

A response to the report received from National Council on 3 January 2023 in relation to the Competition Review

Thank you to National Council for the additional feedback provided in the report. A significant proportion of the content was already submitted by National Council in a previous report on 9 November, to which the Competition Review Steering Group provided a written response on 13 December. I noted at the time that those recommendations were very much in line with what is already in the Competition Review following the additional member consultation process - and I am pleased to see that continues to the case.

You can view the detail and documentation for Board's agreed direction of travel here: [Competition Review: New structure approved - Table Tennis England](#) - you will also see in the appendices to the presentation an 'audit' of how this aligns with National Council feedback, which is also appended again here. Of the 35 areas of feedback received before Christmas, 33 are agreed and align with the review, one will be given further consideration, and one has not been accepted with a clear rationale.

Consequently, I am not going to address each point from the latest report individually – but I can advise that this additional feedback will be shared with the Steering Group, and we will consider how this might help inform the current proposals. However, I will take this opportunity to make a small number of observations:

Including Local Leagues in the Scope of the Review – like all parts of the (National) Competition Review, the aims, scope, and objectives were subject to consultation and agreement by Board. I'm not aware either at the time or subsequently anyone in any way disagreeing with excluding local league competitions from the scope. The scope of the National Review was already considerable – extending it to local leagues would have rendered it unmanageable. You can see all this background in the [supporting documentation for Phase I](#) - we cannot revisit at this time a fundamental that has shaped all the work subsequently built on this agreed approach - but local opportunities will of course be a key part of the work of the new area staff moving forward

Specific competition proposals – thank you for your thoughts in these areas. The challenge of the Competition Review is not simply to come up with a brainstorm of new competitions, which no doubt all have individual merit when viewed in isolation. The challenge is to determine which events can be fitted into a finite calendar – and, crucially, which opportunities most effectively deliver our core objectives. There seems to be almost total unanimity that the current calendar is bursting at the seams. The revised calendar that is emerging from the Review will not be much different – however this differs from an unsubstantiated 'wish-list' in three simple but absolutely critical ways: firstly, the events are not conceptualised in isolation, but are a set of connected strategic 'responses' to deliver the underlying objectives and principles; secondly, they are evidenced by singularly robust and widespread consultation; and thirdly, they are 'proven' to deliver the appropriate frequency of opportunity for each age-group and standard, and also to work collectively as an overall programme, via the illustrative calendar. You can see this detail in the [outcomes to Phase I](#) and [outcomes to Phase II](#)

I am satisfied and fully confident that the work of the Competition Review to date provides a robust and appropriate roadmap, and that its consideration also addresses the key issues and proposals raised in both the National Council reports. I am heartened that there is such a large degree of overall alignment between your feedback and the current proposals.

I note that the key stakeholders in various competitions will be engaged and involved where those formats may evolve as part of the wider changes and will help shape the remaining phases of the review, including the drafting of the implementation plan – this final phase will involve the Project Group and the new

Competition Advisory Committee and be led by the Executive team before seeking final approval to proceed from the Board on 24 March 2023.

Thank you to members of the National Council for their further input and I encourage National Council and councillors to support the Board's agreed proposals and work constructively with the Steering Group for the future of the national Competition programme.

Adrian Christy
Chief Executive

Appendix: overview of key Phase II feedback #1

- **General** Unfortunate but wholly expected general position of *'we like all the new stuff, please add it in, but don't take anything away'* which is clearly unworkable – there has to be some trade-off!
- ✓ **General** Retaining a County Champs representative programme was a strong and consistent theme for all age-groups (Cadet, Junior, Senior, O40s, O60s), although binary differences of opinion on what age-groups were/weren't the key ones. Compelling case made for unique nature of CC representative programme which can't be delivered through club league structure alone (eg kudos/ honour) Noted that County Champs programme also helps plug gaps in club structure (eg by providing another geographical 'unit' in which players can access team competition) Other feedback recognised problem with County Girls getting full teams; noted that Counties are struggling for volunteers and may not be viable in several years; suggesting need to be stricter and more specific with CC dates to ensure remains viable in calendar [Event retained in proposals](#)
- ✓ **MAG/ National Council** Note that CC (held in clubs by division) is cheaper than BL (typically a large national event) - though NCL/ NJL is cheaper to enter than either [Overall programme will provide mix of both club-based and national events for each age-group and standard, and on principle that more reasonable/ accessible at lower-levels - recognising importance of cost-effectiveness and offering a blend of opportunities](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Would new proposals create additional burden on volunteers? [Not expected to; sustainability in this area is an objective of project](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Would new proposals create additional financial burden on players? [Not expected to; sustainability in this area is an objective of project](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Noted that expansion of Junior club league would need to remain affordable [Agreed; to be addressed in Phase III](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Noted domestic competition clashes with Junior European events [Agreed; review will actively address this](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Noted that National Opens are expensive to host by members, eg due to cost of sports hall [Agreed; proposals include that TTE support/ resource these pinnacle events centrally to ensure viability and ability to attract best players](#)

Appendix: overview of key Phase II feedback #2

- ✓ **Open/ National Council** Several comments that review proposals support T&P development and make domestic programme more fit for purpose
- ✓ **Open** Noted importance of younger age-groups in Local Opens (eg U11) as key competition opportunity [Agreed; reflected in priorities for allocating events](#)
- ✓ **ELCC/ National Council** Small pockets of strong feedback on ELCC competition, notably from the ELCC Chairman and Committee members, plus some National Council members. Noted that ELCC is the only opportunity for local league representation in the national programme. Noted importance of local leagues to the Association. Oldest current domestic national competition (almost 90 years). All Committee members clearly very surprised by some of the quantitative feedback – does not tally with their existing understanding of participant satisfaction or feedback received directly (though not doubting the data or analysis) [Option for retaining this event proposed to Board and agreed](#)
- ✓ **Open** Noted that regional team has been first opportunity for many U11s to play outside clubs, and works as a blended team [Agreed; specific opportunity proposed for this cohort](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Suggested NCL/ NJL sits as ‘development’ activity rather than ‘competition’ [All Competition is categorised as Development under Table Tennis United](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Noted MAG report on tournaments [Has been considered and incorporated within proposals](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Felt that implementation could be phased to greater degree [Illustration now provided to indicate phased approach](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Queried if officiating requirements was manageable [Anticipated yes; sustainability in this area is an objective of project](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Welcomed para and inclusive/ adaptive elements
- ? **MAG** Potential to combine all age-groups into single National Championships [Multiple practical considerations prevent this at current time - mileage in a feasibility study when capacity allows in order to ascertain if a viable medium-term aspiration](#)



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Appendix: overview of key Phase II feedback #3

- ✓ **MAG** More difficult for W&G to gain initial ratings at tournaments as smaller pool of players **Agreed; change to starter points agreed for December '22**
- ✓ **MAG** Does the 'local open' approach dilute the W&G playing pool too much – should there be fewer events designated for W&G, despite greater travelling distance, in order to maximise numbers of W&G competitors at a given event? **Agreed; reflected in proposals**
- ✓ **MAG** Are there opportunities to expand local youth leagues at weekends **Agreed; area staffing opportunities reflected in proposals**
- ✓ **MAG/ National Council** Comments around best-targeting prize money **Agreed needs to be clear rationale – eg National Opens, as part of package to attract best players + Snr Nat Champs, at appropriate level to constitute reward and recognition – reflected in proposals and further detail in Phase III**
- ✓ **VETTS** Welcomed more structured approach to calendar
- ✓ **VETTS** Noted that requires collaborative approach between TTE and VETTS to agree VETTS dates to fit into new proposed schedule **Agreed; need to engage positively and reach desired position over 1-2 seasons**
- ✓ **VETTS** Noted that VETTS are not regulated by TTE but O40s events are given ranking points by 'special arrangement' **To be clearly defined in due course as part of MOU outlining relationship**
- ✓ **National Council** National Junior and Cadet Leagues are very valuable competitions. **Agreed; there is no suggestion of material change to NCL/ NJL, only greater overall alignment – eg branding, TTE support and processes – in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness, and to provide an improved experience to hosts and entrants.**
- ✓ **National Council** U10 and U12 National Championships provide motivation for youngsters **Agreed in terms of principle - the competition review is proposing instead that multiple additional opportunities are specifically created in this age-group. The age-groups with a specific National Championship event are still considered to provide the optimal approach at this time**



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Appendix: overview of key Phase II feedback #4

- ✓ **National Council** Competitions are considered expensive for entrants [Agreed; the competition review proposes an overhaul of the domestic tournament structure to help address this](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Improvements can be made at local league level [Local League was out of scope of the *National* Competition Review – this has been clearly stated throughout - but the Steering Group agree that improvements can be made at local level that will complement the review](#)
- ✓ **National Council** The programme requires a minimum of at least 20 days of the right level of competition for youth players [Agreed; the frequency/ quantity of competition opportunities are covered by proposals in the competition review](#)
- ✓ **National Council** The Junior and Cadet National Championships should remain unchanged. [Agreed; as per the competition review](#)
- ✓ **National Council** There should be multiple National Cup events for juniors and cadets [Agreed - this is the 'National Series' as per the competition review](#)
- ✓ **National Council** A realignment of 4 Star tournaments should take place with fewer, better and more geographically spread events [Agreed; this is covered by the proposal for open tiered tournaments](#)
- ✓ **National Council** England should host a WTT Youth event(s) [This is covered within the Table Tennis United strategy](#)
- ✗ **National Council** A new Cadet British League should be established on the same basis as the Junior British League [The Steering Group do not agree on this point, and this direction is not evidenced by the body of knowledge established via the review. It is considered that a\) the best Cadets play-up to Junior events, b\) NCL provides appropriate opportunity for lower-level, and c\) this would risk player pressure to double-up, also creating calendar clashes. Instead, an expansion of the national Junior league programme is proposed, to three or four weekends, which is considered to better meet the same principles](#)
- ✓ **National Council** Counties, Leagues and Clubs should host events in table tennis clubs to encourage local competition [Agreed; this is reflected in the Tiered Open Tournament approach, and area staff will be advocates at local level](#)



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