

Executive Summary

This report, prepared by the Standing Committee on Governance (SCOG), provides a comprehensive review of the Club Rugby Board (CRB) structure and operation as part of a wider club rugby governance framework. It addresses the mandate given to SCOG by the SRU Board to assess whether the CRB has transitioned effectively from its origins and to recommend steps to enhance its effectiveness, structure, and strategic fit within the rugby landscape.

The scope of this review focused specifically on the governance arrangements related to the club rugby game in Scotland. It encompassed the CRB's role, structure, effectiveness, and alignment with the broader SRU governance model.

The review has considered the relationship between the CRB and other bodies including, Rugby Development, the club fora, and Member Clubs, and explored how governance arrangements can best support the long-term sustainability and strategic growth of the grassroots game.

The CRB was established following the 2022 Crerar Report as the new body responsible for the strategy and development of club rugby in Scotland. It replaced the Scottish Rugby Council and was intended to reflect a more modern, compliant, and responsive governance model. As the primary forum representing the views of Member Clubs, the CRB plays a vital role in ensuring the grassroots game is effectively supported, developed, and strategically aligned with national rugby priorities.

Summary of Key Findings and Insights

- The CRB's role is broadly accepted, but concerns exist around its effectiveness, size, and skills mix.
- There is an imbalance in representation, with the men's game dominating current CRB membership (10 of 13 seats).
- The transition from a league-based to a regionally focused governance model presents both an opportunity and a challenge.
- The use of sub-committees has been limited but holds great potential to improve focus and delegation.
- The membership process requires more flexibility and broadening of expertise and skill-sets.
- Communication gaps exist between CRB, Rugby Development, SRU and other key stakeholders.

Options Considered for CRB Structure

SCOG considered five primary options for the future size, shape, and make-up of CRB:

- (i) **Legacy:**

Retain the existing 14-member structure, with improvements focused on operational effectiveness through enhanced use of sub-committees and better-defined roles.

- (ii) **Legacy+:**

Reduce CRB membership to a more balanced and streamlined 9 member structure, maintaining a constituency-based model but with broader regional remits.

- (iii) **Regional:**

Introduce a fully regionally-led governance model with standalone Regional Boards aligned with Rugby Development structures.

- (iv) **Regional+:**

Expand the Regional Model to include specific representation for Women & Girls, Schools & Youth, and Match Officials at the CRB level.

- (v) **Executive:**

Create a lean, strategically-focused CRB of 4 appointed members with defined skills and experience, supported by an extensive sub committee structure. These options were evaluated in line with the scope of the review as set out above.

SCOG Recommendations

- **Retain the current CRB structure in the short to medium term:**

Maintain the existing structure (Legacy) to ensure stability, while exploring the viability of a more regionally orientated model with key stakeholders.

- **Establish four core standing sub-committees:**

Introduce permanent sub committees for Finance, Strategy, Rugby, and People to enable more focused discussion, distribute workload, and improve subject-matter understanding.

- **Develop a Board Improvement Plan:**

Co-design and implement a plan to improve CRB's operational capability, covering a range of improvements including clearer role descriptions, succession planning, member induction, ongoing development, and performance reviews.

- **Introduce a skills matrix:**

Map the current CRB skillset to identify gaps and future needs, and use it to guide appointments, elections, and succession.

- **Review chairing arrangements:**

To ensure future leadership reflects ongoing governance needs and expectations.

- **Strengthen Forums and regional engagement:**

Reinforce the role of the club forums (Fora) to improve input and feedback, with a review of the format, and alignment to regional development.

- **Enhance communications:**

Establish formal communication protocols and channels for updates, decisions, and feedback between CRB, Rugby Development, Member Clubs and other governance bodies, including the SRU Board.