Leap
Getting more people active for life

Sue Imbriano 11/6/26.

Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28th January 2026
13:45-17:30 Red Kite Pavillion, Aston Clinton, Buckinghamshire, HP22 5HL

Attendance: ***Leap Board:*** *Sue Imbriano (Chair), Dr Martin McElhatton OBE, Alistair Patrick-Hesleton, Prof. Paul Morgan, Sophie Payne (Snr Independent Director), Will Rysdale, Yvette Thomas MBE*

Leap Executive: *Chris Gregory, Andrea Healy, Kirsty Ingham, Mark Ormerod (Director), Mark Stokes, Hans Trivedi (full meeting)*

Leap team: *Kayla Byfield, Wendy Couzin, Shay Fenlon, Anya Forbes-Phyall, Yvette Hockley, Charlotte O'Connor, Portia Simmond, Rhiannon Smith (items 1-4)*

Apologies: *Jules Anderson, Thomas Godfrey*

1. **Welcome & Introductions** — *Action*

1. SI opened the meeting and welcomed board members and colleagues.
2. Apologies were noted.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

1. SI called for any declarations of interest.
2. No declarations were recorded.

3. **National Context Setting**

1. MO provided board members with an updated presentation following one provided 18 months prior, setting out and reviewing the national key policy drivers and their impacts to date:
   a. **Reducing Inequalities:** Addressing deep-seated inequalities in access to sports facilities and opportunities is a major theme. Policies aim to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, has the chance to participate in sports.
   b. **Health and Wellbeing:** There is a significant focus on integrating physical activity into health and wellbeing strategies. This includes using sport and physical activity as preventive measures within the NHS and other healthcare systems.
   c. **Physical Education in Schools:** There is a strong push to elevate the status of PE within the school curriculum. This includes proposals to make PE a core subject and ensure better sports provision for children and young people.
   d. **Active Environment:** Policies are being proposed to include active environments in planning policies. This means designing urban spaces that encourage physical activity, such as more parks, cycle lanes, and pedestrian-friendly areas.
   e. **Regulation and Standards:** There are calls for greater governmental intervention to improve standards and introduce new regulations in the sports sector. This includes measures to tackle issues like doping, misconduct, and corruption.
   f. **Economic Development:** Policies are also focusing on the economic benefits of sport, such as improving productivity and creating jobs through the sports sector.

2. Each driver was considered in the context of i) impact over the past 12 months, ii) the impact/response from the Active Partnership Network (nationally), iii) the impact response at Leap-level.
3. MO set out the key issues 'on the radar' including local government reorganisation and the devolution agenda, DCMS, Sport England and Uniting the Movement (the next 5 years), national investment into children and young people, and the evolving strategic direction of the Active Partnership National Organisation.
4. MO concluded setting out a timetable evolving Leap's current position in the local/national landscape, future strategic framework. MO sought the Board's permission to develop a draft plan for the future strategy for further Board involvement at the May meeting – this was agreed. MO

4. **Measure/Report/Celebrate – Leap's emerging methodology**

1. KI provided a presentation outlining Leap's approach to developing place-based insights that inform strategic decision-making, storytelling, and continuous improvement across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
2. The presentation called on examples and best practice from across the Leap team that would evidence the 9 'conditions of change' (codesigned by Sport England and the National Evaluation and Learning Partnership - NELP):
    a. Shay Fenlon and Rhiannon Smith provided examples from place-based expansion (Milton Keynes) and place universal offer (Buckinghamshire) explaining how system change was being enabled whilst avoiding [traditional] transactional dynamics and evolving 'distributed leadership'.
    b. Anya Forbes-Phyall discussed leadership and Leap's role in supporting the Local Skills Board, along with the development of the specialist experience programme for young people called 'Fit for the Future'.
    c. CG discussed community connectors, and Leap's approach to more radical investment into the voluntary sector to create a multiplier effect for capacity, and the example of Truby's Garden Tea Room (Milton Keynes) and the importance of connecting communities prior to introducing movement and physical activity.
    d. Abbi McKane described a programme she had supported addressing the challenges of remaining physically active during maternity, dispelling some of the myths around post-natal activity. This programme has trained over 80 healthcare professionals to assist women positively change physical activity behaviours during this critical time of life.
3. Kirsty explained how a methodology was developing to record in detail the intervention made by Leap in the co-design, co-funding and learning from each type of programme.
4. SI thanked the team for bringing to life some of Leap's work.

5. **Performance metrics – Balanced Scorecard**

1. Leap's Balanced Scorecard had been shared in advance.
2. A question was asked if Leap's metrics were benchmarked across the Active Partnership's network. KI responded that there were many common metrics such as Active Lives data, People Survey, some elements of staff survey and all financial metrics.
3. SI suggested that Board members reflect on the BSC and direct any specific questions to KI/AH. All

6. **Leap People Survey**

1. AH spoke to Leap's latest people survey, highlighting the following:
    a. Leap continues to offer a highly positive, values-driven and supportive workplace culture. 100% respondents recommended Leap as an organisation to work for.

b. Capacity and workload pressures remain the biggest concern for staff.
c. Internal systems need modernising, including communication, governance, and CRM capability.
d. The team is strong in learning, evaluation, and systems leadership, and wants to build on this.
e. Small enhancements to strategy, operations, and metrics need better alignment to reduce duplication and improve focus.

2. AH and SF advised that the internal working group would continue to address the areas highlighted above.

7. **Safeguarding**

1. MS advised the Board that he, SI and Rhiannon Smith, had completed the latest Child Safeguarding Review on behalf of Leap, meeting all 10 requirements.
2. MS further updated the Board on Leap's pursuance of the recognised Adult Safeguarding Standard led by the Ann Craft Trust. Abbi McKane, as Leap's Adult Safeguarding lead has been working to complete the standard before the March 2027 deadline. The bulk of the work has been completed with two outstanding areas to be finalised prior to submission before the end of March 2026:
    a. Firstly, for Board members to sign off Leap's [draft] Adult Safeguarding Policy. SI/PM/MMc
    b. Secondly for all Board members to complete the mandated 2-hour online Adult Safeguard training 16th March (18:00-20:00). AMc would reach out to Board members with an invitation. AMc
3. MS agreed to share the Leap Safeguarding protocol (CYP and Adult) with the Board and arrangements will be made to sign off the policy in time for submission. MS
4. MS introduced an adult safeguarding scenario to the Board and, following discussion in small groups, Board members shared comments and asked questions about several aspects of adult safeguarding policy and procedures.

8. **Governance**

National Sports Governance Code

1. MO updated Board members on Leap's compliance with the National Sports Governance Code, highlighting a number of policies which would need reviewing and updating for the May Board, including:
    a. Leap Governance Annual Statement SI/SP/MO
    b. Leap Governance Framework
    c. Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

Board Skills Audit

2. SI reported back on the analysis she had completed as part of the Board skills and governance audit. SI reported that results showed a good understanding of the governance requirements of functioning as a Leap Board member.
3. Many key skills areas are optimum, however there are lower scores in the following areas - legal, campaigning, system building, data analysis and safeguarding. These along with other lower scores, for example in accountancy will form the basis of future Board member recruitment. SI/SP/MO

Board member recruitment

4. MO advised the Board that following the skills and governance audit, he was able to commence Board member recruitment.
5. MO did explain that volunteer recruitment for Board positions was currently recognised as a challenge within the voluntary sector, and that Leap was likely to need different approaches to widen the search for the right candidates.
6. Board members offered suggestions about where to recruit board members with the desired skill-sets which MO agreed to explore. MO

External Board Audit

7. MO spoke to the paper reminding Board members that a requirement of the National Governance Code (4.2) states, "*that all tier 3 organisations must complete a periodic external evaluation of the board facilitated at least every four years or at the request of UK Sport or Sport England.*"
8. MO explained the Active Partnership National Team had looked at efficiency savings and consistency in this area and had created a preferred suppliers list.
9. Included within this list were Selinger Associates who completed Leap's previous Board Audit. The paper made recommendations to the Board to reappoint Selinger Associates.
10. Inviting Selinger Associate to return would allow the Board to thoroughly assess progress made against past recommendations and allow for some consistency in approach.
11. The Board agreed for MO to recruit Selinger Associates to commence the process with immediate effect. SI/SP/MO

9. **Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Report**

1. The Finance, Audit Committee and Risk Committee had previously met 13 January 2026.

Finance

2. AH spoke to the Financial Report which had previously been reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. AH provided an overview of the financial position, highlighting a healthy budget and reserves.

Risk Management Plan

3. MO talked to the January 2025 Risk Management Plan, highlighting no new or exceptional risks:
   3.1. Risk 1 - Sport England is reviewing part 2 of its Uniting the Movement strategy, creating a small risk that it may shift away from place-based local investment, though this appears unlikely. All System Partners, including Leap, will need to submit core five-year funding applications before December 2026.
   3.2. Risk 2 - The Government is consulting on removing Sport England's role as a statutory consultee on planning applications affecting playing fields and outdoor activity spaces. This could increase inactivity, obesity, and related health conditions—particularly among vulnerable groups—widening inequalities and reducing access to active, healthy environments.
   3.3. SP mentioned some safeguards may exist if the designation of '*Assets of Community Value*' (ACV) is applied to protecting sports grounds, for example. ACV status can offer some protection but is not automatically applied, remaining a material consideration.
   3.4. MO added that he had responded to the Government's consultation reviewing Sport England's (and other NGOs) powers on behalf of Leap, along with almost all other Active Partnerships.

10. **Minutes from the last meeting – 25th September 2025**

1. The minutes of the meeting were agreed as correct and signed by the Chair.

11. **Matters Arising from the meeting 25th September 2025**

1. All matters arising were reported and agreed.

12. **Any other business**

1. MMc requested that MO investigate an appropriate way to commemorate Roger Fennemore MBE, past Chair of Leap in recognition of his long service to sport in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes. MO agreed to investigate. **MO**

Dates of Future Meetings

Date of future board meetings	
2026	**2027**
	24th February
20th May	26th May
7th October	13th October

Papers and presentations

Item 3 – National context presentation
Item 4 – Measure/Report/ Celebrate presentation
Item 5 – Balanced Scorecard
Item 6 – Leap People Survey Presentation
Item 8 – External Board Audit paper
Item 9 – Financial Report / budget forecast
Item 9 – Risk Management Plan
Item 10 – Minutes of the last meeting
Item 11 – Matters Arising paper