



## Strategic Priorities 2019/2020



Respect    Excellence    Encouraging



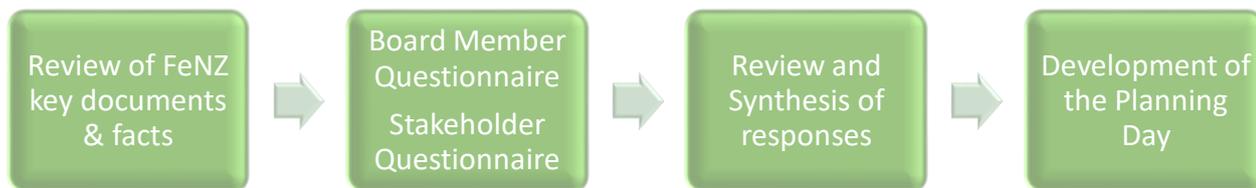
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## 1. Executive Summary

This document details the outcomes of the Fencing New Zealand planning day held in Auckland on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February, facilitated by the author of this document. Whilst the initial request was for a full strategic plan it became apparent during the review of documentation and a one-on-one interview with the President of the Board that the organisation was not ready to undertake such a process.

The recommended approach to the day was to focus on developing strategic priorities for a shorter period of 12-18 months. The preparation for the planning day included document review, desk research, internal questionnaires for the board and commission heads and a separate questionnaire for a small number of external stakeholders, a parent, fencer, past fencer and coach.



The agreed focus for the planning day was to:

1. Define and agree a shared view of the purpose, values & vision
2. Develop and agree priorities/initiatives for the sport
3. Develop a clear implementation outline for each priority
4. Establish timelines

Rather than developing a 3-5-year plan that locks in plans and programs for long periods, more significant gains can be achieved by preparing strategic priorities for the coming 12-18 months. This will endeavour to deliver tangible improvements for the fencing community who in turn will be encouraged to support the priorities and allow the sport the greatest chance of success. This approach is also aimed at clearly communicating the activities of the board and reinforcing the value it provides to the fencing community.

The success of the recommended plan will be based on four key elements that are strongly interconnected and co-reliant: leadership, commitment, prioritisation and review. Any significant change to the sport requires a long-term view, clear establishment of shorter-term priorities and ongoing commitment.

There are four strategic pillars within the plan; Leadership & Governance, Operational Capability & Capacity, Sporting Capability & Capacity and Communications & Marketing. Figure 1 on the following page details the focus of each pillar.

With ownership, commitment and regular reviews the organisation can look forward to achieving the initiatives set for the next 12-18months and in doing so develop a whole of sport focus for the national fencing community that embodies the purpose, vision and values of the organisation.

It is envisaged that the organisation could undertake a more comprehensive planning session in February 2020.

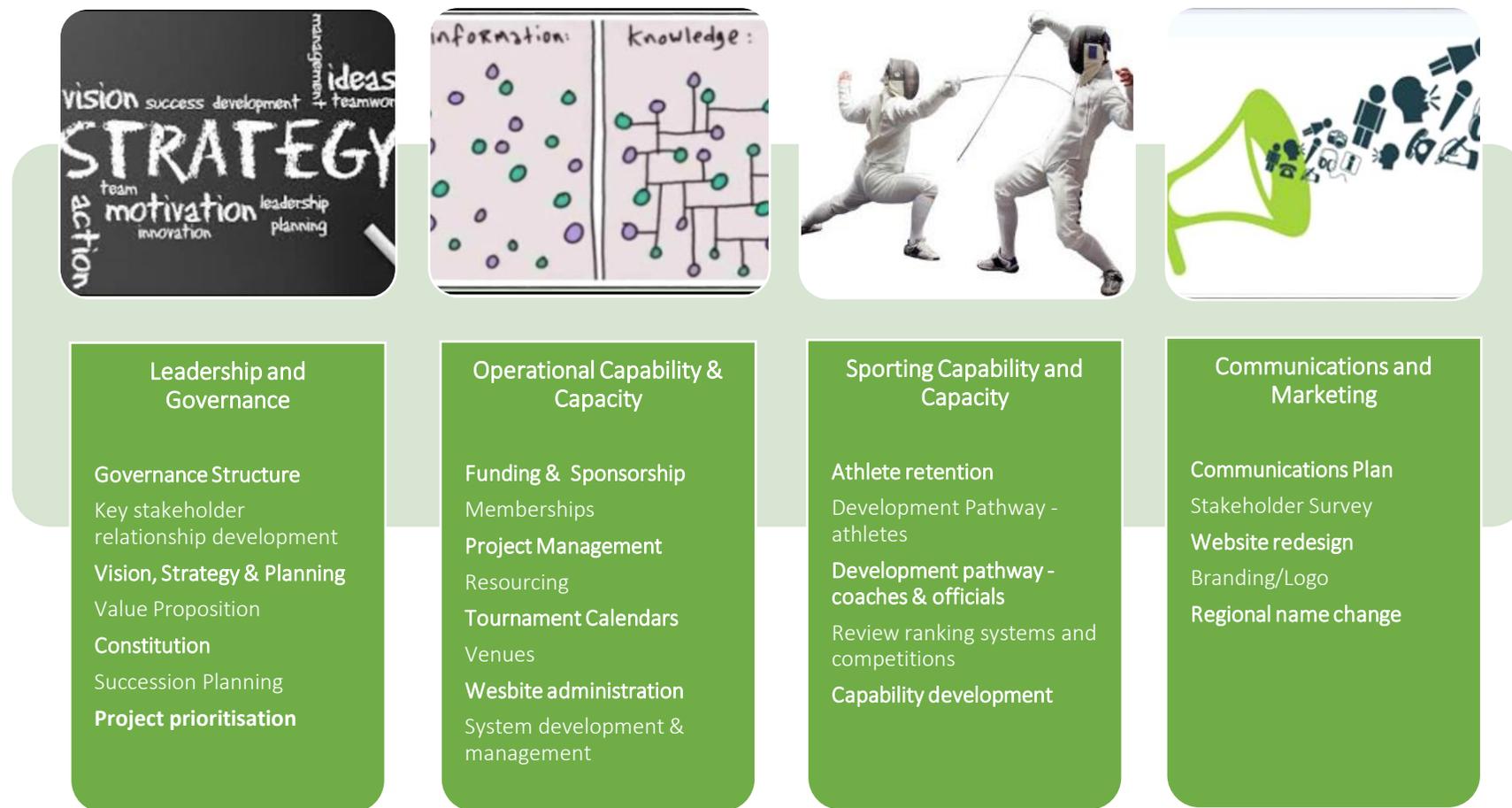


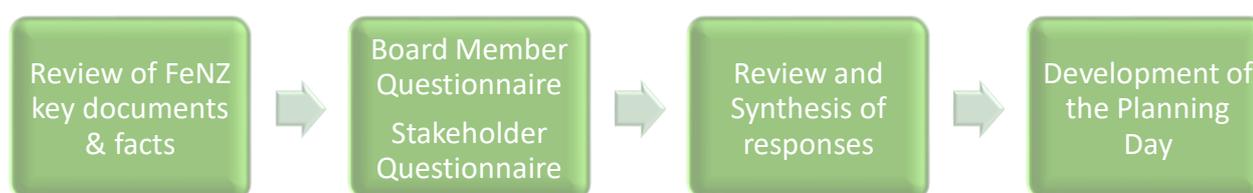
Figure 1 The Four Pillars

## 2. Background

Fencing NZ is solely run by volunteers and have around 450 registered members nationwide competing in national and regional competitions. They have a regional structure with bases in; North, Central, Mid-South and South. The regions are run by Presidents who each hold a position on the board with the remaining 4 posts held by the President, Secretary General and 2 independents, one based in Wellington and one in Auckland.

The board identified the need to develop strategic priorities in order to provide focus for the organisation going forward and to develop a collaborative approach across the community to further grow the sport. The second need was to develop a clear implementation plan as to 'how' and 'when' the priorities would be delivered.

For the Fencing NZ, it was appropriate to dilute the strategic planning process to focus on a shorter time period, and to establish a clear purpose, vision and values for the organisation. The recommended approach was to undertake document review, desk research and questionnaires, all of which were synthesised to inform the planning day.



The agreed focus for the planning day was to:

3. Define and agree a shared view of the purpose, values & vision
4. Develop and agree priorities/initiatives for the sport
5. Develop a clear implementation outline for each initiative
6. Establish timelines

Following the planning session, a draft document was circulated to the attendees listed below and the four absent board members (Vanda Simon – President South and Kyle McDonald – Head of Selectors, Steve Martin – Independent, Alice Boyd - Independent) for review prior to the final document being penned.

The attendees on the day were:

- **Mark Rance** – President Fencing NZ Board
- **Amanda Hopkins** – Secretary General & Treasurer
- **David Elder** – President North
- **Vicci Lamb** – President Wellington
- **Richard Johnstone** – President Mid-South
- **Nicola Shackleton** – Head of Officiating Commission
- **Steve Clark** – Head of National development programme & selector
- **Dave Barson** – Head of Coaches Commission
- **Neil Young** – Health & Safety Officer

## 2. Purpose, Vision and Values

The purpose, vision and values were developed in part, using the attendee responses from the questionnaire. Once draft statements were established, they were discussed and challenged as a group and then 'tested' using the summarised responses from external stakeholders to ensure it was representative of the wider fencing community.

### 2.1 Purpose

The summarised responses for Fencing NZ's purpose gathered from the questionnaires are shown in figure 2.



Figure 2 Questionnaire Responses - Purpose

Fencing New Zealand's Purpose was agreed as:

***Inspiring and enabling people to start, stay and succeed in the sport of fencing.***

### 2.2 Vision

A vision states the full reason for the organisation to exist and it allows it to focus on what really matters. A vision is also vital to an organisation as it offers clarity for decision making and it helps to drive activities of the organisation in the direction of the vision – keeping you on the right path.

The review of the old vision combined with responses from attendees' questionnaires led to the development of Fencing NZ's vision below.

***To be recognised as a New Zealand sport of choice with a strong, sustainable and successful fencing community.***

It is important to understand and communicate the meaning of 'Succeed' in the purpose and 'Successful' in the vision to the wider community as being success for whatever fencing is for you, be it turning up each week to fence socially, or attending and succeeding at competition or high-performance level. The two statements encompass the whole of sport.



### 2.3 Values

When reflecting on the organisations values it became clear the group did not have a good handle of what these were, and they didn't appear to have been previously documented. Working with the responses from the internal questionnaires, shown in figure 3, and referencing the 3 questions (below right), draft values were listed, discussed and challenged then prioritised to come up with an agreed set of 3 core values.



1. How does your organisation operate?
2. How is your organisation is perceived?
3. How do volunteers and contributors carry out the services and activities of the organisation?

Figure 3 Questionnaire Responses - Values

The core values of Fencing NZ are:

**Respect**                      **Excellence**                      **Encouraging**

### 3. SWOT

A SWOT analysis revealed a consensus between the board and stakeholders and following discussion and challenge it was agreed as the table on the following page. It is recommended that the board utilise the information and work through an enhanced SWOT to determine:

- How to exploit strengths to maximise opportunities
- How to overcome weaknesses
- How to capitalise on opportunities
- How to minimise/mitigate threats



It is important to understand that a SWOT is a starting point and that an enhanced SWOT analysis to answer the questions above is where the true value lies. An enhanced SWOT guides the organisation as to the work that needs to be done going forward. This work could be undertaken as a half-day session at the time of the first formal review of the strategic priorities.

## SWOT Analysis

### Strengths

- Passionate dedicated people
- Excellent coaches
- A good regional structure/foundation for change
- FIE support
- Good fencing knowledge
- Wide range of experience on the board
- Good progress in gender equity
- Some great fencers
- We achieve great things with very little money

### Weaknesses

- Dependency on a handful of volunteers – lack of time
- Self-interest driving decisions & politics
- Different values and ideas on direction
- No clear plan – lack of skill around the 'how'
- Lack of focus on fencers
- Lack of funding
- Difficulties retaining top fencers & fencers 18+
- Knee jerk decisions
- Communication
- Non-affiliated fencers
- Quality of governance
- Legacies negatively impacting the future

### Opportunities

- Delivering sport into changing communities
- 2020 Olympics & the growth of internet coverage
- Recalibrate offerings to reflect today's lifestyles
- Engaging with the fencing community more effectively
- Better communication
- National Development Programme
- Large number of coaches
- Large fencing pool
- Better visibility in Auckland
- Support from FIE and Oceania
- Sponsorship and Partnerships
- Leveraging local expertise
- Applying for resources
- Niche sport – appeal to the 'square peg'

### Threats

- Inability to retain of fencers – drop off rate after 18 is 50%+
- Continued lack of funding
- Continued lack of a clear plan
- Poor relationships with competitive fencers
- Other more popular sports
- Entitled attitudes
- Not learning lessons from the past
- Activities/actions not aligned to a 'best for Fencing NZ' approach
- Expensive sport compared to many mainstream sports
- Political in-fighting

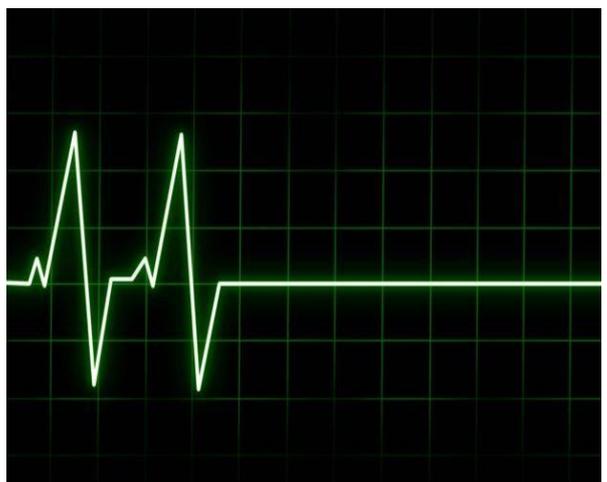


**4. Critical Issues**

An important part of the planning day involved identifying and agreeing the critical issues the organisation was facing.

As with previous sections the attendees used information gathered from the questionnaires to develop a draft list of critical issues that need addressing. Once discussed these were compared to the list tabled by the external stakeholders to ensure there was consistency with the thinking amongst the wider community.

Figure 4 summarises the agreed issues.



<b>FENCING NEW ZEALAND CRITICAL ISSUES – 2019</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coherent vision, strategy and plan</li> <li>• Development programme &amp; pathway for athletes</li> <li>• Development programmes – coaches &amp; officials</li> <li>• Fencer retention</li> <li>• Athlete centric environment (coach delivered)</li> <li>• Cost &amp; availability of venues</li> <li>• Communication – all forms</li> <li>• Succession planning</li> <li>• Awareness &amp; profile in NZ Sport</li> <li>• Website is dreadful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operational resource</li> <li>• Governance structure – roles, definitions</li> <li>• Create stronger more cohesive relationship between the board and stakeholders</li> <li>• Operating income and funding drive</li> <li>• Develop coaching</li> <li>• Develop Marketing strategy</li> <li>• Supporting clubs to grow and retain members - reciprocity</li> <li>• Clear objectives, goals and a plan to get there</li> <li>• Consistency at national comps</li> <li>• Developing referees</li> <li>• Developing Clubs</li> </ul>

*Figure 4 Fencing NZ Critical Issues*

There was considerable overlap of responses from the questionnaires which was helpful in terms of ensuring the organisation is focusing on what the whole of sport feels is critical. With a large number of issues to be addressed the attendees spent the rest of the planning day working through what would be addressed, how, by whom and when.



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An important first step in addressing any issues is understanding the planning parameters within which the organisation can operate.

### 5. Planning Parameters

No project or organisation can operate in a completely limitless or boundless way. There are certain parameters or boundaries that define or limit what it can and cannot do, what it is most likely and least likely to do well.

It includes looking at Competency, Values, Resource and Assumptions – the external conditions that your organisation cannot control but which it assumes will exist and which are necessary to the success of the organisation.

For Fencing NZ, the planning parameters were identified as being:

- **Being 100% volunteer resourced**
- **Limited funding**
- **Limited time**
- **Available skills and experience**
- **Needing to make an impact in the very short term**

When setting plans, and in particular timelines to each initiative it was important to consider these parameters in order to support the team to achieve results.

### 6. The Strategic Priorities

Having established the planning parameters, the strategic priorities were determined. Ownership of each priority was assigned to a member of the board and/or a commission head and the high-level actions were noted together with a deadline for delivery.

My guidance would be to develop a simple project plan for each actionable item that encompasses:

- A full task list
- Identifying and addressing any obstacles and barriers to delivering the task
- Identifying who will deliver the work
- Identifying and providing the necessary resource for delivery
- Setting milestones through to the deadline

For there to be any significant change or positive impact for the wider fencing community the approach must be long term combined with ongoing effort, hence the strategic priority focus for the next 12-18mths. The delivery of the prioritised items will require focus & resource, most likely in the form of additional volunteers which may be a project in itself – recruiting new volunteers with the right sets of skills.

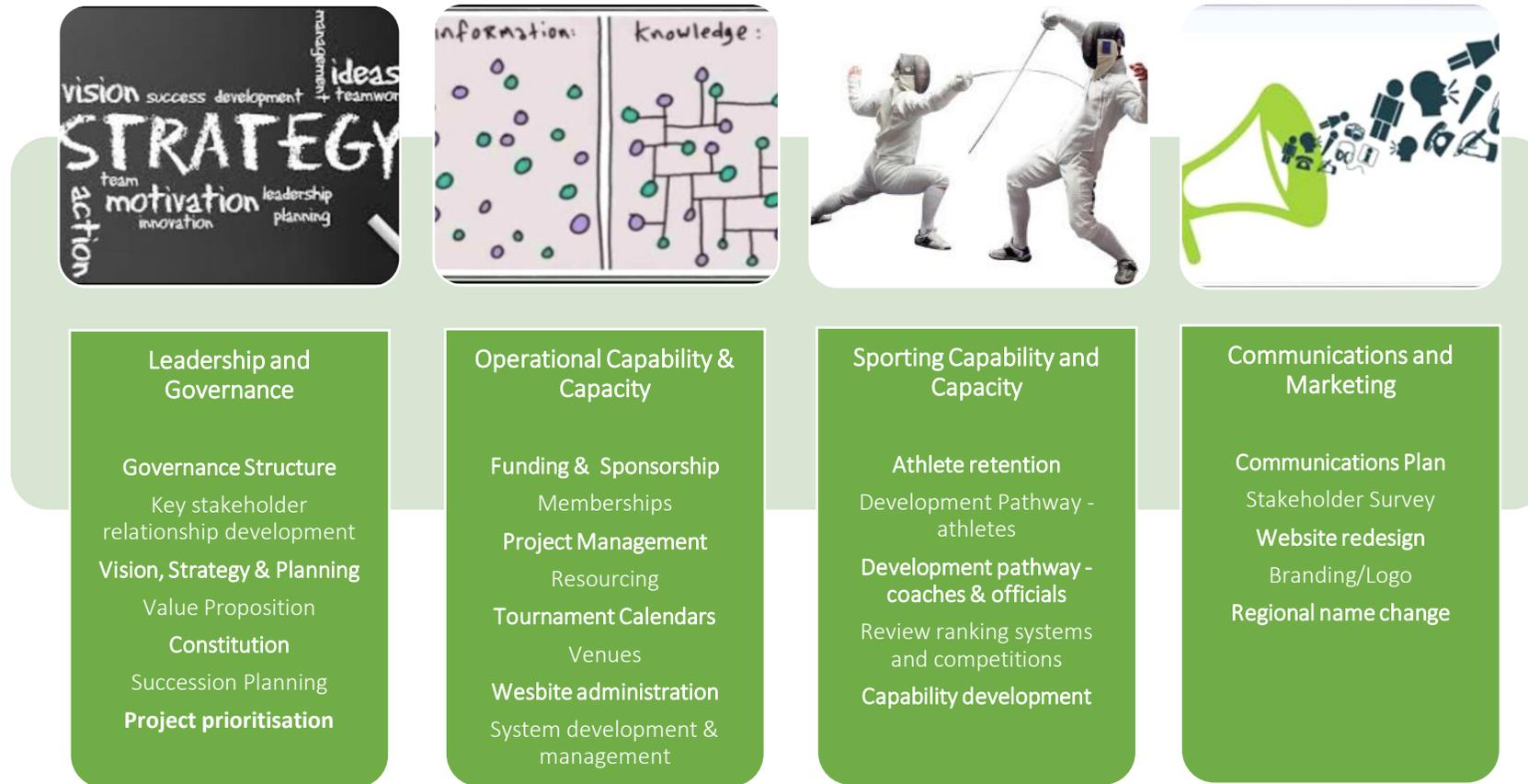
There are legacies and behaviours within the sport that no longer supporting it and that requires a cultural change and a shift to occur for a new *modus operandi*. Ongoing sharing of learnings and collaboration within the fencing community and particularly between the board, commission and regions should be strongly encouraged to help support change and the overall development of the whole of sport.

The four strategic pillars are **Leadership & Governance, Operational Capability & Capacity, Sporting Capability & Capacity and Communications & Marketing.**



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## 6.1 The Strategic Pillars



## 7. Strategic Priorities and Timing

The tables on the following pages detail the priorities of the above pillars. Please note that the final column 'When', refers to the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month unless otherwise noted.

Fencing New Zealand Strategic Priorities 2019/2020



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LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE			
Initiative	High Level Actions	Owner & Contributors	When
<b>Governance Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review current board, commission and regional structures</li> <li>Sub-committee recommendations</li> <li>Review &amp; define operational/management need (GM), write job description and determine funding options</li> </ul>	} MR AH RJ	Feb 2020 Feb 2020 May 2019
<b>Key stakeholder relationship development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review relationships with stakeholders (clubs, regions, athletes, coaches, officials, parents)</li> <li>Review relationships with NZOC, NZ Sport, Oceania</li> <li>Develop and implement engagement plan for both groups</li> </ul>	} DE MR	August 2019
<b>Vision, Strategy and Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hold a Planning day for the board and commission heads</li> <li>Final report signed off</li> <li>Review cycle confirmed (Board mtg, formally @6mth, 12mth)</li> <li>Outcomes published</li> </ul>	MR FeNZ Board MR, FT AH	Feb 2019 14 Mar 2019 Apr 2019 Apr 2019
<b>Value Proposition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop &amp; define Value Proposition, Fiona to provide tool to David</li> </ul>	DE	Apr 2019
<b>Constitution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define stages &amp; timeline</li> <li>Review and amend to align with new structure</li> </ul>	} RJ	May 2019 Feb 2020
<b>Succession Planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a succession plan for the board</li> </ul>	MR + project team	Jan 2021



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OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY & CAPACITY			
<b>Funding &amp; Sponsors Memberships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify funding sources, grants, sponsors &amp; partners</li> <li>Review above list and develop plans</li> <li>Review Membership fee structure</li> <li>Define and document the collection process</li> <li>Determine funding allocation</li> </ul>	<b>DE</b> <b>DE</b> <b>VL/SC</b> <b>VL/SC</b> <b>VL/SC</b>	May 2019 Jul 2019 May 2019 31 Apr 2019 31 Oct 2019
<b>Project Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a process to track project costs (starting with 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb)</li> </ul>	<b>AH</b>	Apr 2019
<b>Resourcing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define what is needed – capability &amp; capacity</li> <li>Write job descriptions for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sponsorship &amp; funding Coordinator</li> <li>- Treasury management</li> <li>- Tour Coordinator</li> <li>- International Administrator</li> </ul> </li> <li>Work with the governance team on the GM role</li> </ul>	} <b>AH</b>	June 2019
<b>Tournament Calendars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define &amp; document the process for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- National calendar</li> <li>- International calendar</li> <li>- Regional calendar</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	} <b>AH</b> KM	31 Oct 2019
<b>Venues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coordinate the identification of a list of venues (nationally)</li> <li>Define &amp; document the availability and cost</li> <li>Ensure venues meet FeNZ competition/operating standards</li> </ul>	<b>NS</b> Regional Reps	June 2019
<b>Systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure the new website can work with the ranking database</li> <li>Identify a safe and cost-effective central repository for board documents. Present the option to the board for sign off</li> </ul>	<b>SM</b>	Apr 2019



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SPORTING CAPABILITY & CAPACITY			
<b>Athlete retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop an overarching plan for the retention of and development of athletes, coaches and officials, including dependencies</li> <li>Work with the governance team to communicate the Value Proposition to the wider fencing community</li> <li>Determine what tools &amp; resources clubs need for retention, develop &amp; document programmes for clubs</li> </ul>	SC DE SC RJ VS	31 Mar 2019 31 Mar 2019 Jun 2019
<b>Development Pathway – athlete</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and document a development pathway for athletes</li> <li>Present the 1<sup>st</sup> draft to the Board and commissions for review</li> </ul>	SC AB	Sep 2019
<b>Development pathway – coaches and officials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and document a development pathway for Coaches</li> <li>Develop and document a development pathway for Officials</li> <li>Present the 1<sup>st</sup> drafts to the Board and commissions for review</li> </ul>	DB NS	Sep 2019
<b>Review Systems &amp; Competitions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review ranking system</li> <li>Review competition formats, schedule &amp; standards</li> </ul>	MR DB, NS, AB, KM, SC	Sep 2019
<b>Capability development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Define &amp; document what is needed over the next 24mths and why?</li> <li>Who and how could this be potentially delivered?</li> </ul>	AB SC Regional reps	Oct 2019



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COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING			
<b>Communications Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communicate the outcomes of the Planning day in the form of a one-page document emailed to the database and published on the website</li> <li>Stakeholder Survey – who will be surveyed? what needs to be communicated, how often and via what channels? Collaborate with the key stakeholder relationship project</li> <li>Survey date set</li> <li>Develop a comms plan based on survey results detailing activities, frequency and channels which may require external help</li> </ul>	<p><b>MR</b></p> <p><b>DB</b> AB</p> <p><b>DE</b></p>	<p>Apr 2019</p> <p>TBC</p> <p>Apr 2019</p> <p>TBC</p>
<b>Website redesign</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine current status of new site</li> <li>Review and finalise structure and layout</li> <li>Ensure ranking system &amp; membership login can</li> <li>Ensure admin access to site &amp; ease of maintaining</li> <li>Look for design tweak and build \$3500 - \$5000 (estimate) – publish site</li> </ul>	<p>DE</p> <p><b>RJ</b></p>	<p>3 Mar 2019 Apr 2019</p> <p>May 2019</p>
<b>Branding/Logo/Marketing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set up a folder in the central repository for materials</li> <li>Collect list of current marketing materials used by clubs (via regions)</li> <li>Define the guidelines for logo use</li> <li>Develop the tag line 'Sport for Life' &amp; present to board</li> <li>Name change communicated to regions including reasoning – FeNZ North, FeNZ Central, FeNZ Mid-South, FeNZ – South</li> </ul>	<p><b>SM</b> <b>AH</b></p> <p><b>RJ</b></p>	<p>Apr 2019 May 2019</p> <p>May 2019</p>



## 8. Review

After committing the time and resource to the development of this plan the focus shifts to implementation. A critical part of this are regular check-ins and reviews in order to ensure any unforeseen barriers or obstacles are addressed in a timely manner and that there is the opportunity to review the timelines if there is a change in the availability of resources or in external conditions. The recommended review structure to be adopted is detailed below.

### 8.1 Monthly check-ins

At each board meeting the 4 priority tables should be reviewed with reference to the projects to be delivered in the coming 4-6 months. The process should take no longer than 10mins as the check-in is designed to answer the following questions but not to specifically resolve anything at that time.

- Are we on track to meet the deadline?
- Are there any issues that need addressing?
- Who is going to manage those?

Any issues that need addressing would be dealt with outside of the board meeting itself.

### 8.2 Half year and full year reviews

A facilitated review of the initiatives is recommended in August 2019 and again in February 2020. These reviews would be detailed and would involve:

- Reviewing each priority in depth and the progress of its project plan
- Identifying and addressing any issues or barriers to completion
- Reviewing the sporting landscape – has anything changed that would affect the focus of the priorities
- Are there any new priorities that need to be fed into the plan?
- Reviewing all timelines

At the completion of the 6 and 12 months reviews it is recommended that a communication is written that provides the wider fencing community and stakeholders with an appropriate update. In order to continue to build trust and value in the board it is important to consistently demonstrate the changes being made.

