

# British Cycling

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## GBCT Review

Prepared for Ian Drake, CEO

**STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL**

Peter A King CBE

Executive Director

19<sup>th</sup> November 2012

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## 1. Introduction

The background to the review is set out in an email to the Board and all GBCT staff from the CEO in September 2012 which was framed as follows:

### **CEO GB Cycling Team Review - September 2012**

#### **Introduction**

2008 to 2012 has been a remarkable 4 years for British Cycling, culminating with Team Sky's and Bradley's historic success in the Tour de France followed by the delivery of 8 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze Olympic Medals and 8 Gold, 9 Silver and 5 Bronze Paralympic Medals in a home Games. These successes combined together have to be one of the greatest ever achievements in sport, and one of which you should all be immensely proud. The performances of everyone, athletes and support staff, regardless of medal success, have been inspirational.

Looking ahead we have continued to progress the Project Rio submission to UK Sport for 2013-2017 and are making good progress, and I am confident we will get a good settlement in December for both our Olympic and Paralympic Programmes.

I'm conscious that there has been speculation about the future structure of GBCT, and having reflected on this over the past week or so, I feel it is really important that I get a more detailed insight into people's thoughts about the future, and how we continue to sustain this success for Rio and beyond.

As such we will be embarking on a similar process to the review I conducted in 2010, which involved a number of 1-1 informal interviews from which a number of recommendations were made to the Board and changes implemented. I have asked Peter King to conduct the interviews on my behalf and to report back to me.

## 2. The Brief

### 2.1 Focus

The brief provided by the CEO of British Cycling can be summarised in two key points as follows:

A) It will be important to stress that all interviews will be confidential and no comments will be attributed to individuals in the final report.

B) We will be looking to identify key themes / trends around areas of strengths or weaknesses we need to address to sustain success in Rio and in 2020 across more disciplines.

### 2.2 Timeline

Interviews were initially planned to be conducted in two phases, but a further phase was added later as follows:

#### **Phase 1 (to be complete prior to 11<sup>th</sup> October)**

We are aiming to conclude all phase 1 interviews as quickly as possible and have some initial feedback / recommendations before our UK Sport RIO Panel meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> of October.

#### **Phase 2 (to be complete prior to 2<sup>nd</sup> November)**

No deadline set for completion of review but urgency understood.

#### **Phase 3 (added after completion of phase 2 to accommodate further members of staff who requested to contribute and members of the BC SMT)**

Review delayed to accommodate all those who wished to contribute, including supplementary interviews in person or by telephone.

## 3. The Process

### 3.1 Methodology

- 3.1.1 Following the initial briefing from the CEO a series of face to face interviews were carried out with 19 members of the permanent staff of GBCT on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September 2012.
- 3.1.2 These interviews lasted from 45 minutes to an hour and were conducted in a completely confidential environment with no comments being subsequently attributed to any interviewee and this has permitted some illuminating comments to be made.
- 3.1.3 Several interviewees from this first phase asked for second and even third opportunities to submit further comments either face to face or over the telephone.
- 3.1.4 The second phase of interviews was conducted by telephone between October 25<sup>th</sup> and November 1st. This wave included 6 more staff members and 6 athletes and the interviews lasted from 20 minutes to one hour.
- 3.1.5 A third wave of interviews involving 3 more members of staff and 5 members of the BC SMT were conducted between November 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.1.6 During the second and third waves of interviews several interviewees asked for second and third opportunities to provide comment over the telephone.
- 3.1.7 In total, almost 50 interviews were conducted, either face-to-face or over the telephone, with a total of 39 people including GBCT staff at all levels, athletes and members of the BC SMT.
- 3.1.8 All comments were analysed and assimilated during the process and finally consolidated into this report between November 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>.
- 3.1.9 Many comments were made about personalities and personal relationships but these are not all recorded in this report for reasons of confidentiality. Some may be relayed verbally if it is thought they could be helpful.

## 4. Key themes

A number of key themes emerged from the process which can be separated into three related groups – (1) Structure and Management and (2) Performance and (3) People.

### 4.1 Structure and management

- 4.1.1 There is an overriding impression, supported by many comments, that “it’s broke so let’s fix it”.
- 4.1.2 “It was the most bizarre management structure I have seen in my life – and then we lost [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] and ended up being managed by [REDACTED]”
- 4.1.3 There now appears to be no recognisable management structure and no senior management team following the move away of [REDACTED] and the return to a consultancy role of [REDACTED]
- 4.1.4 The management structure, such as it is, is seen as being too flat with too many middle managers supposedly reporting direct to [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]
- 4.1.5 Individual elements of the overall programme are working in silos with the senior people in each silo doing their best to manage downwards but feeling little or no sense of being managed from above.
- 4.1.6 Middle managers feel the decision-making process is flawed. There is frequently nobody available prepared to make decisions and decisions made are often overturned by someone else for no apparent reason.
- 4.1.7 There appears to be no process to manage the progression of talented athletes through the stages of the talent pathway.
- 4.1.8 Many interviewees expressed the view that they did not feel part of a team but merely one of a collection of individuals.
- 4.1.9 Many interviewees expressed the view that the various silos in which they felt they were working did not often cooperate well with each other but tended to be defensive of their own positions. Expressions such as “lobbing grenades over the wall” were used more than once.
- 4.1.10 Many interviewees from both the GBCT and other departments expressed disappointment around the disconnect between GBCT and other parts of British Cycling meaning that the sport cannot presently fully maximise the impact of our medal success

## 4.2 Performance

- 4.2.1 There is a widely held view that success in London came from concerted efforts by the podium coaches working with athletes who stepped up to the mark rather than from a structured, streamlined and coordinated team effort such as we saw in Beijing.
- 4.2.2 There was some suggestion that luck was a key factor in the 2012 success.
- 4.2.3 Many questioned the lack of resources and management time being applied to the discovery and development of the talented athletes of the future, particularly referring to women, paralympic athletes and the disciplines of BMX and MTB.
- 4.2.4 A majority of athletes and coaches who are not part of the track podium programme felt that they were second class in respect of funding and access to support and resources.
- 4.2.5 Many references were made to the serious neglect of the talent team over more than five years.
- 4.2.6 There seems to be a degree of disappointment within the paralympic programme with the medal haul in London.
- 4.2.7 A number of athletes and coaches expressed the view that there was too much focus on Olympic disciplines and events and not enough use of the non-Olympic disciplines and events as development opportunities.

## 4.3 People

- 4.3.1 The leadership style is seen by some as being autocratic.
- 4.3.2 Several referred to a culture of fear, intimidation and bullying.
- 4.3.3 There are frequent examples of open antagonism between senior managers and between senior managers and middle managers.
- 4.3.4 Instances were referred to by several people of athletes, coaches and support staff behaving in a manner which could be interpreted as arrogance during competitions.
- 4.3.5 ■ seems to command wide respect ■ – but this is tempered by constant references to the little amount of quality time ■ ■ ■ ■ ■ The perception of this ranges from “less than 30%” to “no more than 50%”. Nevertheless, there is little or no appetite for ■ to operate ■

- 4.3.6 There was confusion and uncertainty before, during and after London 2012 caused by initial statements that [REDACTED], followed by actions which clearly denied this prospect.
- 4.3.7 Opinions of [REDACTED] are divided, ranging from strong support by some athletes and coaches to little or no respect at all from others – but few [REDACTED]
- 4.3.8 There are mixed views about [REDACTED] going forward, as a consultant, but his role as a member of [REDACTED] seems to have been seen as something of a peacemaker with colleagues rather than that of a manager. Several expressed the view that being part of [REDACTED] was actually a conflict of interest for [REDACTED] which will not now be the case.
- 4.3.9 There is a general feeling that staff are not valued and that there is little or no prospect of salary enhancement, personal development or promotion.
- 4.3.10 There is no feeling that GBCT has a team ethos. “We are not rewarded for success and we do not even celebrate it as a team”
- 4.3.11 Several felt that we are doing nothing to train the next generation of high performance coaches and too little to train club coaches.
- 4.3.12 Many thought that [REDACTED] was a big loss to GBCT and questioned whether it could have been prevented.



## 5. Conclusions

### 5.1 People

- 5.1.1 It was suggested to me by some interviewees that the GBCT would function better without one or more of their colleagues or that if certain others did not leave then they themselves would leave. I have not come to the conclusion that any one or more of the present staff complement is surplus to requirements.
- 5.1.2 Contrary to the suggestion of reducing the existing staff complement, my conclusion is that we need to strengthen it by addition and/or promotion.
- 5.1.3 We need urgently to strengthen not only the management structure but the administration which supports it.
- 5.1.4 The present situation regarding inter-personal relationships / behaviours is untenable and must be addressed urgently, whatever overall plan is established for the future.
- 5.1.5 Staff and particularly managers, should not step outside the areas of involvement and responsibility designated for them as part of their job description.
- 5.1.6 As soon as a plan is agreed for the next four years it is important that staff terms and conditions of employment, remuneration levels and career advancement prospects, are reviewed regardless of whether they are to continue in their present roles or move to different roles.

### 5.2 Management Structure.

- 5.2.1 Any semblance of a management structure has clearly disintegrated during the last Olympic cycle.
- 5.2.2 A new structure is urgently needed to deliver the Rio programme and the related Performance Pathway.
- 5.2.3 The structural model included in the Project Rio submission represents a good basis for a new management structure for the GBCT, going forward.
- 5.2.4 There are not enough members of staff on the GBCT payroll with management expertise and authority. Several senior additions will have to be made.
- 5.2.5 There is no evidence of an adequate integrated administrative function underlying the GBCT and supporting coaches, middle managers and elements of the programme.

- 5.2.6 It is not sustainable to have the CEO and Finance Director dealing with operational as opposed to strategic GBCT issues including the CEO personally writing the RIO funding submission to UK Sport.

### 5.3 Performance

- 5.3.1 Many of the more senior and longer serving interviewees expressed the view that if we did not implement a robust management structure quickly our performance levels could collapse as the Rio cycle unfolds.
- 5.3.2 There is a widely held view that our programmes in talent ID and nurturing, along with the minor disciplines, the women's programmes and the paralympic programme are not taken seriously enough and consequently not resourced, funded or equipped as well as they should be.
- 5.3.3 People are in fear of post-Olympic scrutiny and criticism.
- 5.3.4 There appears to be a lack of regard for BC members, Clubs and Club Coaches.

## 6. Recommendations

- 6.1 [REDACTED] with the prime functions of
- of leading, motivating and inspiring the GBCT. He should not try to micro-manage the team, or any part of it, but definitely should not transfer [REDACTED].
  - Supporting succession planning and ensuring maximum benefit to the GBCT and the whole of BC from developments in Team Sky
- 6.2 It should be established between [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] exactly how much quality time can be devoted to the role of [REDACTED] of the GBCT. This MUST be realistic and may have to be reflected contractually.
- 6.3 Any on-going role for [REDACTED] must be seen as transitional with a clear plan in place for [REDACTED]. The uncertainty seen in 2012 must not be repeated in 2016.
- 6.4 A new and very senior post of Programmes Director should be created to take responsibility for managing the entire GBCT programme on a full time basis. A fundamental element of this appointment is that it must be a certainty of mutual respect between the Performance Director and the Programmes Director.
- 6.5 Although the Performance Director will be the team leader, the Programmes Director should be line-managed by the CEO along with the Performance Director
- 6.6 The activities of the GBCT should be overseen at the strategic level by a Senior Management Team consisting of the Performance Director, the Programmes Director and the CEO.
- 6.7 A Management Team underneath the new Programme Director to be created to ensure that all disciplines, programme elements and support teams are properly managed and represented at SMT
- 6.8 The new Programme Director and the SMT will together manage the operations of the GBCT and all its elements and be part of BC SMT
- 6.9 Steps must be taken to ensure the GBCT remains fit for purpose in terms of governance, compliance and process.
- 6.10 Better administrative routines must be put in place, along with appropriate strengthening of the staff delivering administration services.
- 6.11 Changes must be quick and decisive before we lose momentum and credibility.

## 7. Data extracted from interview notes

What follows is an extraction of the most significant points made by interviewees. Although each is listed once only, many (particularly the more critical ones) were repeated several or many times over. This section is included only to give a flavour of the comments made.

### 7.1 About the successes of 2012:

- Talented pool of podium-ready athletes.
- Quality and dedication of podium coaches.
- Sky sport-wide commitment.
- Fortunate that in the final run-in to the Games the coaches worked beyond the call of duty and the senior athletes stepped up to the mark.
- NGB direction and involvement.
- UK Sport funding and support.
- Clear and/or inspirational leadership – both BC and GBCT.
- Everybody can be relied on.
- Specialisms of employees – particularly in the stores.
- Performance analysis.
- EIS.
- Best coaches, athletes, medics, doctors.
- NCC facilities.
- Marginal gains, R & D.
- Ethos of excellence.
- Bloody lucky with TDF and Olympics.
- Senior staff did their jobs well – but not as a team.
- Clarity of purpose – Olympic and paralympic medals.
- Psychological boost of home Games and impact of big, supportive crowds.

## 7.2 About the things we do well:

- Integration of paralympic coaches.
- Performance planning.
- Medal Tracker.
- Strength and Conditioning.
- Joined up technical support and coaching.
- Cooperation with EIS
- Equipment sharing, access, innovation.

## 7.3 About the things we do less well:

- Can't come to terms with MTB and BMX.
- Level of support for women is embarrassing.
- Too much concentration on only winnable track and road disciplines.
- Part-time PD.
- Talent Team not working.
- PD not visible enough:
- Division between BC and GBCT.
- Fear factor and unhappy environment.
- Dilution of paralympic funding to support Olympic.
- No management information system – all in the heads of the coaches.
- Support services prioritised to the one who shouts loudest.
- Pecking order for support services, not managed access for all athletes.
- Lack of clear direction.
- Initiative only valued if it's what management wants.
- Lack of clarity over line management.
- Bullying and public criticism.
- Staff undervalued.

- Cancellation of Staff meetings, RDT, Medal Tracker.
- Communication within GBCT is poor and sometimes non-existent.
- Too much paperwork.
- Absence of pay structure, CPD, bonus plan.
- SMT don't go to training sessions except for track.
- Issues between stores and mechanics.
- No junior pathway for MTB and only one coach.
- MTB not important.
- BMX is the ugly cousin.

#### 7.4 About the Management Structure:

- Most bizarre management structure I have ever seen in my life.
- Management by [REDACTED]
- SMT splintered in 2010.
- [REDACTED] understands the system but not the people within it.
- Collection of senior staff as opposed to a senior team.
- SMT too small.
- [REDACTED] should not run both Sky Team and GBCT.
- Everyone thought [REDACTED] was finishing, now it appears he is not.
- No voice for paralympic programme at SMT level.
- Project Rio structure looks good – if [REDACTED] has the time.
- Rumour mill indicates that we can expect BIG changes.
- Autocratic leadership style.
- Culture of fear and bullying.
- Open antagonism between various senior members of staff.
- Decision-making process too slow.
- Lack of clarity over line management.

- BMX doesn't fit in.
- No mission, no leadership.
- No progression, no succession planning.

## **7.5 About things that need more attention or resource:**

- SMT
- BMX, MTB, Women, Paralympic, Talent Team.
- Programme managers for dirt programmes and Academy.
- Integrated performance pathway.
- Line management.
- Big gulf between podium and development squads.
- More and better hardware.
- More and better accommodation.
- Better treatment rooms.
- More than one physio.
- Autonomy for paralympic programme.
- Closer integration across ALL of BC.
- More training camps.
- Performance Services Manager.

## **7.6 Thoughts, comments or observations to inform the review:**

- To be leaders in cycling we need to be winners in all areas.
- Need to improve domestic competition programmes to produce the talent pool of the future.
- Make a big deal of CG2014 in Glasgow. Opportunity for four times as many athletes to be exposed to top class competition in a multi-sport environment two years out from Rio.

- We have a superiority complex.
- Athletes don't support other BC programmes by appearances and they are not directed to do so.
- Friction between Sky Team and GBCT staff.
- Most people would like to feel more valued.
- Put MTB, BMX, ■■■ and ■■■ in a separate place where they can be appreciated and cooperate.
- We should contribute more to the wider world of cycling.
- Need stronger links between Talent Team and Go Ride.
- Take academies down to a lower level.
- ■■■ is a big loss.
- Preserve roles of marginal gains team.
- GBCT/Sky Team works well.
- Talent ID is a failure, there is no talent coming through.
- We need a Head of Coaching Development.
- Lack of good coaches in academy and development area.
- No coherent structure across programmes and through from Talent ID to podium.
- We will cut off the supply chain if we focus on clubs and not schools.
- Lack of ■■■ so lack of direction.
- Office is not a nice place to be.
- Nobody ever says "well done" or "thanks".
- Talent Team too small and too narrow.
- Salaries static for 4 to 7 years.
- Not enough administrators so coaches end up booking hotels and travel.