Martin Darlow and Clare Connor as interim Chair and CEO respectively for much of 2022. The ECB Board was also immensely saddened by the passing of ECB Senior Independent Director, Brenda Trenowden CBE, in August 2022.

More recently the ECB has appointed Richard Thompson as Chair and Richard Gould as CEO. In addition, we have appointed six new Directors at our AGM on the 10th May 2023. Biographies for these directors can be found in the “About Us” section of the ECB website.

EDI and the Independent Commission for Equity in Cricket (ICEC)

The issue of equity, diversity and inclusion in cricket remains the highest priority for the ECB, and the ECB Board has ensured our governance processes reflect this. We will not expand here on the work the ECB and the wider game has carried out in this area as this has been reported regularly elsewhere, including our Annual EDI Report.

At the time of writing, the ICEC has yet to publish its report into equity in cricket. We expect that there may be governance implications for cricket accordingly, which we will consider and respond to in due course.

The Portas Governance & Regulation Review

Over the first half of 2022, the ECB and the wider county cricket network appointed Portas Consulting to carry out a major review into the governance and regulatory arrangements of the ECB. The review made a series of recommendations that were adopted by the ECB most notably:

- Revising the ECB’s Sub-Committee structure to strengthen the stakeholder voice through the ECB’s decision-making structures – most significantly resulting in the creation of the Professional Game Board and Recreational Game Board
- Strengthening the ECB’s stakeholder engagement systems, improving communication, transparency etc
- Taking steps to strengthen the ECB’s regulatory system, e.g. by making it sufficiently independent

While some recommendations from the review, specifically in relation to the Regulatory elements, remain under review while we await recommendations from the ICEC, the majority have now been implemented.

Cascading Good Governance

The ECB has for several years, with the launch of cricket’s County Governance Framework in 2020, led the sports industry in cascading good governance requirements. The ECB is proud of the progress the game has made across all aspects of good governance – most how aggregate Board composition across county cricket organisations has reached 34% female diversity and 18% ethnic diversity. In 2022 the ECB launched a new partnership with recruitment firm Perrett Laver to provide best practice recruitment and search support for county organisations. We continue to support and monitor the implementation of the County Governance Framework and will, following the ICEC report, consider how to extend and enhance good governance across cricket.

Sport England Code of Governance Compliance

The ECB has recently reviewed our compliance with the Sport England Code of Governance and submitted a self-assessment report to Sport England as part of a wider NGB review process. We believe we continue to remain fully compliant with the Code’s requirements.

Risk Management

The ECB Board, supported by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, identifies and manages both strategic and operational risks on a regular basis via the Risk Register.



Richard Thompson, Chair

On behalf of the ECB Board