

NORTHERN CRICKET UNION OF IRELAND



DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2014 – 2018

April 2014

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Foreword

In common with any organisation's planning process, there is a continual need to review, on a regular basis, all areas of the organisation and to plan to take account of internal and external changes which impact on its development.

The Northern Cricket Union of Ireland ('the Union' or 'the NCU') is in this position following the publication of the Development Plan in 2007. Given the rapid changes in Cricket Ireland ('CI') over the past number of years and the subsequent aspirations contained in its 2013 Strategy Plan, the Union postponed the formulation of its planning for the next 3 years.

The Management Board has carried out an in depth review of the Directorate structure and the governance contained in the 2007/09 Plan, considering how it can best reflect the objectives of CI but also take forward the development of our own domestic game.

While there have been successful achievements in many areas, it was felt that the present developments at national level dictated that the responsibilities of the Directorates be revised along with the governance issues which would arise from the changes.

The proposed changes were circulated to all clubs to seek their comments and were approved at the 2013 Annual General Meeting ('AGM'). These are now reflected in the current Plan and we would encourage all clubs to participate in the achievement of its objectives.

Having attended meetings of all the new Directorates that have been closely involved in the drafting we would like to take this opportunity to thank all Board and Directorate members for their input into the Plan which will take the Union through to 2018. We also welcome the commitment from within the Board to continually review the implementation of the Plan throughout its life cycle and to adopt further changes should these become necessary.

As a result of all this, we are confident that post publication, the new Development Plan will provide fresh impetus for all those involved in NCU cricket.

WR Boyd (President)

A Clement (Chairman)

February 2014

Introduction

The Northern Cricket Union published its first Development Plan in 2007, the year in which Ireland made its presence felt in the ICC Cricket World Cup in the West Indies. Success confirmed Ireland's place as the leading Associate Nation and paved the way for a series of significant initiatives which began in 2008 and culminated some four years later.

These included:

- The establishment of a new Cricket Ireland Management Board;
- The appointment of additional staff throughout the period;
- The publication of a High Performance Plan 2009-2015;
- An Independent Review of Domestic Cricket in 2009; and
- The publication of a Strategic Plan 2012-2015.

The period between 2008 and 2012 heralded on-field success at all levels of both men's and women's international cricket, enabling the Strategic Plan and facilitating Cricket Ireland's aspiration to make a case to the International Cricket Council (ICC) for Ireland to become a full Test Nation by 2020.

These were years of radical change in Irish cricket during which the impact of the proposals inevitably took some time to be appreciated by all interested parties.

Consequently, and having regard to the significant changes ongoing, in 2013 the NCU Management Board took the decision to proceed with the preparation of its Development Plan for the period 2014-2018.

Given the strategic context outlined above, the Union's Management Board will ensure that this Plan focuses attention on the positive development of clubs and players in a manner sympathetic to their aspirations. These may be aligned purely to players' recreational interests, or in aiming to participate at the highest level and the ambition of attaining representative provincial or international selection.

The underlying theme, therefore, of this plan is one of devising policies and proposals which recognise the dynamics in our game and the importance of the contrasting expectations of everyone involved at a time of economic and financial restraint.

Following this Introduction, the first part of the Plan will briefly examine progress made between 2007 and 2013 at Management Board and Directorate levels. This review will provide a context for the next section - 'The Way Forward 2014-2018', within which the Management Board and each of the new Directorates will outline their proposals for the Plan period.

The Directorates are:

- Finance and Policy
- Domestic Cricket
- Representative Cricket

The final section 'Summary and Conclusions' will summarise the Management Board's approach to the development of cricket within the Northern Cricket Union.

Development Plan 2007/09 Performance Review

Introduction

The review is designed to assess progress made during the lifespan of the Management Board and its four Directorates:

- Finance and Sponsorship
- Forward Planning
- Cricket Development
- Competitions

Principal achievements are briefly outlined and these, together with areas of concern identified by each Directorate, will form the platform upon which proposals for 2014-2018 are prepared. An important component of the platform has been the process of continuous internal review, which culminated in an 'Away Day' in 2013. The latter enabled the Management Board to participate in a review of performance, facilitated by a member of staff of Sport Northern Ireland ('Sport NI').

This approach has hopefully permitted current areas of concern to be resolved in keeping with the Union's aims and its clubs' expectations during the next five years.

Management Board

Principal Achievements

- Establishment of a form of governance capable of addressing issues at all levels of cricket;
- Acceptance by clubs of this structured form of administration;
- Improved communications with clubs;
- Skill to conduct business with a wide range of stakeholders; and
- Awareness of policy flexibility and its realisation in a democratic and inclusive manner.

Finance and Sponsorship Directorate

This Directorate's primary responsibilities included:

- Establishment of effective budgetary control mechanisms;
- Cost control over NCU events;
- Investigation of sources of grant aid; and
- Increase in total revenues from sponsorship, advertising and NCU publications.

Principal Achievements

Achievements recorded below have been realised against a backdrop of an unstable and challenging economic environment. For instance, 2007 was the last year that the Union received funding from Sport NI. This was followed by the cessation of our Lords Taverners funding in 2008. In spite of this, in the financial reporting period from December 2007 to March 2013, the Union has generated an aggregate net surplus of over £2,000.

- **Retention of Ulster Bank as primary sponsor** - Ulster Bank have sponsored the League competitions for over a decade, and in 2011 extended the scope of its sponsorship to the Challenge Cup. Total funding from Ulster Bank in the 15 month period to March 2013 was £15,000, comprising almost 30% of our total gross income;
- **Prudent expenditure/working capital management** - Over the last 6 years significant controllable costs have either been held or reduced due to budget monitoring or re-negotiation of contracts (for example, gross insurance costs have dropped from £10.7k in 2006 to £6.9k in 2012/13 and annual dinner catering costs, in excess of £5k in 2006, dropped below £5k in 2012). These savings have enabled the Union to continue to operate through periods of deficit reporting;
- **Ability to contribute to funding of Cricket Development Officer ('CDO') in NCU area** – Annual contributions of £6k are made to Cricket Ireland to assist funding this post. The appointment has facilitated an increase of cricket development and coaching activities in the NCU area;
- **Anniversary Dinner** - The 125th Anniversary dinner attracted new guests and received positive profile and feedback, contributing in excess of £4k to our revenues;
- **Sourcing funding from Belfast City Council** - Whilst overall the drop in grant aid and assistance from the public sector has been disappointing, we have obtained grant aid towards coaching spend from a new source, Belfast City Council, and anticipate further funding from this source going forward;
- **Optimisation of revenues from affiliated clubs and schools** - In 2005 school affiliation fees were increased from £30 to £50, and in 2011 approval was granted at the AGM to increase club registration fees from £2 to £3 per registered player (generating £3k additional revenues). In October 2013, a further increase to school affiliation fees was approved (£1k additional revenues).

Forward Planning Directorate

The Directorate's responsibilities were:

- Research, including club census analysis;
- Review of 2007/09 Development Plan;
- Forward Planning - replacement plan framework;
- Liaison with Sport NI and Cricket Ireland; and
- Ad hoc requests from Directorates and the Management Board.

Principal Achievements

- **Adoption of 2007/09 Development Plan** – As part of the consultation process, presentations were made to clubs explaining the rationale underlying the Plan and its effect on the governance of the Union;
- **Update and rewrite of the Disciplinary Bye-Laws** – The Bye-Laws required continuous review to take account of changes in the ICC Code of Conduct and those being used by Cricket Ireland;
- **Automation of the Union's procedures** – Competition entries were automated in 2010 and in 2012 the electronic submission of registrations and starrings (including amendments) and result forms was introduced;
- **Umpires' Disciplinary Report** – The report form has been regularly updated to reflect changes in the Disciplinary Bye-Laws;
- **Club Census** – In 2010 a census of clubs was undertaken in association with Cricket Ireland. The data collected is designed to assist in obtaining an overview of the playing strength of clubs and their facilities. It is intended that this census will be carried out on an annual basis to enable the Union to acquire an accurate picture of trends in the growth of the game over the Plan period.

Cricket Development Directorate

The Directorate's principal responsibilities were wide-ranging and included:

- Coaching, youth competitions and representative teams;
- Grassroots advice and club development;
- Child protection;
- Schools cricket including school/club links; and
- Umpiring and scoring.

Principal Achievements

These have been considerable during the Plan period, not least in relation to major restructuring of leagues, the re-introduction of an inter-provincial series, improvement of dialogue with clubs and the promotion of volunteer umpires to officiate at fixtures.

- **Appointment of Regional Development Officer** – This has been a successful and much needed appointment. The CDO has helped increase the number of participants playing cricket and schools introducing cricket into their curriculum. The game's enhanced profile has also facilitated the implementation of the Club Accreditation Scheme and in strengthening the women's /girls' cricket;
- **New Domestic Cricket Structure** – The establishment of the Senior and Junior Cricket taskforces to examine the structure and composition of both league tiers has enabled considerable improvement of communication with Union clubs. As a result, league restructuring, where appropriate, has taken place in a receptive environment;
- **Improved Youth Structure** – This was mainly promoted by the Competitions Directorate and provides an invaluable example of the importance of inter-directorate liaison and policy resolution. Improved youth cricket formats have been in place over the last number of years;
- **Club Accreditation** – In conjunction with the CDO and CI, the introduction of the Club Accreditation Scheme has seen the majority of Premier League and Section 1 clubs either commence or achieve the basic level of accreditation. This has resulted in clubs obtaining recognition for best practice, or given them the opportunity to look at how they might achieve the standards required. A timeline has been agreed with CI as to when the remainder of our clubs should be introduced to the process;
- **Improved Communications with Clubs** – The introduction of the two taskforces, associated questionnaires and face-to-face discussion has led to clubs being more receptive to proposals made by the Directorate;
- **Volunteer Umpires** – This scheme has worked well during the last two seasons but still requires further refinement;
- **Feedback from umpires regarding grounds and from captains on umpires** – Communication with all parties has improved, leading to more reliable information being received by the Management Board. Moreover, a Groundsmans Association has been established;
- **Regional Development Squad Organisation** – New youth development squad formats have promoted a marked improvement in the coaching standards available to all participants;
- **Promotion of Girls' Cricket** – The Directorate, in conjunction with the CDO, has been making particular efforts to increase the number of girls and clubs playing cricket. At present there are four women's teams playing regularly and nine girls' teams entered in schools' competitions;

- **University of Ulster (Jordanstown)** – A facility within the University has been set up following initiatives by the Cricket Development Directorate. It will benefit all of the Union’s clubs, with further improvements earmarked for the future;
- **Schools Cricket** – New competitions have been introduced for girls and developing schools and our outreach to Primary Schools has been extended.

Competitions Directorate

The Directorate's responsibilities were:

- The running of the Union's league and cup competitions;
- Fixtures co-ordination and administration;
- Review of competition rules;
- Registration of players;
- Provision of administration advice to clubs; and
- Media relations.

Principal Achievements

- **Inter-Directorate Initiatives** – A series of roadshows were held in 2010/11 in partnership with the Cricket Development Directorate. This included discussion on the establishment of a new eight team Premier League;
- **ODI and Duckworth Lewis Regulations** – Regulations mirroring those used in One Day International (ODI) cricket were introduced to the Premier League, Senior League 1 and the Challenge Cup competitions, while Duckworth Lewis is used in all Senior Leagues and the Challenge Cup;
- **Introduction of new Twenty20 Competitions** – Most clubs in the Union are now playing in this format of the game;
- **Union Website** – The new website has enabled much improved communications with clubs and the general public;
- **Public Relations Officer** - After the position being vacant for some years, a Public Relations Officer was appointed.

The Competitions Directorate has now been incorporated into the new Domestic Cricket Directorate. Its previous experience of partnership with the Cricket Development Directorate will prove invaluable in their assimilation during the plan period.

THE WAY FORWARD

2014 – 2018

Strategic Aims

- **Wider engagement** – to enhance the strength, quality and management of NCU cricket at all levels and assist our clubs in fulfilling their development aspirations;

- **Promotion of good governance** - to develop and implement relationship management strategies for all key stakeholders, including, but not limited to member clubs, Cricket Ireland, sponsors and funders, and the NI Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers;

- **Effective collaboration** - to work in partnership with Cricket Ireland and, where appropriate, the other provincial unions to make a positive contribution to Irish Cricket, both on and off the field.

Governance Overview

The proposed changes to the Union's Directorates and governance structures were circulated to clubs in advance of the 2013 AGM. These retained the existing base of a Management Board and Directorates which had worked well since their introduction in 2007. The proposals were adopted unanimously at the AGM. (See Appendix 1)

The existing Directorates were reduced from four to three, namely:

- Finance and Policy
- Domestic Cricket
- Representative Cricket

The Forward Planning Directorate's functions have been transferred to a new Directorate of Finance and Policy, while those of the Competitions Directorate are now part of a new Directorate of Domestic Cricket. The recent development of cricket at the national level has been of such a scale as to require a new Directorate of Representative Cricket to be created. This will deal with the Union's inter provincial cricket at both senior and youth levels.

Leadership of the Directorates is based on the existing system with an additional assistant Director for Finance and Policy.

The reduction in Directorates has reduced club representation to the Management Board by one, but this has been addressed by three club nominations directly elected to the Board. As a result, club representation on the Management Board has been increased from four to six – three continuing to come from club nominees to the various Directorates. The Management Board has now increased by one member to seventeen.

Proposals

Management Board

Promotion of Board effectiveness

The Union conducted a review of its activities and management, examining our existing structures and leadership and assessing what has worked well, what has not worked well, and what our key areas for improvement and development should be. All participants in this event, which was facilitated by a third party, viewed it as a success and the Management Board propose to hold an annual strategy session and management evaluation to assess progress against our current Development Plan and identify forward priorities.

Timeframe: Spring 2014 (and annually thereafter)

Establishment of a Chairman's Committee

This Committee is designed to:

- Oversee the ongoing review of the Development Plan;
- Ensure that any unavoidable overlap in the Directorates' responsibilities are clearly identified and resolved;
- Improve general communications between the Management Board and its Directorates and issue an agreed agenda in advance of Board Meetings; and
- Explore means of enhancing dialogue with the constituent clubs of the Northern Cricket Union.

Timeframe: Spring 2014 with meetings held at the Chairman's discretion

Finance and Policy

The remit of the Finance and Policy Directorate has been extended to assume the responsibilities of the Forward Planning Directorate. A priority of the enlarged Directorate is the promotion of sound financial management strategies with a view to the achievement of controlled growth of the Union's activities, underpinned by effective governance and best practice operating structures.

In order to consolidate the success of recent years and address those areas of concern which still require improvement, the Directorate has made the following proposals:

Prudent Working Capital and Financial Management

- As a priority, continue to set budgets for and monitor costs incurred against key areas of spend;
- Budgets to be sought in advance for events such as school tours, all Northern Knights and Youth Representative cricket, and the annual dinner.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing

Development of a Sponsorship Relationship Strategy

- Clarify ownership of and responsibility for how the Union manages relationships with its key sponsors;
- More formal targeting of new sponsors. We will seek to secure new revenues, broaden existing and build new relationships; and
- Proactive collaboration will be increased with the Union's PRO. Work with third party advisors, as appropriate, and with Cricket Ireland will also be extended.

Timeframe: Immediate, with interim and annual reports to the Management Board on sponsorship activities

Increased Spend on Cricket Development Activities

The appointment of a Cricket Development Officer in the NCU has resulted in additional spend. This spend will be increased, including, as appropriate the appointment of a Domestic Cricket Development Officer, working closely with the Directorates of Domestic Cricket and Representative Cricket, to ensure prudent management of resources.

Timeframe: Monitoring of spend is ongoing while budgets for the 2013 -2014 are in progress

Enforcement of Communication Strategy

- The Directorate will liaise with our General Secretary, PRO and website administrator to develop a communications strategy for all major Union events and activities, and to further improve communication with the member clubs;
- A social media policy will be published on the Union's website and distributed to all clubs.

Timeframe: Policy to be published prior to the commencement of the 2014 season with communications strategy for events to be agreed on an ad hoc basis

Development of Information Technology Strategy

- The Directorate will liaise with the other Directorates to clarify and establish policies addressing the use of technology, not only around communication, but public relations, marketing and administration (including use of statistical data);
- Such policies will promote further automation of procedures by clubs (for example electronic score cards).

Timeframe: Marketing and PR policies to be developed during the 2014 season. Policies relevant to club participation to be agreed by the 2015 season

Development of Marketing Strategy

- A significant element of the marketing strategy will be captured through our sponsorship relationship management;
- The Directorate will also: review the format of the annual dinner; consider the introduction of activities around the Challenge Cup (or other) finals to achieve wider publicity; work with Representative Cricket Directorate, sponsors and Cricket Ireland to secure greater publicity and profile for interprovincial and representative youth cricket; develop relationships with public sector organizations to obtain financial assistance either directly for the Union or its affiliate clubs;
- Achievement of this proposal will require cross-directorate activity engagement with clubs, sponsors, PRO, press and Cricket Ireland.

Timeframe: Dinner and Cup Final formats to be considered in the Spring of 2014, with a view to rolling out across a number of Cup Finals in successive seasons. Promotion of representative cricket to be considered in the Spring of 2014

Identify Additional Fund Raising Events

Traditionally limited to the annual dinner and the gate at the Challenge Cup Final, in the 2013 season the Last Wicket Standing competition was introduced. As such events have the added benefit of enabling the Union to promote engagement with clubs and members and with Provincial Unions and the media, the Directorate will endeavour to identify and promote an additional fundraising event or activity on an annual basis.

Timeframe: First event / activity to be held in 2014 – 2015

Development of Corporate Risk Register

- The register will further promote good governance and recognise an appetite for managed growth of the Union's activities;
- It will also facilitate the Management Board in the identification of key risks and the development and monitoring of mitigating strategies to manage risk;
- This proposal will require input from all Directorates and the Management Board.

Timeframe: First draft to be prepared during the Spring of 2014 and presented to the Management Board prior to the Spring annual strategy event

Research / Club Census

The Directorate will extend the club census, consider the capacity for additional research and provide data and analysis on requests from the Management Board and Directorates.

Timeframe: Census to be carried out on an annual basis, while other data will be collated and analyzed as required

Safeguarding Children

- Review of adequacy of existing Child Protection Policy and procedures (including communication with Clubs);
- Revision of procedures, as appropriate, to reflect current best practice and guidance, including the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children's Sport in Ireland;
- Establishment of database of Club Welfare Officers (or those responsible for child protection measures) ;

Timeframe: Policy review immediate, database to be in place for 2014 season

Domestic Cricket Directorate

As expressed in the Introduction to the Plan, the impact and influence of Cricket Ireland have been significant factors in the shaping of the new system of governance. From this a pyramidal structure has emerged - a solid base to build a successful interprovincial and ultimately international team.

In constructing a solid base, the Domestic Cricket Directorate must cater for the contrasting expectations of players and clubs, be this purely for recreational interests or for the opportunity to participate at the highest level. Related to this is the developing environment in which clubs are now better informed and less wary of the work and intentions of the Union. The Domestic Cricket Directorate is anxious to continue with this course of action and encourage all clubs at all levels to have the confidence to make their views known and assist in the running of THEIR game.

To this end, the Directorate has identified a number of policy areas which it regards as priorities during the Plan period. The following priorities have been targeted for seasons 2015 and 2016 and give particular emphasis to:

- Increased participation;
- Club awareness/development;
- Improvement in standards.

All directorate activity is underpinned by a continuous review of domestic cricket.

Appointment of a Domestic Cricket Development Officer

- The appointee will put emphasis on interacting directly with clubs and schools in relation to coaching, fundraising, grant availability, grounds and equipment;
- This is the Directorate's single most important goal. It is crucial to all development issues. Therefore, the officer's work programme must be designed to promote and develop all NCU clubs.

Timeframe: Appointment within 2 years of the commencement of the Development Plan

Club Accreditation

- All Premier and Senior League 1 clubs to have achieved appropriate accreditation;
- Specific dates to be set for clubs to achieve accreditation; and
- A system of encouragement and assistance to be provided for clubs to obtain the relevant standards.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing with completion within the duration of the Development Plan

Umpires and Scorers

Directorate to work with NIACUS in the following areas:

- Increase the number of umpires and scorers, both regular and occasional;
- Formation of an Elite Panel of umpires and scorers from which major appointments would be made; and
- Agree clear pathways for entrance to the Elite Panels, including coaching and mentoring advice.

Timeframe: Immediate and completed by commencement of season 2015

Junior Leagues

- Continuing review of the current Junior League system, using written polls and road shows to consider development options; and
- Evaluation of the options to address, inter alia, regionalisation at or below an agreed level, length of games, starrings and starting times.

Timeframe: Ongoing and through the period of the Development Plan

Increased Participation

Investigation of the alternatives to traditional school / club bases such as work forces, churches, youth clubs and ethnic minorities.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Schools' Cricket

- Increase participation by schools which do not have an historical cricket base;
- Review of the status and effect of the "longer school games" on Saturdays; and
- Increase participation in girls' cricket.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Annual Dinner

Seek increased player / club participation in conjunction with the Finance and Policy Directorate, for example the introduction of awards for player of the season for leagues below Premier League.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Women's and Girls' Cricket

- Women's Premier League to be expanded to 6 teams

Timeframe: By commencement of 2015 season

- U17 Girls – T20 Cup;
- U15 Girls – T20 Cup;
- U13 Girls – Super 8's Cup;
- U19 Schools Cup;
- U15 School Cup;
- U13 (Super 8's Cup) Premier;
- Annual NCU Primary Soft Ball tournament.

Timeframe: By commencement of 2016 season

Competition Rules

To consider:

- Senior League titles in the event of a tie to be decided by run rate;
- Assessment of merits of 2 up 2 down promotion and relegation;
- The option of clubs with only one adult team playing in junior cricket;
- Encouraging more flexibility in starting time;
- Requirements of facilities and equipment for various standards of cricket.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Grounds Committee

- Further development of Grounds Committee remit and activities;
- Grounds advice where deemed improvement required;
- Access to top level advice on grounds / pitches;
- Courses available on an annual basis;
- More accurate assessment of grounds facilities; and
- Ongoing support for the Groundsman's Association.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Youth Cricket

Review of the changes in youth cricket and the best v best plan.

Timeframe: By commencement of 2014 season

Coloured Clothing

Consideration of the option of playing in coloured clothing.

Timeframe: By commencement of season 2015

Overseas Players

- Review qualification criteria which best meets the current requirements taking into account the political, legal and financial realities.
- To consider the availability of overseas players to assist with the Union's coaching programme.

Timeframe: Review of qualification criteria by AGM 2014, otherwise immediate and ongoing throughout the period of the Development Plan

Representative Cricket

In its Strategic Plan, Cricket Ireland, which has overall responsibility for interprovincial cricket, recognises the importance of partnership with the Provincial Unions. For partnership to progress, it will require considerable dialogue, hard work and frequent meetings between all interested parties. This is especially the case with representative cricket, which has just been reintroduced to the Irish scene on an in depth basis. Consequently, the proposals which follow from our newly formed Representative Cricket Directorate are founded on the above proposition of partnership to which our Union fully subscribes. The Directorate's proposals relate to management of the:

- Northern Knights Inter Provincial Team; and
- All Youth Representative Cricket.

Northern Knights to be competitive in the three formats – 3 Day, 50 over, T20

- Win a minimum of one competition per year;
- Develop local players to play for the Knights and to increase our number of Cricket Ireland 'contracted players';
- Develop an NCU Academy which becomes the Junior Knights, the best of whom will join the Knights' squad for practice and possible selection; and
- Plan and organise specialist workshops and practice for the weaker skill sets within the Knights.

Timeframe: Ongoing during the period of the Plan

Enable the Union to administer all aspects of the Northern Knights

- Up-skill the Union to manage the obligations imposed by the Inter Provincial Targeted Assistance and Performance Programme ('TAPP') funding provisions;
- Inherit from CI the day to day responsibility and finance to manage the Inter- provincial team and associated staff; and
- Explore CI, ICC, public and private sector funding streams to enable us to maintain existing programmes.

Timeframe: Discussions to commence during the 2014 - 2015 seasons, commence the transfer of responsibilities for the start of 2016 with the process to be completed for the start of the 2018 season

Maximise sponsorship and marketing opportunities for the Northern Knights

- Obtain sponsorship and develop the brand to enable appropriate training, practice, tours and warm-up matches to be arranged;
- Maximise the potential match attendance through publicity and working with the local schools, clubs and the community; and
- The Team Administrative Officer, the Union's PRO and others will promote the team, players, practices and fixtures in order to sell the brand. For the above to be successful particularly close partnership will be essential between Cricket Ireland and the Union's Finance and Policy Directorate.

Timeframe: Ongoing during the period of the Plan

Fully participate in the Cricket Ireland Match Allocation Group (MAG)

- Increase the CI rating of grounds in the NCU area to host representative cricket matches; and
- Form a MAG sub group to recommend suitable grounds and develop a 'home' venue for the Knights.

Timeframe: Immediate and ongoing and target to be realized by end of Development Plan period

Establish and maintain an effective and competitive regional youth structure

- Create a NCU youth development and coaching steering group;
- Establish a structured regional development program at Under11, Under13, Under15 and Under 17 levels;
- Establish a coaching programme for 7 to 9 year olds;
- Provide competitive match programmes for the regional development sides beyond the annual interprovincial tournaments;
- Improve the current win ratio in Youth Interprovincials; and
- Target 4 selections per age group per season to the Irish youth teams.

Timeframe: Initial structure to be in place early 2014, targets ongoing to the end of the Plan period

The creation of a coaching structure that supports the regional development programme

- Establish a Junior Knights Academy;
- Involve specialist coaches / senior Knights players to further enhance the quality of coaching;
- Assist with the formation of a regional coaches association;
- Increase the number of coaches involved in the regional development programme. Provide regular coaching development workshops to ensure coaches are continually up skilled; and
- Create a means of achieving high quality coaching and development for those who don't make final regional development squads.

Timeframe: Initial structure to be in place early 2014, targets ongoing to the end of the Plan period

Progression of Women's and Girls' Cricket

Regional:

- NCU Women's Squad - Interprovincial fixtures v LCC/NWCU
- NCU U17 Girls - Interprovincial 'Tournament' fixtures v LCU/NWCU
- NCU U15 Girls - Interprovincial fixtures v LCU/NWCU
- NCU U13 Girls - Interprovincial fixtures v LCU/NWCU

Timeframe: Ongoing and all of the above to be in place for the 2017 season



Summary and Conclusions

This Development Plan covers the period 2014 – 2018 and replaces the Union's first Plan published in 2007.

The reasons for the delay in replacing our Plan are explained in the Introduction. However, in the last few years, the Forward Planning Directorate ensured the original Plan's aims were reviewed and updated, where appropriate.

The proposals have, inter alia, retained in principle the structure of governance (Management Board and Directorates) first introduced in 2007. The new Directorates reflect the importance of the Union being fully aware of the strategic context within which it now operates. Of parallel importance is the stability of our clubs and players to be reinforced by the appointment of a Domestic Cricket Development Officer.

As a Union, we will strive to promote effective governance and to administer our sport in the NCU area in a professional manner, treating each other with respect, and conducting our activities in a spirit consistent with the laws of cricket.

In brief, the Directorates have sought to bring attention to the need in future for:

- Prudent financial management;
- The preparation of clearly defined sponsorship and marketing strategies;
- Identification of additional fund raising activities;
- Overall policy monitoring and review;
- The appointment of a Domestic Cricket Development Officer;
- Increased participation in cricket, including schools;
- Club awareness of development opportunities and related advice;
- Improvements in standards;
- Promotion of women's / girls' cricket in clubs;
- Effective management of the Northern Knights Inter Provincial team;
- Effective management of all youth representative cricket; and
- Progress in the development of women's / girls' representative cricket.

The Development Plan will be subject to continuous review by each Directorate from which an Operational Plan will be prepared. The Plan will place emphasis on targets and outcomes with a summary published at the end of year 1(2014) and year 3 (2016).

The summaries are designed to invite our clubs to participate in Union policy-making and its progress during the policy cycle.

The realisation of the Plan's aims will depend on a meaningful partnership with Cricket Ireland when required, informed recognition of the inter relationship between the professional and amateur game, and the fact that the strength of our Union has always been our volunteers.

Appendix 1

Directorates October 2013

Finance and Policy Director + 2 Assistant Directors + Hon Treasurer

- Setting of budgets and the monitoring of performance against them
- Insurance, banking and investment arrangements
- Approval of draft accounts
- Financial delegations to Honorary Treasurer
- Liaison with CI Finance Committee
- Liaison with Auditors
- General Secretary's remuneration
- Annual Dinner
- Fundraising and sponsorship
- Marketing
- Media relations
- Research on participation
- Development Plan
- Forward planning
- Board/Directorate succession planning
- Review of General Rules
- Safeguarding Children

Domestic Cricket Development Director + 1 Assistant Director

- Promotion of grassroots cricket
- Club development/accreditation (including advice to clubs)
- Coaching (non-elite)
- Club/school links
- Liaison with NCU Development Officer
- Liaison with Schools' Committee
- Grading and inspection of grounds (including setting standards)
- Umpiring and scoring (including liaison with NIACUS)
- Registration of players (including registration guidance)
- Adult competitions (including rules)
- Liaison with C I Cricket Committee re C I club competitions
- Youth competitions (including rules)

Representative Cricket Director + 1 Assistant Director

- Interprovincial Cricket - including management of T.A.O., Manager and Coach
- Liaison with Cricket Ireland Operations Manager
- Nomination of Youth Cricketers for RDS's
- Youth representative teams U13, 15, 17 and U12 & 14
- Appointment of coaches
- Provincial elite squad coaching and preparation
- Academy development

