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## There is no question that 2005 was an exciting year for cricket throughout England and Wales. The success of our Men's, Women's and Disabilities teams captured the hearts of the nation.

2006 will see the implementation of Cricket's Strategic Plan 'Building Partnerships from Playground to Test Arena' to build on the legacy from 2005 and advance cricket at all levels of the game.

The 2005 Ashes Series has been justifiably described as the greatest Test match series of all time played in an excellent spirit by two outstanding teams at full grounds. Crowds flocked to parks around the country to follow the Ashes on big screens thanks to ECB's Cricket in the Park initiative and then as a finale to the season a parade through the streets of London to Trafalgar Square provided the opportunity for the nation to celebrate a summer of success.

Planning to capitalise on the legacy from this wonderful summer of cricket commenced when ECB launched Cricket's Strategic Plan 'Building Partnerships' for the period 2005-9 in May 2005. As the summer unfolded, participation and the following for cricket both in the Men's and Women's games, grew at unprecedented pace and the foundations laid in the Strategic Plan enabled ECB to commence programmes to build a lasting legacy for cricket throughout England and Wales.

A 79% growth in our domestic Twenty20 crowds demonstrated the vibrancy of our domestic game and the changes to our Corporate Governance structure provided an efficient and modern organisation to drive cricket forward over the next decade.

During 2006 we shall be working with our partners to provide additional impetus to the programmes identified in Building Partnerships which are focussed on four key areas of activity:

- Effective Leadership and Governance
- Vibrant Domestic Game
- Enthusiating Participation and a Following for Cricket
- Successful England Teams

### Effective Leadership and Governance

The process of translating the Strategic Plan into action commenced with the formulation of agreements defining the roles of ECB and our partners. Memoranda of Understanding have been developed with First-Class Counties, the Recreational Assembly, the Professional Cricketers' Association and Sport England. These MOU complement our commercial agreements with broadcasters and sponsors and provide the ability for our partners to plan a four-year cycle through to 2009 with greater certainty.

ECB has also been active through the International Cricket Council (ICC) in developing a programme of International Cricket between 2006 and 2012. The norm during this period will be for England to host seven npower Test matches, 10 NatWest Series one-day internationals and two NatWest Twenty20 Internationals each summer. Scheduling international cricket is a complex programme with the introduction of one Global ICC Event per annum. ECB's leadership of Twenty20 cricket has been a worldwide success and the ICC has recently announced plans for a Twenty20 Trophy. Member nations anticipate this will commence in October 2007 and ECB can be proud of the role it has played in establishing Twenty20 as an international game.

ICC has invited submissions for the staging of the Global Events through to 2015 and ECB has responded positively with the objective of staging one such event in the cycle through to 2015. We have further reached agreement with Australia and India to seek to play Test match series on a four-year cycle as part of the Future Tours Programme compared with the norm of a five or six-year cycle for the majority of our international series.

ECB warmly congratulates the 2012 Olympic Bid Team in securing the London Olympics. World class events bring significant value to our country and the ECB submission for a Global Cricket Event has been widely supported by the government. During 2005, ECB made good progress in working with government on many opportunities. It is important for cricket that these relationships continue to strengthen as we seek support in areas such as the National Lottery, funding for sport, securing world class events, ticket touting, security and taxation matters.

Cricket is synonymous with fair play and in early 2006, ICC reached agreement for a worldwide anti-doping code with the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). ECB warmly welcomes this development and has added focus to the Ethics programmes led by ECB to ensure a safe playing environment for all players especially at youth level.

During the past year, ECB should be proud of the role played by cricket with the Tsunami matches at Lord's and The Brit Oval, the involvement of the England Team in the earthquake relief efforts in Pakistan and the support of projects in India and Sri Lanka. ECB has also provided support to the European Cricket Council to expand cricket throughout Europe and to Bermuda to assist in coaching programmes as part of our wider responsibilities for the game of cricket.

A Major Match Group under the chairmanship of Sir William Morris has been established to evaluate and recommend the award of Major Matches in England and Wales. ECB seeks to ensure that our venues provide world class facilities for these matches whilst delivering competitive returns from our flagship events to help fund the future development of cricket.

The re-structuring of the ECB staffing organisation has now been completed with three Departments: Cricket, Commercial and Finance to mirror the modernised governance structure of our three main committees.

### **Vibrant Domestic Game**

During 2006 a new domestic playing structure will be introduced. A Long-Term Athlete Development Plan has been established to deliver a national cricket pathway to ensure the best pathway for the development of our talented cricketers from primary school through to Team England.

The new playing structure will bring greater consistency to our domestic match schedule with C&G 50-over cricket in the first half of the season and a return to the popular Pro 40 League competition in the second half of the season. In the Liverpool Victoria County Championship, two up/two down promotion and relegation is to be introduced and the Twenty20 competition will again be played at the height of our summer.

ECB is grateful to MCC for their continued support of the University Centres of Cricketing Excellence programme. The County Academies are also providing a flow of talented young cricketers and the qualification of additional coaches is a focus of our 2006 activity.

Minor Counties and Premier League cricket provide opportunities for talented cricketers to play competitive cricket and we acknowledge the contribution of all sponsors in their support of the Vibrant Domestic Game.

### **Enthusiasm Participation and a Following for Cricket**

In Building Partnerships, the goal was set to have three England cricketers recognised by 10% of the population by 2009. The Ashes summer helped deliver that goal in the first year of the plan!

An expansion of, and improvement in, the quality of club and community facilities is required throughout England and Wales. To meet our goals in this area, ECB launched the NatWest CricketForce weekend in 2005 which involved more than 650 clubs and 50,000 volunteers. The weekend demonstrated how the family of cricket could deliver enhanced facilities with a value of more than £15 million over one weekend. The event has been so successful that in 2006 we are hoping to involve more than 1000 clubs and 30,000 volunteers.

Another important partnership is with the Cricket Foundation who launched the impressive *Chance to shine* project in 2005. The project seeks to raise £25 million to be matched by government funding over a 10-year period with the aim of rejuvenating cricket in state schools. The pilot projects held in 2005 were a great success and ECB congratulates the Cricket Foundation on this excellent initiative.

During 2005, the England and Wales Cricket Board Trust was established. The Trust seeks to expand financial support for grassroots facilities, county boards and clubs and more than £8 million has initially been invested in the Trust. The Trust will provide interest-free loans to clubs to assist in rejuvenating pavilions, installing artificial turf pitches and enhancing practice facilities.

For more than a year, ECB has been in negotiation with Sport England to deliver a multi-year funding programme for the grass roots of our sport. Cricket is pleased to be one of the first sports to be awarded a three year grant programme amounting to £10.7 million and we thank Sport England for their support of cricket.

The grass roots of our sport would not flourish without volunteers. Many thousands of volunteers throughout England and Wales give freely of their time and expertise to support local clubs and young players. The OSCAs ceremony held each year at Lord's recognises the contribution made by cricket's volunteers and ECB thanks each and every volunteer throughout the country whose support creates the vibrancy for our national game.

### **Successful England Teams**

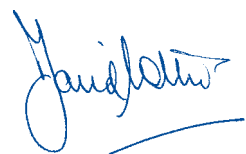
Our National Cricket Centre is the envy of countries throughout the world. During 2005, Peter Moores was appointed to succeed Rod Marsh. Cricket in England and Wales owes a huge debt to Rod - he established the National Cricket Centre and he developed the initial Academy programmes building on the vision created by Hugh Morris. Rod will be a hard act to follow and we thank Rod for his outstanding contribution to England Cricket.

The success of our England Men's and Women's Teams captured front and back headlines in 2005 but our Learning Disabilities, Deaf and Blind teams all also recorded famous victories.

We shall invest further in Successful England Teams in 2006 by introducing a video data capture project providing a library of all England-qualified cricketers playing first-class cricket. We shall also introduce England A matches at home as well as abroad. We shall expand our spin bowling programme under the leadership of David Parsons and our fast bowling programme under the leadership of Kevin Shine.

In 2005 ECB established the Team England Development squad of 25 players and already young players are pressing their claims for inclusion in the full teams.

The year 2005 has been a wonderful period for cricket in England and Wales. ECB is indebted to our partners, our players and our staff for their contribution towards a very special summer. We cannot however afford to be complacent when we compete with a growing number of leisure and entertainment options available to our young players and supporters. In order to succeed on and off the field, ECB is committed to delivering the programmes and goals outlined in Building Partnerships as we build on this plan to ensure that cricket in England and Wales is a world leader through to 2009 ●



1 England captain Michael Vaughan shows his batting technique to pupils during the launch of Building Partnerships, at Featherstone High School, Southall on April 19, 2005.