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Statement by Tom Harrison, CEO England and Wales Cricket Board

The COVID-19 pandemic has left cricket facing its most significant challenge of the modern era. The game has already lost more than £100m, and the financial impact is likely to be £200m if there is further disruption next year, which many are expecting.

Getting cricket back on this summer – at a recreational, domestic and international level, for both men and women - has been a remarkable achievement by everyone across the game. It has been the result of true partnership in action; across our first class counties and recreational game,

from our broadcast and commercial partners and with Government and local public health agencies.

When the crisis first hit, the ECB put in place a range of measures to save money in the short term including furloughing staff and significant pay reductions across the organisation, in addition to a recruitment freeze. I am very proud of the work that has been done by my colleagues across the business and the sacrifices made at a time when we asked them to work harder than ever before, while managing their own personal experiences of COVID. It is now an irrefutable fact however, that the impact of this pandemic is significant and will be long-lasting. There is also deep uncertainty about the future, and it is vital we take more steps now to ensure the future financial sustainability of cricket in England and Wales.

The entire cricket network has pulled together to get us through this challenge so far and overcoming it will mean continuing to work in partnership and continuing to make tough decisions as we have done this year. We must reduce the cost base across the game - and that requires the ECB to lead the way by reducing its own cost base.

Given this new reality, if we are to safeguard cricket's long-term future and still deliver on the growth ambitions of our Inspiring Generations strategy, it is clear the ECB will need to become a leaner and more agile organisation.

Over recent weeks we have thoroughly reviewed the ECB's structures and budgets in order to reduce central costs without compromising on our ambitions. We have now shared with colleagues our Board-approved proposals, which will generate significant savings. Every part of the ECB is affected by these changes, and these savings will only be possible by reducing our headcount.

These proposals include a 20% reduction in our workforce budget, which will equate to the removal of 62 roles from our structure – a number which is largely made up of existing headcount and a small number of vacant positions. Additionally, we are also proposing further cost savings by changing a number of current posts into flexible working roles. ECB staff have been informed and a collective consultation will begin imminently.

Seven months ago, sharing a message of this nature was unthinkable. The position we had created to come together as a game and grow cricket on the

back of a remarkable year in 2019 was truly game-changing. Our ambition and energy are unchanged, but how we get there now needs to look significantly different to what we originally planned for.

I am extremely proud of the work everyone at the ECB and the wider county, county board and club network has done this summer. In the most trying of circumstances, with uncertainty the only guarantee, we have come together to deliver a compelling summer of cricket at all levels. When the pressure has been on, our sport has come together and shown cricket in its best light.

Over the coming weeks we will be supporting our colleagues affected by these proposals as we seek to safeguard the future of our sport. We will share more news as this process progresses.

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