CAMPBELL TICKELL

Supporting **Excellence**
Delivering **Social Purpose**

Certified B Corporation

Board Evaluation: Middlesex County Cricket Club

Summary Report

November 2026

ECB

MIDDLESEX CRICKET

1 Summary report

1.1 This summary report highlights the principal findings and recommendations of the external Board evaluation of Middlesex County Cricket Club (MCCC). The Board evaluation was commissioned by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and has been carried out by the consultancy Campbell Tickell.

1.2 The findings, and our comments throughout the report, reflect our opinions and interpretations. They have been drawn up in good faith, based on the extensive experience of our consultancy and our team members over many years in conducting governance reviews and board evaluations, working in non-profit, statutory, and commercial sectors. Our experience has included developing a number of codes of governance, codes of conduct and similar.

1.3 The review took place between June and September 2026. It involved a desktop review of governance documents and Board papers, an online survey, interviews with Board members and senior leaders, and observations of a Board meeting and a Finance, Risk & Audit Committee meeting. Through the review, we have heard a striking consistency of views, although there is not unanimity across all issues on possible solutions. We have synthesised the findings from different elements of our fieldwork. This summary report provides an overview of our informed judgements, including the strengths that we identified in MCCC's Board effectiveness, and an account of the areas where we consider there is a need to make significant changes and improvements.

1.4 Recent years have been particularly challenging for MCCC. The Club has experienced financial difficulties, ECB sanctions over financial mismanagement, a referral to the Cricket Regulator, and successive changes of executive leadership – most recently, former CEO Andrew Cornish was suspended in November 2025 and subsequently left the organisation in June 2026. The voluntary club secretary stepped down in November 2025.

1.5 In the interim, Mahdi Choudhury provided temporary leadership support and, when his secondment from Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC) as interim Chief Operating Officer ended, the Chair, Richard Sykes, provided additional support to the leadership team. In July 2026, Julie Harrington was appointed interim CEO to stabilise operations and develop the Club's strategic options for the future.

1.6 The leadership challenges and changes are felt to have had a significant impact on the Board, the organisation and the setting of a clear long-term strategy, and the relationships and culture between Board members and also with the executive. As is evidenced in the findings of our review, this has reached a tipping point where governance is not functioning effectively and significant change is required.

1.7 For the sector, the sale of The Hundred franchise has brought additional funding for first-class clubs. MCCC does not host a team in The Hundred but will share in the total proceeds from the sale of the franchises (the 'Gemini Fund'). ECB rules on use of the fund have had a particular impact for MCCC. Without its own ground, it is limited in its options for drawing down capital investment; and it does not hold significant debt which could be repaid with money from the fund.

1.8 Against this backdrop, the Board recently investigated options to improve future financial sustainability and to help find a long-term home base for the Club. A possible external investment and commercial joint venture was considered which would have created a new home away from Lord's and changed the management of back-office functions. This option was explored by the Board's Growth Committee drawing on external advice. However, the planned venture was ultimately not supported by ECB and the Board has decided not to proceed.

1.9 Since then, the Club has been exploring demutualisation, with a view to an indicative vote by the members in 2027. However, there is a lack of consensus about what the long-term vision and strategy for the club should be and whether demutualisation is a necessary pre-condition for financial sustainability.

1.10 The Chair's Statement in the Annual Report & Accounts to November 2025 notes with regard to MCCC that "…our financial outlook remains very delicate…". Ensuring long-term financial sustainability is now an urgent priority.

1.11 An important part of MCCC's context is its membership. MCCC appears to have an engaged and, at times, vocal membership. This should be a real asset to an organisation of this type. Recently, however, there have been some high-profile criticisms of the Club's approach by a small number which have had an impact on members of the Board and executive team.

1.12 The ECB has identified that it has ongoing concerns about MCCC's governance, leadership and finances. It has commissioned this review to act in the best interests of the game, and to support the Club in addressing the issues it currently faces, restoring confidence and ensuring the governance arrangements are robust and fit for the future.

1.13 At the time of our review, it is clear the Board has not been operating effectively and has not provided the leadership and oversight the Club needs. Board culture and some behaviours have negatively impacted the Board's ability to carry out its role. There are too many people attending Board meetings, with a lack of clarity about the role of observers. Although the Finance, Risk & Audit Committee is generally operating effectively, the governance structure overall is overly complex, with too many committees and unclear delegations. Board composition moreover is not sufficiently well-aligned to MCCC's needs.

1.14 Tensions and divisions within the Board, exacerbated by the breakdown in relations between the former CEO and some of the Board members, have resulted in limited alignment at Board level and poor governance culture. This, combined with the absence of a permanent CEO for approaching a year, means there is a lack of a shared vision and long-term strategy for the Club's future and an absence of coherent delivery plans.

1.15 That said, it is clear that current Board members are deeply committed to the organisation. They bring individual skills and expertise and diversity of experience and thought. Many have devoted considerable time and effort through a very difficult period in the Club's history.

1.16 Throughout our work, we encountered a consistent recognition of the need to address the current challenges and a desire for change, although there is not yet a consensus about what change would look like in all areas. We have also seen some initial signs of improvement. A workshop on Board culture was held earlier this year (although not everyone attended). A highly experienced interim CEO, Julie Harrington, has been appointed, and she is helping to stabilise the organisation and making a fresh, clear-eyed assessment of the Club's strategic options. The Board meeting we observed welcomed this, and Board members demonstrated a capacity for working together constructively.

1.17 Having led the Board through this period of considerable challenge, Richard Sykes has recently announced that the Club has commenced a search for his successor and that he will step down as Chair once that process is complete. This will helpfully allow work to reset governance and stabilise the organisation to proceed through a managed transition period.

1.18 Significant work remains to be done to develop and strengthen the Board and its effectiveness. We recommend:

- Fully reconstituting the Board over the next six to nine months through open, transparent, skills-based selection processes, with external input;
- Significantly streamlining the committee structure, with clear remits focussed on governance;
- Appointing a new, permanent Chief Executive;
- Agreeing a clear vision and long-term strategy for the Club;
- Working to restore relationships with members and key stakeholders;
- Clarifying the governance framework for Middlesex in the Community;
- Improving governance capability and capacity, and establishing a governance improvement programme to drive change.

1.19 Change of this scale is necessary to put in place an effective Board which will provide the leadership and oversight the Club needs to equip it for future success on the pitch and to ensure it is financially sustainable. Such a

significant transition will be challenging, including for current Board members whose commitment to the Club is not in doubt. We suggest a staged process to enable an orderly transition and ensure a new Board is in place as soon as possible. Necessarily, this will be a key focus over the coming months; however, it should not be the Club's sole focus and we would expect appropriate attention and urgency to be applied to preparations for the start of the next playing season.

2 Conclusions and recommendations

2.1 The Board of MCCC has faced a difficult set of challenges in recent years. Despite the commendable commitment of individual Board members, the Board as a whole has not succeeded in providing the leadership and oversight the Club needs. Significant change is required to meet the ECB's County Governance Framework and to ensure MCCC has the governance it requires to enable strategic success.

2.2 Our recommendations are set out below. We suggest a staged approach to help manage the change in an orderly fashion. This includes some immediate actions and others to support medium-term governance improvements.

Recommendation 1: Reconstitute the Board

The Board should be reconstituted to bring the necessary skills and experience to work collectively and effectively in the long-term interests of MCCC.

Succession planning and appointments processes must be open and transparent, and based on a rigorous assessment of skills and experience.

External input to the appointments processes must be sought, and, as key partners, both the ECB and MCC should be consulted.

In reconstituting the Board, it will be necessary to comply with the Rules and the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014.

We recommend a phased approach as follows.

Phase 1: Establish Transitional Board and recruit new Chair

A smaller Transitional Board should be established from existing Board members to lead the Board through the first phase of the governance transition (October to December 2026).

Members of the Transitional Board will need the skills and experience, and the ability to work collaboratively and constructively, to:

- Initiate and manage recruitment of the new Chair;

- Oversee the establishment, resourcing, and delivery of a governance improvement programme;
- Support the interim CEO in stabilising operations (including cricket), finances, and relations with members and key partners.

Consideration should also be given to how the Transitional Board is able to provide continuity of governance in the critical areas of finance and cricket.

Current Board members who are not appointed to the Transitional Board should resign their office.

Observers, other than executives, should no longer attend meetings as a matter of routine. Where an observer is invited to attend, for example where their input is required on a specific item, the terms of their participation should be clearly defined.

The Transitional Board should oversee the recruitment and appointment of a new Chair through an open and transparent process, with external input. Critical criteria should include:

- Substantial experience of chairing comparable Boards and of leading governance change;
- Ability to build consensus and foster a culture of trust, openness, and constructive challenge;
- Ability to build and maintain constructive relationships with members and key stakeholders;
- Ability to support the Board and the Chief Executive in articulating a vision and long-term strategy.

Phase 2: Recruit new Board members

Once the new Chair has been appointed, they should lead the recruitment and appointment of new Board members through an open and transparent process, with external input. In the first instance, the core skills for the Board should include:

- Prior non-executive experience;
- High-performance cricket/sport;
- Finance and audit;
- Strategy development and/or transformation;
- People and culture (including EDI and safeguarding);
- Commercial and marketing.

A transparent process, led by the new Chair with external input, should be put in place to assess whether nominees for election (whether by the members or by affiliated clubs) meet the skills criteria before their candidature is confirmed.

Current Board members should be eligible to apply for reappointment, or stand for re-election, should they wish to do so.

Phase 3: Consider medium-term needs

Once the new Board members have been appointed, the remaining members of the Transitional Board should resign.

The new Board should consider the Board's future needs as regards skills, experience, and diversity, taking account of the new strategy (see recommendation 4).

Recommendation 2: Streamline the committee structure

The number of committees should be significantly reduced and their remits and terms of reference redefined to provide clarity on their roles and ensure they bring value to the governance structure.

We recommend a phased approach (aligned to the phases of Board reconstitution) as follows.

Phases 1 and 2: Establish essential committees

In the first instance, the Board should establish the committees that are necessary to support the Transitional Board's work or otherwise essential for the good governance of the club (including compliance with relevant ECB expectations). Those must include:

- Finance, Risk & Audit Committee;
- Nominations & Remuneration Committee;
- Cricket Committee.

Amended terms of reference for each committee should be drafted and approved by the Transition Board, setting out unambiguously their strategic governance role, providing support and constructive challenge to the executive team and assurance to the Board.

All committees should be chaired by a Board member. Where expert members external to the Board are appointed to committees, Board members should normally be in the majority both for membership and for quoracy, unless the Board, for exceptional reasons, agrees otherwise.

All other committees should be de-constituted, with a report to the Transitional Board explaining how the functions of each will be redistributed

within the governance structure (e.g. delegated to the CEO, delegated to another committee, or undertaken by the Board).

Phase 3: Review the committee structure

Once the new Board is in place, a further review of the committee structure should be undertaken, informed by the new strategy and future organisational needs.

The new Board may wish to consider whether to establish a Membership Committee, to provide governance oversight and assurance to the Board regarding engagement with the members.

The new Board may wish to consider whether to establish working groups to assist the Board and the executive team with specific topics. The terms of reference for working groups should, wherever possible, include an end date to ensure they do not become standing committees by default.

Recommendation 3: Appoint a permanent CEO

The new Chair should lead the recruitment and appointment of a permanent CEO.

The criteria for the permanent CEO role should be informed by the strategy development. The new appointee should have substantial experience of strategic leadership in a comparable organisation, together with financial literacy.

Recommendation 4: Agree a new strategy

The Club's finances and operations must be stabilised in the immediate term, and a vision and strategy, reflecting MCCC's unique position, developed to secure long-term sustainability and success.

The Transitional Board should provide governance oversight to the interim CEO in:

- Stabilising the Club's operations and finances;
- Developing long-term strategic options.

Once appointed, the new CEO should conclude the strategy development process for approval by the new Board.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen stakeholder relationships

Relations with key stakeholders – including members, ECB, and MCC – must be stabilised to rebuild their confidence in the Club.

The interim CEO should continue to build relationships through constructive engagement, with open and transparent reporting to the Transitional Board.

Once appointed, the new CEO should develop a stakeholder relations strategy for approval by the new Board.

Recommendation 6: Clarify governance framework for MiTC

The governance framework between MCCC and MiTC should be clarified to ensure respective responsibilities for strategy, governance, and assurance are clear.

In the first instance, the interim CEO, in partnership with MiTC and with oversight from the Transitional Board, should review the governance framework and ensure the Board has appropriate visibility and assurance over MiTC.

Once the new strategy has been agreed, the new CEO and the new Board in partnership with MiTC, should conduct a review to consider the pros and cons of the group structure, assess whether it is meeting the objectives for which it was established in December 2025, and consider whether it continues to meet future needs.

Recommendation 7: Enhance governance capability

Dedicated capability and capacity should be put in place to underpin the recommended changes and support development of the Club's governance practices.

In the first instance, a temporary interim club secretary/governance director should be appointed to work with the interim Chief Executive and the Transitional Board to shape and deliver a governance improvement programme. They should have significant expertise and experience to be sufficiently objective and influential in order to deliver the outcomes that are needed.

The governance change programme should encompass:

- Managing Board recruitment and induction;
- Transition planning and support;
- Drafting terms of reference, delegations, and role definitions;
- Reviewing the role of the President;
- Proposing necessary changes to the Rules;
- Strengthening governance processes and systems;
- Strengthening arrangements for declaring and managing conflicts of interest;
- Putting in place a rolling agenda plan for the Board and committees;

- Developing an annual process for reflecting on individual and collective Board performance;
- Developing report templates;
- Proposing the permanent staffing required to provide an adequate level of governance support for the Board and committees in the future.

Once the new Board is in post and has been inducted, the agreed permanent staffing arrangements should be put in place.

2.3 The table overleaf provides potential phasing and an indicative timeline for implementing the recommendations. In determining how to implement the recommendations, including the phasing and timeline, the Board will need to give due consideration to how the Rules apply.

Potential phasing and indicative timeline for implementation of recommendations – subject to due consideration of the Rules.

Recommendation	Short term phasing		Medium term phasing
	Phase 1: October to December 2026	**Phase 2: January to March 2027**	**Phase 3: April 2027 onwards**
Reconstitute the Board	• Board initiates search for new Chair	• Incoming Chair appointed and inducted • Handover period to new Chair	
	• Smaller transitional Board put in place from existing Board members • Other current Board members resign	• Incoming Chair initiates skills-based search for new Board members	• New Board members appointed and inducted • Transitional Board members resign (unless reappointed) • Reconsider future skills requirement in line with new strategy
Streamline committee structure	Put in place committees with defined terms of reference: Finance, Risk & Audit Committee, Nominations & Remuneration Committee, and Cricket Committee		• Review need for Membership Committee • Consider short-life working groups
Appoint permanent CEO	Interim CEO in post	• Interim CEO in post • Incoming Chair initiates search for permanent CEO	• Permanent CEO appointed and inducted • Handover period to permanent CEO
Agree new strategy	• Stabilise operations and finances • Develop strategic options		• New CEO concludes strategy development • New Board agrees strategy, implementation plan and reporting requirements
Strengthen stakeholder relationships	Stabilise relationships through continued engagement and transparent reporting to the Board		New CEO develops stakeholder relations strategy
Develop relationship with MiTC	Clarify governance framework and stabilise relationship		Review pros and cons of group structure, achievement of original objectives, and alignment to strategic direction.
Enhance governance capability	• Appoint interim club secretary/governance director • Develop governance improvement plan • Support Board recruitment • Develop governance processes	• Execute governance improvement plan • Support Board recruitment and induction • Develop/embed governance processes • Develop options for permanent resource to support governance	• Execute governance improvement plan • Support Board induction • Develop/embed governance processes • Confirm future review process • Permanent resource recruited and handover

Disclaimer

The status of Campbell Tickell's advice to clients is as follows. We are a management consultancy, which provides general advice, reviews, reports, good practice guidance and recruitment services to a range of clients. We are not authorised or qualified to give legal advice to clients, and our advice should not be taken as such; reference to a legal firm or barrister will always be required in connection with the interpretation of law, statute, regulations or contracts. Accordingly, no formal or legal reliance may be placed on our written or spoken general management advice in relation to these or other similar matters without additional reference to an appropriately qualified person or firm. In giving our general advice or guidance, we will seek to draw attention to any such matters where the further advice of a qualified third party may be required. Our advice to clients is provided solely for the use of the client in question and must not be shared with third parties without our agreement. We take no responsibility for any reliance that any third party may place on it. Proposals submitted to clients by Campbell Tickell remain the copyright of Campbell Tickell. Reports and other documents submitted to clients by Campbell Tickell are the joint copyright of Campbell Tickell and that client unless otherwise agreed in writing.

© Campbell Tickell, 2026.

CAMPBELL TICKELL

Get in touch to find out more

Matthew McClelland

governance@campbelltickell.com

© Campbell Tickell. Please contact comms@campbelltickell.com for permission to reproduce any of this material