

Revised Vision for British Orienteering

The final version of the vision adopted by Council is:

More People, More Places, More Podiums (MP³)

The vision statement encompasses three threads which are crucial to the future of British Orienteering and which had considerable support during the consultation:

1. **Expanding the numbers of people** aware of, participating in, and assisting as volunteers in, orienteering. This will also swell the number of members of British Orienteering and its Clubs.
2. **Widening the range of places** where orienteering takes place – bringing the excitement, fun and skills of navigation at speed to a wider public by holding events more locally, including in or near urban areas, closer to where they live or can reach in the time they wish to devote, and with less environmental impact arising from travel to events.
3. **Winning more places on the podiums** at international competitions – stressing the competitive nature of the sport and increasing our already creditable success by winning more medals and podium places internationally.

Council also adopted a set of values for British Orienteering.

Values

The values we wish to observe in all our conduct in orienteering as we pursue our vision will be as follows.

1. **Health & welfare**

We will be concerned about the **health and welfare** of everyone involved in orienteering. We will strive to ensure that orienteering provides a safe environment for everyone to have fun and enjoy themselves, and to take advantage of orienteering's huge potential for developing physical and mental well-being. We will balance the necessary risks of an adventure sport with policies to manage and mitigate risk. We will aim to ensure that all volunteers and staff members are treated with respect, offered appropriate training, and not unreasonably overburdened. We will pay particular attention to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

2. **Fair play**

We will expect **fair play** in all aspects of our sport. In accordance with this value of fair play, we will take strong action against violators, eg by punishing cheats and those who commit doping offences.

3. **Operational practice**

In our Rules, our Guidelines and our documented processes and our general practice we will endeavour to ensure that all decisions are taken with proper authority and have been researched thoroughly beforehand. Appropriate appeal processes will also ensure that these principles are upheld (or decisions reversed or suspended when they are not).

4. **Environment**

In everything we do, we will be conscious of the impact on the **environment** and strive to keep this to the minimum. This will apply not only at events to preserve the natural environment and make future land access more likely, but will also be a factor in the design of our competitive programme, and in all other activities.

5. **Inclusiveness**

By adopting and implementing an equality and **inclusiveness** policy we will ensure not only that our sport has no barriers to involvement, but we will also seek actively to interest and involve under-represented groups (eg participants between the ages of approximately 18 and 40, and ethnic minorities).

6. **Governance**

We will operate using high standards of **governance**, acting ethically in everything we do, practising openness and transparency, whilst ensuring that any conflicts of interest are managed appropriately. We will compare our governance to best practice models and make changes where necessary, or ensure that known deviations are explained and agreed.

7. **Members' interests**

All our actions will be taken in our **members' interests**. We will establish systems and processes to enable us to understand members' needs and current satisfaction levels, and to make changes where necessary.

Further actions

With a final vision and values adopted, we will need to review our strategic plans and current programmes to ensure that they are consistent with the vision, and that priorities reflect the vision's elements. This is

essential if we are to focus our limited resources on key issues, and to avoid overburdening key staff members and volunteers.

Each of the vision's threads will benefit by having a series of action programmes associated with them. eg expanding the numbers of people might involve:

- enhancing the recognition (especially in potential partners) of the opportunity that orienteering offers to make a major contribution to physical and mental health
- ensuring the achievements of our top athletes and more importantly the skills (mental and physical) they have demonstrated, are communicated to mass audiences outside the sport
- making people aware of how easy it is to start the sport (compared to many other sports such as swimming, badminton or football) since the skills involved are primarily mental skills that can be taught and learned at almost any age, and the costs of participation are comparatively low
- having a comprehensive marketing plan for the sport: to make potential participants aware of it, what the benefits to them will be, how they can get started, methods to make entry to (and the first year in) the sport as easy as possible, and to make it easy (read local!) to try the sport once a week for a few weeks at least, etc.

Résumé

Associations, Clubs and the general membership were invited to comment on a potential vision for British Orienteering. This followed Council's decision to develop a vision to establish a direction for British Orienteering for the next 10 or so years. It was felt that a vision would summarise where we see the sport going and help set priorities in a way that Clubs and Associations, if they so chose, could support with their own action programmes. A shared vision and purpose could enable us to make faster progress and make all our individual efforts more effective.

Council would like to thank all those who took the time to respond to the invitation, and especially the many Clubs and Associations whose responses clearly indicated both that a great deal of effort had gone into thinking about the vision and then expressing their views. Even the rather negative feedback expressed by a small minority about the need for a vision at all or their personal perception of the National Body was helpful as it re-emphasised some known problems that need to be addressed.

Council also found the responses very stimulating, as there were some well expressed fresh ideas, in addition to some recurrent themes.

It is inevitable as we moved towards a common vision that not everyone will be satisfied with the end result. We hope however that the vision now published will show many of those who took time to respond that their thoughts have been taken on board. The vision adopted will be reviewed regularly, so comments and suggestions for the next review are always welcome.

Summary of comments received to the consultation document on a vision for British Orienteering

Here are some of the recurring comments received, with a response recorded after each.

The draft vision proposed is reasonable, but needs to be snappier, more memorable, and perhaps in the form of a short statement with slightly expanded supporting statements.

This approach has been adopted in the revised vision statement

Although international success is not critical to many "ordinary" orienteers, it is recognised that this dimension of a possible vision should be present. It is an important way of affecting perception of the sport (dimension 3 of possible vision elements – public profile), of developing role models which are important for attracting younger people, and is an important criterion for supporting agencies such as Sports Councils. Indeed, an important statement made several times in the feedback is that the international programmes do demonstrate, to the public & partners (UK Sport & other Sports Councils) that orienteering is a sport rather than purely a leisure activity. Other comments suggested that this aspect should not be introduced at the expense of the wide-ranging appeal of orienteering to all ages and in a family context.

This aspect is reflected in the revised vision statement.

There needs to be reference to the competitive nature of orienteering, as this is important to the general image, and nearly all orienteers regardless of their physical condition or technical capability accept that they are trying to complete their course as fast as they can on the day.

This aspect is reflected in the revised vision statement.

Why are you wasting our time in seeking input to a vision when we are overstretched?

The considerable response received, much of it as already stated well-thought out and articulately put, shows that this view is not held by many of those who responded. It was also of course intended that response was optional. However, it was thought important to gather the valuable input from many experienced and far-thinking members, thereby making any resulting vision both more reflective of the members' opinions, and generally of higher quality.

The issue of the demands on a generally ageing and shrinking volunteer force is understood and already receiving attention, but this feedback was helpful in re-emphasising what an important issue it is. It also reinforced the need to make the sport appealing to new and especially young people, ie dimension 3 of the consultation document, and to have them become involved not only as participants but as volunteers in our sport's many technical and administrative roles. The need for volunteers is now encompassed in the new vision, albeit that it will only be in an expansion of the vision statement that this becomes more obvious.

British Orienteering should be respected internationally

This is reflected partly in the new vision and partly in the accompanying "values" which will be adopted to guide our activities. In conjunction with international success, demonstrating high standards of leadership and governance will command respect abroad.

Environment is important but need not figure in the vision

Environment has been removed from the vision and moved to "values".