

### **Executive Summary - Council Paper on Regional Forums**

A variety of ESR staff from all departments as well as Board members have been involved in creating the following Council Paper that outlines an exciting new programme designed to empower County Associations and significantly improve the working relationship between the NGB and the network of County Associations. The Regional Forums will be resourced and supported by ESR and will enable County Associations to take ownership of how the sport is developed across their region. This represents a significant step change in how ESR and County Associations work together for the good of the game.

A comprehensive consultation process has been undertaken to involve as many County Association representatives as possible in the development of the regional forum proposal. This consultation process has taken place through the County Association Network and directly with representatives from Associations across the country.

Over the last 10 weeks, 35 of the 38 County Associations have been contacted by one or more members of ESR staff, on one or more occasion. There have been in excess of 100 'engagements' via email, telephone or face to face meetings to discuss various key areas of work including the Game Changer Strategy, the new Coaching Strategy, workforce development, the player pathway or the Regional Forum proposal.

Every County in the country has been contacted and given the opportunity to feed into the proposal before it is discussed at Council on the 13th June.

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## **Game Changer: ESR & County Associations – A Key Partnership**

Our new participation strategy '*Game Changer*' outlines a new direction for ESR. We are taking steps to move away from direct delivery to become a business-to-business organisation, which will have a profound impact on the way we engage with all of our partners and indeed our 'prime' partner - county associations (CAs). To transform the fortunes of the sport, we want to engage appropriately with CAs and forge a productive and mutually beneficial partnership. A key part of this process requires the establishment of positive relationships and alignment with our new strategic vision. We propose that CAs fulfil a multi-functional role across a range of elements, including:

- **Junior Development** – to continue to work with facility providers, coaches and schools to be the driving force behind junior development initiatives across the county
- **Competition** - to continue to drive junior and adult inter and intra-county and sub-county competition and events
- **Talent Development** – to continue to develop and maintain an open and accessible junior county pathway that is underpinned by a thriving junior development programme and is aligned to ESR's talent pathway
- **Coach and Workforce Development** - To take an overview of coach and volunteer resources in the county and to identify development requirements and facilitate the delivery of training and mentoring support
- **Communication** – to continue to communicate with providers and workforce within the county and ensure there is a continuous link between the county, the regional forum and ESR
- **Strategy** - To act as a local advocate for the 'Game Changer' strategy, thus seeking to enthuse facilities, the squash workforce and promote ESR programmes
- **Membership** - to continue to support and promote membership and affiliation throughout the county to drive county income and promote the individual and club benefits
- **Club Support** - to provide a clear link to the ESR club toolkit and endorse county wide club development programmes
- **Provider/Facility Support** – to identify venues that are under-utilised and engage with them as part of county development plans or county initiatives and act when facilities are at risk of closure

# Regional Forum Proposal

## Introduction

This draft proposal looks to formalise the support ESR will offer CAs at a regional level, thus improving partnership working between the NGB, County Associations and other key local partners to drive participation within the sport.

## Format

- Up to 8 Regional Forums (RF), each forum taking place 3 times a year

### **North West, North East, East Midlands, West Midlands, East, South West, London & South East and South**

- Each CA represented by one voting member (appropriately skilled and knowledgeable)
- Chair elected by the group
- ESR Participation Manager sits on each forum (two forums per PM)
- Other key partners invited to RF as and when appropriate (for instance, pre-season, University and College sectors)
- Each RF elects one member onto the National Forum Group

## Aims and Objectives

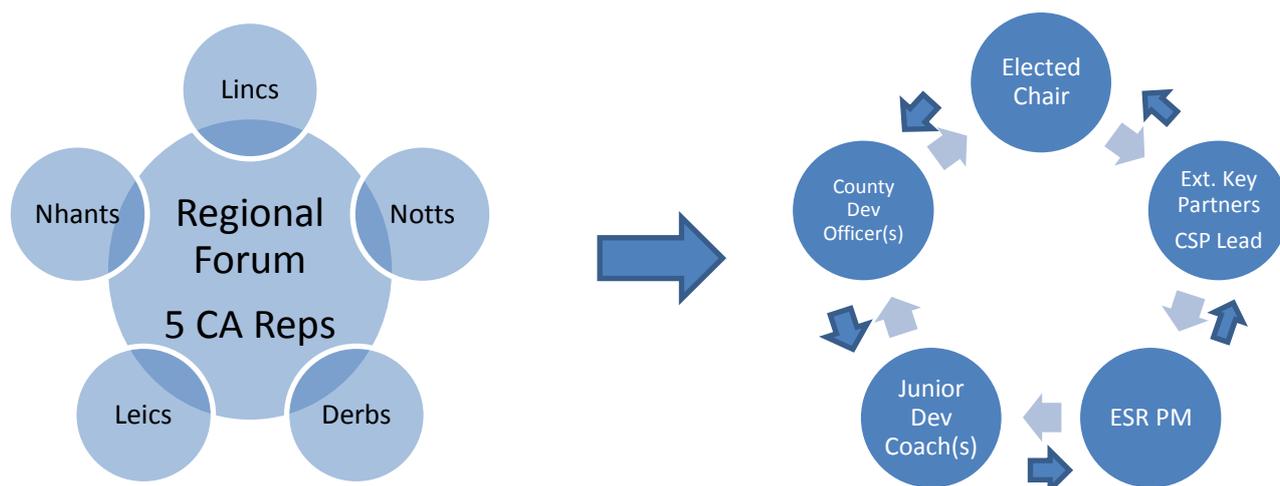
- To build on best practice from around the country (e.g. SE Counties partnership), to develop the relationship that the CA's have with ESR
- To devolve appropriate responsibility for the development of squash to regional level and to drive this development through the county associations
- To ensure that county programmes are driven by best practice and local insight
- To use best practice models from high performing county associations to inform decision making and driving insight driven, sustainable delivery

## Menu of Potential Support and Opportunities

Potential support from ESR could include the following aspects:

- **Funding:** Regional Forum Fund (\*Merge of GDF/TIF)/Foundation
- **Workforce:** Volunteer training/advocate resources
- **Coach Education:** Workshops, conference places, CPD, L1/2/3
- **Referee development:** Markers courses and referee workshops
- **Coach delivery exposure:** Access to national/assistant national coach time
- **Court time:** Allowances allocated through RF network, allowing subsidies for events
- **Equipment:** Mini squash bags, prizes, ball stock for competitions
- **Staff support:** Access to talent pathway
- **Squash & Racketball Foundation:** Links to the foundation and promotional support
- **Events:** Regional events that raise funding for the forum and its development plan
- **Miscellaneous:** Tickets for major events, prizes etc

## Model Proposal



## Logistics

- The chosen representative for each county will act as the main communication channel between the forum, their CA and ESR.
- The group will meet 3 times per year and will have the ability to decide on their delivery as a region through a development plan.
- The RF will be allocated initial starter funding from the RFF and have the ability to apply for further funding from the pot. \*Due to the talent funding element, one-third must be allocated to talent programmes.
- The RF will be able to fund raise to further supplement their development work.
- The RF will be able to apply for workshops, courses and funding to service the region and further develop the sport aligned to the terms of reference/development plan.
- Decisions will need to be made regionally, but should benefit the specific counties.
- The emphasis will be on utilising strong counties to share best practice and influence the delivery and performance of surrounding counties.

## Draft Timeline

| Date                          | Action   |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 13th June                     | Proposal presented and submitted to council for feedback                         |
| 15th - 19th June              | Feedback from council processed and forum plans formalised                       |
| 13th July                     | Deadline for each county association to have selected their forum representative |
| 17th - 21st August            | *Provisional date of first meeting   |
| 23rd - 27th November          | *Provisional date of second meeting  |
| 14th - 18th March             | *Provisional date of third meeting   |
| 21st March - 1st April        | ESR review of the first year and performance of forums nationally                |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> April onwards | CA feedback gained nationally  |

\*Meetings are proposed to take place in the same week across the country (subject to the individual forums availability) allowing a centralised agenda and consistent engagement with external key partners. This will also allow post event consultation and a review process with all participating counties, post forum.

## **Regional Forums – Questions for Discussion**

### **1) How are the regional boundaries decided upon?**

*Suggestion:* We keep the ‘traditional’ regional boundaries (EM, WM, NE, NW, S, SE & L, SW & E)

Retaining this structure would ensure a Regional Forum doesn’t grow too big or become too small. It would also be advantageous with regards regional events (i.e. competitions / coaching squads) that a forum might hold. As it stands there would also be a ‘natural’ mix of size and capability of counties.

### **2) What is the remit of the ‘National Forum Group’ (which has also been referred to as the ‘JAG’)?**

*Suggestion:* The NFGs remit, in the first instance is tied to Regional Forum activity, sharing good practice and providing feedback to the ESR executive.

The NFG would comprise of one representative from each regional forum, with one of these individuals being elected as Chair. The ESR Director of Participation and Talent Pathway Manager would also be standing members of the group. The NFG is not a replacement for Council – which has a wider, all-encompassing remit across the organisation.

### **3) What is the role of an ESR Participation Manager at a Regional Forum?**

*Suggestion:* PMs attend meetings to provide support, updates and Sport England activity and will also arrange the meetings. PMs will not Chair the meetings, this should be done by an elected member.

### **4) How often should Regional Forums meet?**

*Suggestion:* Three formal meetings per year, although counties are encouraged to meet /share best practice and work together outside of the formal meetings.

### **5) How will funding and services be allocated across the Regional Forums?**

*Suggestion:* Funding is allocated to each Regional Forum based upon infrastructure and potential for growth. Each Regional Forum will receive a minimum level of funding (£10k).

### **6) What percentage of allocated funds should be match-funded by Regional Forums?**

*Suggestion:* The funding allocated by ESR should be 100% match-funded by each Regional Forum.

### **7) How does each county nominate a representative to their Regional Forum?**

*Suggestion:* A ‘role descriptor’ will be developed and shared. Counties will be encouraged to select the most appropriate representative for their Regional Forum.

### **8) What percentage of the Regional Forum funding is allocated into ‘junior talent development’ and ‘junior grassroots development’?**

*Suggestion:* One-third of all allocated funds should be spent on junior talent development (county level and above), one-third on junior grassroots (county outreach) and the remaining third on ‘ad hoc’ /discretionary projects (such as adult participation).