

10 December 2021

### **Review of Plenary Session 1: Council**

This note summarises the discussions held during Plenary Session 1 on the role of Council and, in particular, the '1 Council' or '2 Council' models. The Board and Governance Sub-committee will now reflect on the points raised, along with suggestions made during the sessions about other potential areas of reform. They attracted wide ranging comment from a number of speakers in both sessions and can be said generally to be on the minds of Stakeholders.

It was emphasised that the Board had deliberately not yet formulated its own position on any of the topics tabled for debate so as to benefit from the inputs of all the WS Stakeholders before coming to a view.

### **Summary of Main Issues Raised**

1. There were useful philosophical discussions assessing WS as at times being a business and other times being like the United Nations or even a Municipality. The Genius of 'AND' and the Tyranny of 'OR' were mentioned. It was recognised Council members promote the interests of their constituents.
2. What is the right role of Council, and should there even be a Council? It may be seen to detract from the rights of MNAs who are the full members of World Sailing and ultimately its owners. Should MNAs be given a bigger voice and say in decision making?
3. If the 'two Council' model were followed, would the relationship between the two Councils come into conflict or be strained? In particular, there may be grey areas between the areas of Elite Sailing and Growth & Development which means it is unclear which Council has authority. It may also be more difficult for Committees to work effectively if they have to report to two different bodies with different priorities.
4. Council needs to be a forum which encourages greater participation in World Sailing whilst ensuring other bodies in World Sailing are held to account and operate transparently in their decision-making.
5. With the development and implementation of a World Sailing strategic plan, the work of Council should properly reflect that plan and a focus on World Sailing's agreed priorities.
6. Council is a policy-making body and will remain so under a new governance model. Should the role of Council however be to make and approve policy (based on proposals from expert committees) or should it discuss and debate policy in its formative stages as well?

7. What is the appropriate size of Council – some felt it must be smaller than at present to ensure better communication and debate and others felt it must be more representative. If Council is to reflect a wider and more strategic level of discussion and policymaking in World Sailing, should there be greater representation of World Sailing members (i.e. Classes or Continental Associations)?
8. Should the expert committees be represented on Council to ensure that it retains a focus on the expert recommendations offered to it and to allow for better debate?
9. How does World Sailing ensure that Council members have the right skills and competencies to contribute effectively? Or is it more appropriate to allow stakeholders to appoint/elect whoever they wish?
10. Should Council elect its own chair to allow the President to focus on the role of leading the Board and the organisation as a whole?
11. Council's work should be organised on a more efficient and smarter basis. Less time should be spent receiving reports in meetings and more time spent discussing key issues. More time and resources should be spent briefing Council members prior to meetings. Council must have access to the right information, presented in a transparent way, to be able to do its job properly.
12. There was a lot of support for the notion that whilst the proposals of expert committees could, of course, be rejected the higher authority could not on its own come up with a new proposition without referring the matter back to the expert committee for their input.

There was a speaker who questioned the domicile of World Sailing.

The GSC (Governance Sub- Committee) recognised that discussion on some points touched on matters still to be addressed in subsequent meetings. It was accepted that some conversations on Council might need to be revisited in the light of the later discussions still to be had.

The GSC would take the points and suggestions made into account in its deliberations about governance reform. Any members who wish to provide additional feedback, or respond to the issues noted above, are welcome to email [governance@sailing.org](mailto:governance@sailing.org) to provide them direct to the GSC.