



**GREATER  
MANCHESTER  
FOOTBALL**



**FOR A BETTER GRASSROOTS GAME  
IN GREATER MANCHESTER  
MANCHESTER FA BUSINESS STRATEGY 2021-2024**



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## THIS IS MANCHESTER, WE DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY HERE!

**Greater Manchester has always been a vibrant, diverse and collaborative place and now more than ever following the Covid-19 pandemic does everyone have an important part to play in developing a healthy local community with football and Manchester FA at the heart of this.**

From grassroots through to the professional clubs, we work collaboratively with key stakeholders, accompanied by a strong political narrative for all in Greater Manchester to be inclusive and healthy.

Despite the challenges of COVID -19 and the impact this has had on Manchester FA, we remain totally committed to our grassroots community and our team that serves them so well.

In October 2020 we offered our offices for the next two years to support the NHS as a Vaccination Hub. We remain located at The Etihad Campus with the provision of a fresh, dynamic, customer focused offer for 2021-2024. This will be delivered through a fully hybrid approach to our operational ways of working, ensuring the thousands of volunteers and players are at the heart of our plans.

Manchester FA now has a duty to help play a strategic part in the wider regeneration of the city, whilst at the same time developing opportunities for everyone to enjoy football.

Our core values remain **'Passionate, Inspiring, and Professional'** and we are **'One Team'** at Manchester FA. We recognise the opportunity and importance to continue to develop and grow, despite the current and difficult climate we find ourselves in.

We remain greatly advantaged by a very strong and agile corporate governance position in which our Board and members of **Our Game in Manchester** enable us to leverage an increase in diversity, and equally provide a 'fit for the future' structure. We are operationally excellent with a great culture in which our team are flexible and agile to meet the needs of the grassroots game and importantly enjoy doing so.

### **Leading and Delivering the Business Strategy – 'A Commitment from Our Team'**

We recognise that we have to ensure that the three years ahead of us are focused with positive energy enabling us to maintain a stable position and build for a brighter future with an agile business model that will define us for the next decade.

All our team and Board members have been actively involved in producing this three-year plan. The Board are committed both to empowering the Executive Management Team and providing the necessary resources to enable us to successfully deliver the plan. The Board will ensure that there are robust monitoring processes in place to enable effective reporting, giving everyone the ability to evaluate and re-evaluate our progress.



**Colin Bridgford**  
CEO & Senior Safeguarding Lead

# OUR KEY AIMS & ASPIRATIONS FOR 2021-2024

**1**

Ensuring Safeguarding is at the Heart of Manchester FA and grassroots football in Greater Manchester.

**2**

A recalibration of grassroots football across Greater Manchester supporting our passionate volunteers, ensuring that we provide the best customer service from our professional and flexible Manchester FA Team, operating as the first ever fully functioning hybrid County FA.

**3**

Develop an innovative and inclusive football proposition to unite and inspire our local communities across Greater Manchester.

**4**

To ensure that Manchester FA and grassroots football across Greater Manchester plays its part in supporting the challenges faced around mental health and physical wellbeing.

We recognise a key step change and our strategy must seek a greater engagement with stronger partnerships to develop the game. In Year 1, we will gain greater insight and detail of our wards in Greater Manchester and develop a strategic and priority 'GM Ward' plan. In Year 2 we will execute our priority 'GM Ward' delivery plan and identify the positive impacts and correlation to similar wards within GM. In Year 3 we will accelerate the plan focusing on a tiered ward system. Throughout the Covid pandemic Manchester FA has demonstrated a clear and positive approach and connectivity with the strategic leaders across Greater Manchester.

Supporting the delivery of the National Game KPI's will be a strong commercially viable proposition built on the foundations of both corporate and administrative governance excellence. We need to ensure this three-year plan accepts the need to re-set our position and positively re-build Manchester FA. In doing so, we accept that we will need to consider a longer-term alternative and sustainable business model.

Our strong collaborative relationship with all our City Region Local Authorities is vitally important to us and to grassroots football. We now have strong political momentum built on the back of The 'northern powerhouse' which is continuing to take shape and it is imperative that Manchester FA continues to work with Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). With Manchester's elected Mayor Andy Burnham directly owning the powers for housing, transport, and planning (worth £1billion), it is also essential that we maintain strong working relationships with the Mayor and all the key stakeholders within Greater Manchester. A refreshed Stakeholder Map will be completed in Year 1 of our strategy led by our Chief Executive Officer and our Chief Operating Officer.

# OUR GOVERNANCE

## Corporate Governance – It's fundamental to our current and future success.

Our Corporate Governance continues to evolve. We have always prided our governance on being 'fit for purpose' and we now strive for it to be 'fit for the future'. Our Board of Directors are the key and ultimate decision makers and have been since April 2017, when we transitioned from the more traditional Council model and introduced a clearer governance structure and accountability. We currently have three strategic groups that report directly into the Board. These are Regulations Strategy Group, Safeguarding Strategy Group and Inclusion Advisory Board.

Reporting to our Executive Management Team (The CEO, COO, Football Development Manager and Football Services Manager) is 'Our Game in Manchester' (OGIM). Within OGIM, we have working groups that support our strategic delivery. Each working group has an Independent Chair appointed with members recruited from our key networks and stakeholders and most importantly grassroots, adding diversity within our broader team.

## Our Independent Board of Directors:

**John McLellan-Grant** – Executive Director and Chair of the Board (Chair, Salford & Districts Football League)

**Chris Brindley MBE** – Senior Non-Executive Director (Chair of Rugby League World Cup, Portfolio of Directorships in Business and Sport)

**Colin Bridgford** – CEO and Senior Safeguarding Lead, Company Secretary and FA Representative

**Rebecca Britain** – Executive Director and Professional Game Lead (Club Secretary Manchester United FC)

**Elliot Ward** – Executive Director and Communications and Marketing Lead (Senior Communications Director, Manchester City FC, City Football Group)

**Geraldine Ryan** – INED and Legal Board Champion (Partner, Cameron McKenna Nabarro Olswang LLP)

**Will Blandamer** – INED and Safeguarding Board Champion (Executive Director Health and Care, Bury Council and Bury Clinical Commissioning Group)

**Dr Robina Shah MBE DL JP** – INED and Inclusion Advisory Board Chair and Health and Wellbeing Champion (Consultant Psychologist and Group Director Clinical Wellbeing Services, Senior Lecturer Manchester Medical School, a member of FA Women's Committee)

**Karen Bardsley** – INED and Women and Girls Board Champion and Legacy Group Chair for Women's Euro's (Professional Footballer, England and Manchester City Goalkeeper)

**Anthony Lawler** – INED and HR & Development Lead (Managing Director, People Horizons HR)

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## The FA's Code of Governance for County FA's.

Our County FA Code of Governance submission will take place in the Summer of 2021. We are well placed to achieve the standard through the innovative and progressive governance work that we have completed through previous National Game Strategies.

Whilst Manchester FA as an organisation is not in direct receipt of public funding, we believe that many of the organisations within Greater Manchester will be obtaining such funds, especially Post Covid and therefore to access those funds, Manchester FA should demonstrate the commitment to achieving the highest standards that the FA Code of Governance provides.

Manchester FA has adopted an 'Annual Appraisal Review' complemented by an annual skills review. The Chair of the Board and the Senior Non-Executive Director ensure biannually that they conduct those reviews with members on an alternate basis to ensure the views of Board members are heard. In 2022 we will complete an Independent Review of our Board and our governance in full.

### Our Governance aims for 2021 to 2024 are:

- 1** Continue to Increase and develop our skills and diversity in decision making in partnership with our Inclusion Advisory Board, with a minimum of at least 40 per cent gender diversity on our Board.
- 2** Complete an Independent Review of our Governance and create a robust succession plan for the Board, with Chris and Anthony's terms of office ending July 2022, it's imperative that we plan forward and ensure our Board continues to be effective.
- 3** Continue to ensure compliant and effective governance, to ensure our broader governance structure in Our Game in Manchester delivers effectively.
- 4** Provide greater transparency, for example, publishing more information on the structure, strategy and financial position of the organisation.

### Board Advisors:

Co-opted to the Board of Directors also include:

**Tania Brown** – Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) & Safeguarding Advisor for Education Tameside Local Authority

**Holly Grimes** – Chair of Manchester FA Young Leaders Academy and member of The FA Youth Council and FA Regional Youth Network Lead (North)

# OUR GAME IN MANCHESTER

Our Game in Manchester (OGIM) is the governance support and insight to check and challenge Manchester FA. OGIM is strategic working groups with their membership comprising of Manchester FA Staff and Independent Members/Volunteers from across Grassroots Football. Three groups have direct reporting to the Board of Directors with Board Champions. The other groups are operational and report to the Executive Management Team.

## REPORTING TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### REGULATIONS STRATEGY GROUP

Board Lead - John McLellan-Grant - Chair  
 Keith Marsden - Independent  
 Paul Rose - Independent  
 Colin Bridgford - CEO  
 Rachael Birchall - COO  
 Paul Roots - Football Services Manager  
 Andrew McAnulty - Football Services Officer  
 Tom Elliott - Referee Development Officer  
 Andy Baker - Football Development Manager

### SAFEGUARDING STRATEGY GROUP

Board Lead - Will Blandamer - Chair  
 Tania Brown - LADO Tameside MBC  
 Colin Bridgford - Senior Safeguarding Lead  
 Lauren McCorry - Designated Safeguarding Officer  
 Rachael Birchall - Deputy Senior Safeguarding Lead  
 Paul Roots - Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer



### INCLUSION ADVISORY BOARD

Board Lead - Robina Shah - Chair  
 Vice Chair - Alex Williams - Independent  
 Holly Grimes - Young Leaders Chair  
 Dan O'Donoghue - Independent  
 Nafisah Ali - Independent  
 Umer Khan - Independent  
 Azeem Amir - Independent  
 Stuart Lucas - Independent  
 Alfahad Zia - Independent  
 Alex West - Football Development Officer  
 Colin Bridgford - CEO  
 Andy Baker - Football Development Manager

## REPORTING TO THE EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM - CHAIR OF THE BOARD, CEO, COO, FOOTBALL SERVICES & DEVELOPMENT MANAGERS

### CWG

Competitions Working Group  
 Independent Chair - Rob Goodwin-Davey  
 Team Lead - Chris Berrevoets

### CFG

Coaching Focus Group  
 Chair & Team Lead - James Longdin

### MWG

Membership Working Group  
 Independent Chair - Mike Richmond  
 Team Lead - Paul Roots

### YLA

Young Leaders Academy  
 Independent Chair - Holly Grimes  
 Team Lead - Lauren McCorry

### C&LWG

Club & League Working Group  
 Independent Chair - Keith Marsden  
 Team Lead - Sarah Cummings

### RDT

Referee Development Team  
 Independent Chair - Paul Graham  
 Team Lead - Tom Elliott

### WGG

Women & Girls Group  
 Independent Chair - Shannon Howarth  
 Team Lead - Olivia Laiker

# SAFEGUARDING, IT'S AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO!

Safeguarding all who participate in the game in Greater Manchester is the number one priority for Manchester FA. Manchester FA have an ambitious plan to provide opportunities for everyone within the game – whether a player, volunteer, coach, referee or administrator. These opportunities will only be realised where Manchester FA ensure safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do.

For this we have developed through collaboration with our Board, our Team and Grassroots, our own Manchester FA Charter for Safeguarding for 2021-2024.

We will ensure that our operational and strategic governance structures are of the highest standard and compliant with The FA's Safeguarding Operating Standards.

We will ensure that our Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO) has the full support of every member within our team, guided by the Senior Safeguarding Lead (SSL).

We will ensure our Board of Directors, led by the Board Champion, is fully aware of the role they play in Safeguarding and they all champion the efforts within grassroots football in Greater Manchester. This is achieved by ensuring that safeguarding is a standing/regular agenda item at Board meetings.

We will recruit and deploy our team and volunteers appropriately and will ensure that they are briefed fully and abide by the FA Code of Conducts for Safeguarding.

We will ensure that our team, including volunteers, are trained and fully supported in their roles. We have a training needs analysis and daily reports to track those whose qualifications or training have expired.

We will ensure our clubs, leagues and volunteers have the access and support they need to ensure safeguarding is at the heart of what they do. This is facilitated through The FA's Whole Game System that provides reports for the CWO's to track those volunteers whose qualifications or training have expired.

We will ensure that grassroots football is compliant and where not, the appropriate sanctions and actions are taken. We have daily and weekly compliance reports and conduct Club and League unannounced Safeguarding visits.

We will ensure football in Greater Manchester is compliant and importantly that we all work together with stakeholders from football and non-football statutory and non-statutory agencies. This includes Local Authority Safeguarding Boards, Local Authority Safeguarding Officers, Greater Manchester Police and other agencies such as NSPCC.

We are operationally compliant with The FA's Safeguarding Operating Standards.

We will ensure that all our Manchester FA Events are risk assessed and appropriately resourced.

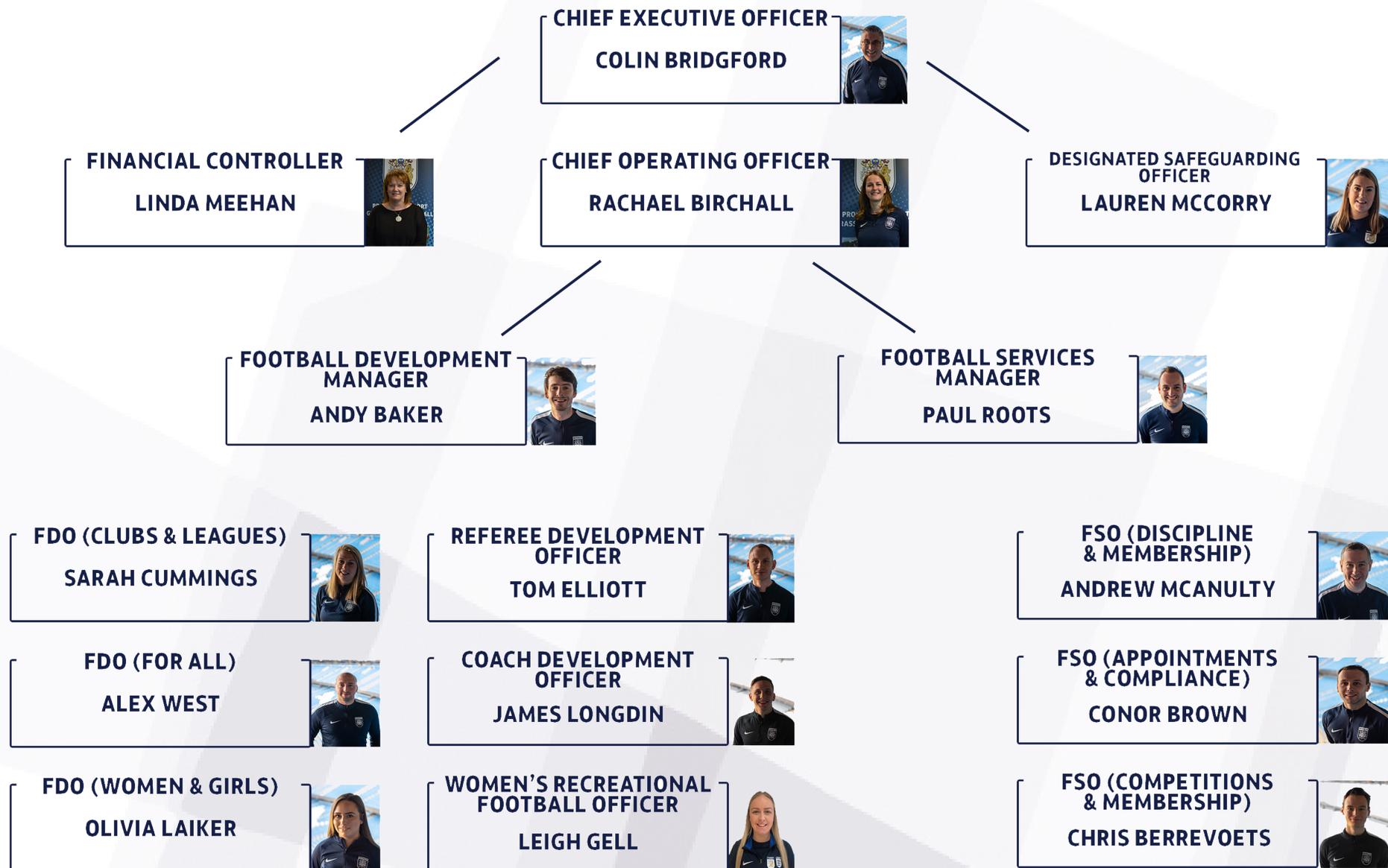
We will ensure our communications are proactive, positive, engaging and are at all times appropriate to meet the needs of participants under the age of 18.

We will commit clear transparent financial resources to support Safeguarding within football in Greater Manchester.

We will ensure that parents and participants under the age of 18 are heard, their views on the game are vital.

We will ensure that our Referees under the age of 18 are supported throughout their development and should any instances arise in reporting of discipline misconduct.

# OUR TEAM SERVING GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER



# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

We have defined five key strategic objectives that will be at the heart of our Workforce Strategy. These are:

## **Responsibility and Accountability**

Each member of staff has their own area of responsibility, which collectively works towards delivering our purpose 'For a better grassroots game in Greater Manchester' – a purpose the whole team helped shape. It was important the team felt connected to our purpose, and as a result the below behaviours have also been established and committed to, creating a passionate, inspiring, and professional culture: -

- We are Manchester FA. We are one TEAM!
- The people of grassroots are at the heart of what we do
- We deliver
- We are accountable
- We embrace change

## **Learning, Development & Performance Management**

Manchester FA is committed to the personal development of all our team members. We will ensure every member of our team has access to a Training Needs Analysis and Development Plan that is appropriate to their career paths and development. Manchester FA has a strong track record in developing individuals who have then progressed to senior positions within grassroots administration or within the professional game. All our team members will be supported to attend any FA face to face training offered, as this not only will be a useful information sharing session but also provides the perfect platform for networking and creating partnerships. Mentoring opportunities are always encouraged, and where we can provide a link with colleagues or our experienced Board members we will do. We will provide Learning & Development time each month for our team to make best use of, using platforms such as the Training Ground to support our online learning. Our Line Managers will complete 1to1's as and when required with all team members, to provide support with their work but also as an opportunity to 'check in'. This will be in addition to the more formal quarterly review meetings with The FA and the quarterly PDR sessions.

We will be adopting The FA's strategic principles for learning:

- Greater consistency of knowledge and skills across our Manchester FA Team Network, working continuously to develop culture and build capacity.
- Make the best use of technology to optimise efficiency and performance improvement
- Increased focus on digital learning methods to improve agility, delivery and access to content
- Reduced travel and associated costs will result in less burden on workload and improved wellbeing.

## **Inclusive Culture**

As part of the Equality Standard, there are areas of policy that have been highlighted for a refresh to help create an Inclusive environment. We are committed to reviewing our policies and handbook to be reflective of the correct language and have this consistent approach across all our platforms and content. Our workforce should reflect the diversity of Greater Manchester and we have a commitment to deliver this. We will work closely with our Inclusion Advisory Board to develop a strong internal and external connectivity and relevance to grassroots. We will in year 1 of our strategy review the feedback from the FA's State of Play Survey and ensure we have a robust action and implementation plan of any recommendations.

## **Flexible and Agile Environment**

Manchester FA has always been committed to a flexible working pattern, which we know from our yearly Staff Survey is extremely valued by all staff members. Our new 'Ways of Working', due to the COVID -19 pandemic, has given us the opportunity to adopt a hybrid model of work. We believe this hybrid approach, where our team can work both from the office and/or from home, will further support their work-life balance and continue to provide the flexibility our team need. This method works due to the trust we have as a team and the commitment and passion we all have for our work providing staff with the opportunity to plan their own working week. We will be adopting flexible working hours also to both support our approach and to help contribute to one of our main strategic aims of providing the best professional customer service. We will be introducing 'Freshcaller' phone system to further complement the advancements we have made with Freshdesk and to support our aims and ambitions and solidify the foundations of hybrid working. We truly believe that we will be the first fully functional Hybrid County FA.

## **Health and Wellbeing Plan**

The health and wellbeing of our staff is always something that is taken into consideration. This can be from policy changes to 'Ways of Working' and staff benefits, to Mental Health First Aid training, providing access & opportunities to physical activity in the working week or simply checking in with the team members on a regular basis to see how they are doing. In 2019 we introduced our own Manchester FA Mental Health and Wellness Scheme to support our team. This will complement the FA's Employee Assistance Programme 'Health Assured' that we will continue to promote to our team members. Simple changes have proved so successful in Manchester FA, such as 'Your Birthday Off' has been gratefully received and contributed to the wellbeing of the team. Simply put – 'We look out for each other'

All of this is underpinned by having the correct HR policies in place, and our partnership with Howarth's continues to provide the external support to both the Executive Management Team and individual staff members when needed. Feedback from our own staff surveys and The FA's State of Play Survey are vital to help us create a holistic and robust plan. We have the full support from all our Board members to continue developing our Health and Wellbeing Plan, to make it suitable and relevant for ALL our team.

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# OUR GOALS



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Focus area 1:

# MALE PARTICIPATION

Our 2024 Goal:

**'To create an accessible, inclusive and sustainable pathway for male players across Greater Manchester to inspire a lifelong journey in football'**

The male football pathway is currently representative of 89% of the Manchester FA football population, and therefore it is vital that we support the retention of our existing provision and harness this to create a lifelong interaction with the game.

Whilst we have seen growth over the past season at some of our critical transition age groups (U13 – U18), the data shows that there are still some gaps in provision to be developed at key life stages, and this is reflected in the current offers from our league network. Notably, no Manchester FA sanctioned league currently offers U21's provision resulting in a significant drop out and reduction in the number of affiliated U18 and U21 teams (approx. 80%). This will therefore be a key area of focus as we look to increase transition between youth and adult football.

Another significant life stage that we will concentrate our effort on is over-35 participants. The existing Manchester Veterans League is at capacity and with an increasing interest and number of teams at this age group, growing the offer in this area of the game is needed to meet demand. Furthermore, with the growth in veterans' football and the opportunity for players to continue in the game for longer, we will work to develop provision for both over-35's and over-45's age groups, alongside a small-sided offer for these players.



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We are committed to working closely with small-sided football providers as we modernise our offer and explore flexible formats across all age groups. Whilst we will develop our offer for specific age groups, we are also focussed on enhancing our offer across a diverse range of communities. Through strengthening our competitive recreational football and Just Play programme across Greater Manchester, we believe this will support us to increase engagement with our currently underrepresented communities.

Alternative provisions are key for future growth. Previously we had made significant strides in the development of futsal, which in the short term has suffered setbacks due to the impact of Covid. However, we are committed to supporting recovery in this area and continuing its growth, recognising futsal as a game in its own right, as well as a format which benefits player development and experience in the football pathway.

Although there are clear opportunities for growth in the league infrastructure, we have also seen a surge in applications for new leagues to service age groups where there is already an existing league presence. Understanding this landscape will play a critical role moving forward, enabling us to strategically govern the league pathways to ensure that there is a high quality, accessible offer across each of our boroughs.

The lasting impact of the pandemic is still coming to the fore and over this last season we've seen less participants affiliating at the traditional introductory point to mini soccer. Therefore, as we emerge from these circumstances, we will focus on working closely with our club and league stakeholders to address this issue. The emphasis will be placed on creating positive, safe and fun environments to support a high-quality introduction, with a view to creating a long-lasting passion for the game.

## Strategic Objectives:

- To ensure a positive and inclusive introduction to the game, delivering initiatives to improve the environment and experience for our newest players to the game.
- To increase the number of male player pathways within our clubs' network from U7 through to Walking Football to create more streamlined football opportunities across each of our boroughs.
- To create a localised U21's football offer for Manchester FA clubs, to support participants to transition between youth and adult football.
- To support the development and growth of over 35's football by expanding the number of competitive opportunities through a new league offer.
- To increase the number of competitive recreational football opportunities with a valued membership offer for small-sided and recreational football providers.

## Key Success Measures:

**31,500** male players across all formats of the game by 2024

“ *I enjoy taking my son to football, it's great to see him playing with a smile on his face. The league environment is fantastic and there's opportunities for him to play here for many years to come.*

*I thought my football journey was over when I left school at 16. Then I realised there were so many other opportunities to play beyond this and getting back into football has increased not only my physical well-being, but my social and mental well-being too.*

Focus area 1:

# FEMALE PARTICIPATION

Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To create a dynamic and accessible recreational and affiliated offer for women and girls of all ages across Greater Manchester, ensuring we have an empowered female workforce to support the growth and development of the women and girls’ game’**

Manchester FA currently have 63 FA Wildcats Centres, 3 clubs offering the FA Teenage Pilot, 2 girls football leagues, 1 women’s football league, 2 female specific Just Play Centres, with 73 clubs and 195 teams offering affiliated female football across Greater Manchester. We have a growing FA Girls’ Football School Partnership network and aim for 90% of our primary and secondary schools to join the programme by 2024, with clear connectivity between school and community football opportunities.

The FA’s four-year strategy for the women and girls’ game – ‘Inspiring Positive Change’ sets out plans to ensure that every woman and girl has the opportunity to play, coach, officiate, spectate, manage or administer the game, making sure it is an inclusive game for all and ensuring it’s truly representative of our society. UEFA Women’s Euro 2022 is coming to Manchester and Trafford and provides us with the unique opportunity to inspire the next generation of female footballers. We will utilise the tournament as a catalyst for further growth and development of the Women and Girls game here in Greater Manchester.



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Manchester FA aims to work with our existing female friendly clubs, to support them in developing full player pathways from mini soccer through to adult football as well as supporting our existing leagues to grow their capacity and infrastructure. We will continue to work with Manchester City Women FC and Manchester United Women FC and their Regional Talent Clubs as part of the player pathway young females can aspire to be part of and to raise the profile of the female game locally.

We will develop a network of accessible and inclusive recreational football sessions, for both women and girls, grow our women's recreational league offer and introduce a women's summer series to welcome new players to the game and ensure an appropriate level of competition and activity for all abilities and experience.

Manchester FA are committed to growing and developing the future leaders of the female game to ensure that girls in Greater Manchester have role models they can relate to and aspire to be. As part of our Women's Euro 2022 legacy plan we will deliver a number of events and campaigns in the run up, during and post tournament, to inspire more women to lead the female game and shine a light on those already paving the way here in Greater Manchester.

## Strategic Objectives:

- To work closely with The FA Girls Football School Partnerships Network across Greater Manchester to ensure clear connectivity for girls to join FA Accredited Clubs and Wildcats providers.
- Create a unique and inclusive adult recreational offer for all women & girls and abilities.
- Ensure a clear female player pathway from youth to adult football in grassroots Accredited Clubs and Leagues.
- Develop and increase the female workforce supporting the female game, ensuring it is representative of our local community and shining a light on female leaders and role models in the game.

## Key Success Measures:

**4,138** female players across all formats of the game by 2024.

**90%** of primary and secondary schools with football on the curriculum by 2024.

**27** FA Accredited Clubs with a full female pathway by 2024.

**64** Weetabix Wildcats providers by 2024.

“

*I now play every week at my school as well as my local club*

*It's been great to start my football journey so late on in my life. It's enabled me to improve my fitness while making new friends*

*I love going to my Wildcats session each week and seeing all my friends*

*I love playing in the monthly rec league. I haven't been able to play previously due to work commitments but now I'm back enjoying the sport I love*

*I love coaching the next generation of girls. No one tells them that 'football is not for them' and its fantastic watching them grow in confidence as young people, as well as becoming great players.*

## Focus area 1:

# DISABILITY PARTICIPATION

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To support grassroots disability football to return, thrive and grow, working towards a local and accessible offer of PAN and impairment specific community football and driven by an inclusive approach to developing the game’**

Disability football has been impacted more than other areas of the game in Greater Manchester as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic with our immediate priority to support a safe return to football for participants with a disability. Greater Manchester Ability Counts League, winner of Manchester FA Grassroots League of the Year in 2020, has set the foundations to grow and develop structured and competitive football for PAN-disability teams. Supporting the league to maintain their previous levels and quality of provision is key, whilst developing new opportunities to reach a wider audience and make football even more accessible, with junior (U12 & U16) and female disability football as particular areas of focus.

Increasing connectivity across the SEND school network in Greater Manchester provides us with an excellent opportunity to connect school and community football provision. We will prioritise connecting each SEND school in Greater Manchester with an accredited club partner to provide smooth transitions for young people with a disability into grassroots football.

In order to ensure that transition we will work closely with existing clubs with the potential to achieve Accredited two star and three-star club status, to grow their existing offer and develop new provision for players with a



We will continue to support the Para Talent pathway, contributing to the recruitment and delivery of regional England Talent Days and local delivery of Talent Identification workshops, with 40 new volunteers and professionals attending the online training in 2021. Developing impairment specific provision locally will be a focus area for the period of this strategy and working with City in the Community and Manchester United Foundation to achieve FA Para Talent Hub status.

Our success in developing disability football will be driven by embedding equality and inclusion of people with a disability across all areas of the game. Ensuring there are accessible recreational turn up and play opportunities across all of our local authority areas, utilising Wildcats to inspire more girls with a disability to try football and ensuring the Accredited Clubs and Leagues network take a For All approach, embedding disability football in their development plans.

We will support the disability football workforce of coaches, referees and volunteers to sustain provision for the future and we will drive our own governance to ensure the voice of disabled people is heard, through our Inclusions Advisory Board, Our Game in Manchester Working Groups and a Disability Football Steering for Greater Manchester.

## Strategic Objectives:

- Work collaboratively with Greater Manchester Ability Counts League and accredited clubs to grow junior PAN-disability (focus on U12s age group) providing an entry route for young players to structured football.
- Support the Para Football Talent Pathway through FA Para Talent Hubs, Talent ID workshops and increasing localised impairment specific clubs.
- Develop a female only disability football offer within our accredited club pathways and a competition structure to support their participation.
- Connect every SEND school across our local authorities with a two star or three-star accredited club partner and build links with wider support organisations for people with a disability.
- Work with accredited clubs and partner organisations to develop a PAN-disability recreational football offer in each of our local authority areas from juniors to adult.
- Develop a disability football steering group ensuring inclusive and equal opportunity to access the game.

## Key Success Measures:

**1012** disabled players across all formats of the game by 2024.

**10** FA Accredited Clubs with a full disability female pathway by 2024.



*Disability football is increasingly recognised in Greater Manchester with a growing amount of girls participation, increased number of clubs offering disability football and an appropriate level of competition for all abilities making football more inclusive and accessible*

*Disability is not a barrier to enjoying football in Greater Manchester, whether you're a player, coach, referee or volunteer, getting involved and accessing the game is possible*

Focus area 2:

# WORKFORCE - COACHES

Our 2024 Goal:

**‘Provide a coach development programme that is relevant and rewarding to support coaches of all levels and experience across Greater Manchester’**

Manchester FA are committed to offering a beneficial and diverse Coach Development offer for coaches of all ages, levels and abilities to support their growth and development, and in turn, help develop the grassroots players of Greater Manchester.

Manchester FA currently have 2,844 coaches that are actively coaching grassroots players on a weekly basis, with varying levels of qualifications and experience and at different stages in their coaching journeys. It is our aim to provide ongoing support to coaches across Greater Manchester, relevant to their individual circumstances and needs, regardless of their experience or entry point to the game.

We are committed to developing a network of coaches that are representative of our game in Greater Manchester, and FA Education’s online courses make the entry point to coaching more accessible than ever. We want to ensure that these online courses are complimented by high quality practical experience locally, so will be offering all newly qualified coaches the opportunity to attend a post qualification, practical support workshop to bring their learning to life.

As part of our ongoing support, we will provide connectivity between coaches and voluntary roles across our accredited club network and provide an engaging and rewarding coach development programme, as a commitment to helping them develop as coaches and people. We will work closely with the FA to offer



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specific CPD events/workshops that are accessible for all and are relevant to the common themes and needs of grassroots football in Greater Manchester. We recognise the importance of coaches as positive role models and will work closely with FA Coach Development Officers in recruiting and supporting a diverse coaching workforce that are representative of the Greater Manchester population.

Manchester FA will also run an exclusive Coaches Membership with high profile ambassadors and coaching master classes, where committed coaches can invest in their personal development with us. We will offer a series of high-level coaching events, with special guest speakers, the opportunity to network with like-minded volunteers and professionals and a range of further benefits that will help coaches continue with their journey.

Manchester FA will continue to work with our partners closely to make sure the offer supports coaches across all areas of the game and continues to drive high standards in FA Accredited clubs and leagues. We will establish a coach development steering group to influence our offer, with the purpose of influencing and reviewing our coach development plans and to give grassroots coaches in Greater Manchester a clear voice, and we will listen.

## Strategic Objectives:

- We will provide essential post online qualification practical support to new coaches to help prepare them for the realities for coaching grassroots football and support them with their next steps.
- We will offer a specific Manchester FA Coaches Membership scheme that will offer committed coaches the chance to access exclusive development opportunities and wider benefits.
- We will provide an engaging and relevant CPD programme for coaches of all levels across Greater Manchester to access.
- We will work with our accredited clubs and leagues to offer specific CPD/Coach development opportunities for their coaches.
- We will work with our Coach Development Officer team to increase and support the development of our Female and ethnically diverse coaches across Greater Manchester.
- We will establish a Coach Development steering group, providing grassroots coaches the opportunity to influence and guide our coach development programme for Greater Manchester.

## Key Success Measures:

**90%** of youth teams with an FA Qualified Coach by 2024.

**975** coaches accessing coach CPD annually by 2023/24 season.

**30%** of coaches of female teams being female by 2024

“

*Manchester FA is an important visible presence in the local grassroots coaching community. They promote a supportive culture which underpins a positive network of engaged coaches*

*Manchester FA make available up to date, relevant information and a variety of accessible and useful resources which help to develop coaches at all levels on the pathway*

*The communication we get from the Manchester FA has been improving over the last couple of years and now it's really useful to me and my age group I am coaching at*

## Focus area 2:

# WORKFORCE - REFEREES

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To recruit, retain and develop a diverse and skilled referee workforce who can achieve their potential in football in a safe and enjoyable environment’**

Manchester FA currently has 476 qualified and registered match officials who officiate at every level of the game, from grassroots to elite. There is a strong sense of community and belonging that has contributed to the overall reputation of Manchester FA registered match officials being one to be extremely proud of.

Over the course of this strategy, Manchester FA aims to further enhance that reputation by applying a holistic approach to referee development.

Regardless of their ambitions or personal objectives, each match official must feel supported and their contribution must be valued if they are to continue to be a member of this community.

In turn, referees must also help to ensure that Manchester, the city of football, is the best place in which to play by elevating the quality of each match through their involvement.

Anyone wishing to become a Manchester FA referee must embrace the fact that being a member of this community is a privilege only afforded to those who wish to make it stronger, in conjunction with each referee developer who share the desire to further enhance the reputation forged over time.



For the refereeing community to be its best, it must embrace the wider footballing community who must be represented, with barriers to accessing the lifetime of memories that refereeing can provide being removed.

## Strategic Objectives:

- We will provide a high-quality introduction to refereeing for the most suitable candidates that wish to complete The FA Referee Course
- We will ensure that the referee workforce is more reflective of the community in Greater Manchester, that services the needs of our member leagues effectively
- We will develop a culture of care for all our match officials by offering enhanced pastoral support, celebrating outstanding achievements and providing quality learning opportunities for all our match officials regardless of level or experience.
- We will provide a robust development pathway that forges excellent match officials at all levels who show the desire and ability to progress through the pathways.
- We will provide an effective promotion scheme which challenges and improves the candidates within it.
- We will recruit and maintain a highly committed Referee Development Team who, in conjunction with skilled Referee Developers, will support the delivery of this strategy and drive forward the quality of match officials who represent Manchester FA.

## Key Success Measures:

By 2024 we will have a minimum of 500 FA registered and qualified match officials, of which 100 will be female (excluding trainees), achieved by:

**Recruit** – Each season, 144 individuals will join our workforce as highly skilled newly qualified Referees whose aim will be to ensure each affiliated fixture has an independent and suitable official appointed.

**Convert** – Each season, at least 100 of our newly qualified Referees will progress into a Level 7/Y during the same season they become a Referee.

**Develop** – Each season, a minimum of 36 of our eligible referee workforce will successfully achieve a promotion within grassroots football in any of the pathways available to them.

**Retain** – Each season, 80% of our total number of registered Referees will continue to officiate in the following season.

“

*I feel that my contribution is valued, and I am a part of a strong and supportive refereeing community*

*I enjoy refereeing as it has given me lots of different skills that I want to develop further in the years to come*

*I know that my child is equipped with the skills and knowledge to play their role effectively and we both know where to find support*

*I have access to the resources I require to achieve my ambitions in refereeing*

*There is nowhere else that I would rather be a registered referee*

## Focus area 3:

# QUALITY PITCHES

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To work with local and national partners to deliver enhanced football facilities in Greater Manchester and for this to have a positive impact on football delivery’**

Everyone, no matter who, what format, competition structure or ability, should be able to have access to a good quality pitch to play on. The quality of the pitch can often be the talking point after a game, for both good and bad, and Manchester FA want to make sure that it is always for good.

Manchester FA currently works within six of the ten local authorities in Greater Manchester. We have supported each of these local authorities in developing their Local Football Facilities Plans (LFFPs) to outline their football facilities strategies priorities. Over the next three years we will continue to work with the Football Foundation to deliver as many of these projects as possible, ensuring that the football outcomes work with both local areas need and support the areas of growth for Manchester FA. It is recognised that access to capital investment is proving extremely challenging to source from one source, so it is more important than ever that Manchester FA take the lead in planning strategic investment across our partner Local Authorities and GM. Working collaboratively with the partners ensures that we are as effective and efficient as possible with the limited resource available.

Investment into grass pitches has been priority by The FA and the Football Foundation. Many of our clubs have already benefited from this opportunity, and we are working to ensure that our strategy uses the wealth of data and insight we have available to reach the clubs we need to benefit from facilities development to allow the growth.



By working closely with the clubs, we can not only improve their grass pitches, but with the short-term injection of resource allow the club finances to become 'Investment Ready' for their future ambitions. This work will support the implantation of the club accreditation framework and will support the emphasis of our two star and three-star clubs in becoming sustainable business.

With Manchester and Trafford being host cities for the much-anticipated UEFA Women's Euros 2022 tournament, it has provided us with a great opportunity to ensure that all new facilities being developed through the Football Foundation have clear women & girls football outcomes. We will utilise the data we have available to us to identify the priority wards and clubs needed to support our player pathway objectives, which in turn influences the LFFPs resulting in facility development supporting the growth of accredited female friendly clubs across Manchester and Trafford to ensure we meet our Women's Euro 2022 legacy objectives.

The use of technology to support the club's grounds workforce is a new concept, but we are already seeing the benefit of it. The introduction of the PitchPower platform has streamlined the pitch assessment process, making the information more readily available. The use of this technology further supports the grass pitch investment and shared KPI to improved natural turf pitches. Manchester FA will continue to develop the grounds network with our volunteers, both to share their many years of knowledge and experience with their peers and colleagues at Grounds Management Association (GMA) but also as a learning opportunity for best practise and efficiency.

## Strategic Objectives:

- Enhance Strategic Partnerships (Football Foundation, LAs, Greater Sport/ GM Commissioners, Clubs & Leagues) to develop a Greater Manchester Facilities - Development Strategy
- Continue to deliver LFFP projects with partner LAs, with a structured reviewing process to ensure the football outcomes meet the MFA priorities
- Utilise the Grass Pitch Maintenance funding available from the Football Foundation to support the priority sites in GM, using our data and insight to highlight key areas for investment, and work with LAs for security of lease for priority clubs
- Provide network opportunities for the club's grounds workforce, utilising technology platforms available such as HIVE community.

## Key Success Measures:

To have **101** pitches in Greater Manchester recorded as 'Good' by the Grounds Management Association (GMA)

“

*The funding into our grass pitches has made a massive difference, we have only had to call one game off this season due to the pitch and considering the weather that's pretty good!*

*Players can see the time and investment that has gone into improving the pitch quality, and are really proud of their home pitch. It's been great working with the MFA to deliver new and improved grassroots facilities in the Local Football Facility Plans across Greater Manchester. They have a thorough understanding of the grassroots facilities required across every local authority area within the region, and we hope to continue working closely with them to transform people's lives through the power of football.*

## Focus area 4:

# SAFEGUARDING

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To safeguard grassroots football, providing a safe environment for all, providing education opportunities to our workforce and listening to the voice of a young person to have a positive impact on the future of our game’**

Manchester FA have completed two external Safeguarding Operating Standards and, on both occasions, have received extremely positive feedback. This is something we are extremely proud of and will continue to hold ourselves to this high level of standard.

We will continue to deliver upon the Safeguarding Operating Standard whilst further enhancing the following areas:

- Safeguarding projects with stakeholders to create new opportunities in both Football and Business Development.
- Supporting the Grassroots Workforce to create a safe environment for all involved.

We will ensure that we deliver to the highest standard any recommendations that The FA consider appropriate in respond to the Sheldon Report.

Manchester FA are targeted to visit 13% of all Youth Clubs in accordance with the Safeguarding Operating Standards. Our aim over the next three years is to be visiting 80% of all Youth Clubs every season by creating a Volunteer network of Safeguarding Champions to support the work of the safeguarding team at Manchester FA.



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Manchester FA have a Young Leaders Academy and Youth Engagement Strategy, that within the next three years will be embedded within our Youth Clubs, to implement a youth role within Club Committees, with the sole purpose to influence their club ethos/experience/environment. This will build positively on the work that we have started and were recognised for in the County FA Awards in 2020 in which our voice of the child work was recognised as best practice.

We currently have Welfare Officers in all Youth Clubs that have the mandatory training. Within the next 3 years we will have Mental Health Champions within all Youth Clubs, to support the Club Welfare Officer, with the delivery of raising awareness on Mental Health and Wellbeing.

Within the next three years, our aim is to have all Youth Team Coaches Safeguarding compliant by having Safeguarding Training, an in-date FA DBS, FA First Aid Qualification. This will ensure that all participants are operating to The FA's Safeguarding policy and help to contribute towards a safe environment within Greater Manchester. We will also actively encourage Parents within the Grassroots Community, to develop their understanding of Safeguarding, by promoting the Safeguarding Children Online Learning, and offering them the option to complete this training.

## Strategic Objectives:

- To partner with a high-profile national partner and work collaboratively in Greater Manchester
- Safeguarding Stakeholders and Partnerships
- For staff and our new volunteer Safeguarding Champion to have visited 80% of Youth Clubs for a Safeguarding visit
- To work with our Young Leaders Academy to develop a Youth Engagement Strategy to capture the voice of a child
- To develop an educational offer to support Welfare Officers and Parents to develop their understanding of Safeguarding

## Key Success Measures:

**An Effective and Efficient Safeguarding Strategy Group with skilled and responsible members.**

**Ensure compliance with the FA Safeguarding Operating Standards**

**Complete Club Visits and reach the 80% of Youth Clubs Visited by 2024.**

**Provide an outstanding CPD network and support for our Volunteers across Greater Manchester.**

**Provide for an Annual Safeguarding Conference with Stakeholders from and outside of Football from within Greater Manchester.**

“

*I enjoy my football and play with a smile on my face, I love feeling safe at my club  
I have a great coach and teammates who look out for me*

*When I pull on my Yellow Armband, I feel safe and proud*

*Manchester FA is always there for us as a Club, we are always keen to learn how we can improve and it's great knowing I can get help*

*It's great that I can now share my views in my club about what I enjoy and sometime what I worry about, I feel my voice is valued*

*I have always been confident that safeguarding is the highest priority at Manchester FA & in the last few years they have excelled in safeguarding & wellbeing of grassroots*

Focus area 5:

# **EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To champion equality and diversity throughout Manchester FA, with a focus on improving representation and inclusion within our communications, recruitment programme, volunteer workforce and participants throughout grassroots football, creating a game For All across Greater Manchester’**

In June 2021 we will be renewing our preliminary status for the Equality Standard Framework for sport. We will be creating a sustainable platform for further Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) development over the next three years. Through the framework Manchester FA intend to address the discrepancy between the make-up of the local population and the participants within the grassroots game, create new entryways in to affiliated football for various minority communities and reach a greater audience for EDI based education in football.

We will increase our inclusive network across Greater Manchester, championing equality across the game by creating and maintaining relationships with community leaders, organisations and supporting charities. We will ensure everyone in Greater Manchester has opportunity to access safe, inclusive football regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, gender, gender expression or sexual orientation.

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We will continue to highlight the benefits of football in fighting mental health difficulties and socio-economic issues, as well as ensuring we can tailor a football offer for all by raising awareness of adaptations to traditional formats. This will include training coaches to deal with the neuro-diversities of players or making leagues and clubs aware of the para-football pathway and we will commit fully to promoting and endorsing The FA's Grassroots code when published.

Manchester FA are committed to creating an environment 'For All', led by our Football Development Officer (For All) to oversee our inclusive football offer, liaise with our Inclusion Advisory Board and create a proactive and inclusive environment throughout the business. We will develop our board, our team, and participants across a wide range of EDI topics, reducing the need for reactive learning as part of discipline proceedings. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion will underpin all areas of our operations.

## Strategic Objectives:

- To deliver the actions and objectives of our Equality Action Plan as part of the Equality Standard Framework for Sport.
- Maximise the impact of Manchester FAs Inclusion Advisory Board to drive diversity and inclusion across participation, participants, education, and governance.
- Ensure Manchester FA policy and governance remain relevant within the ever-changing world of sport aligned to the FA Code of Governance standards.
- To provide community events throughout the football calendar, removing barriers to participation for individuals who might not have considered getting involved with traditional formats of football, across our focus areas; gender (& gender identity), race, sexual orientation and disability.
- To provide quarterly education and development opportunities across a broad range of EDI topics for staff, board, OGIM and grassroots participants.

## Key Success Measures:

**We will achieve the Intermediary Level of Equality Standard Framework for Sport ensuring inclusion is at the heart of Manchester FA governance.**

**Increase representation in race, gender, disability, and sexual orientation across players, coaches and referees.**

“

*I felt confident in applying for a job at Manchester FA and found the recruitment process a pleasant, professional and fair experience*

*I never thought I could play football, but now I play every week*

*I feel included playing grassroots football in Manchester*

*Football really is 'For All' and everyone at Manchester FA makes that happen*



# THE ENABLERS



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The Enablers

# ACCREDITED CLUBS & LEAGUES

Our 2024 Goal:

**‘A more structured and sustainable network of clubs and leagues that sit at the heart of their local communities and deliver quality competitive and recreational playing opportunities for male, female, and disabled players across Greater Manchester’**

The Manchester FA clubs network currently consists of 424 affiliated clubs, of which 188 of these are England Football Accredited Clubs. 54% of our adult teams and 88% of our youth teams are playing within these accredited clubs, which are designed to ensure safer, sustainable and inclusive pathways for players of all ages. With FA research indicating a 21.5% decline in teams in non-accredited clubs over the last 2 seasons, it is paramount that we continue to build our accredited clubs' network and develop hubs that unite communities through the power of football.

Utilisation of the new accredited clubs' framework provides us with a shift in focus towards creating full player pathways, which aligns with our vision to support players to seamlessly transition to the next chapter in their football journey. This will need to be underpinned by the development of robust club structures, embedding appropriate safeguarding measures, good governance and upskilling our volunteer workforce.



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FOOTBALL



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For the clubs who fall into the two star and three-star accreditation model, there will also be a strong emphasis on the need to establish themselves as a sustainable business and more specific support will be targeted towards these clubs. These larger, more sustainable clubs, offering a wider provision to the local community and with capacity to grow, will be central to delivering Local Football Facility Plans and closely aligned to facility development plans and investment within their local authority areas.

All of this development will be supplemented through maximising technology and The FA's digital infrastructure to support club development and administration, creating efficiencies that allow more time to enjoy the game.

Manchester FA currently has 25 sanctioned leagues, of which, 12 of those are currently accredited leagues. This presents us with a significant opportunity to work in partnership with our leagues to drive uptake as they focus on providing a high-quality competition structure for their members and increasing their sustainability. Improving the league landscape will then directly impact the clubs' network as they endeavour to raise standards across the board.

Overall, we want to incentivise clubs and leagues to be a part of the accreditation model. We will continue to reward those who attain and retain their accreditation through Manchester FA's Fund4Football and wider funding opportunities to support their growth, sustainability and development.

## Strategic Objectives:

- To utilise the new accredited club framework to support Manchester FA clubs with establishing full player pathways and encourage more Parent Club models for clubs to pool resources to attain two star and three-star accreditation status.
- To create local and connected accredited league player pathways from U7 through to Walking Football, working across our County FA network to create links between youth and adult leagues to improve team transition at key age groups.
- To support clubs and leagues to operate as effective and efficient organisations through improved governance structures and providing ongoing learning and development opportunities.
- To work closely with our Leagues Working Group to support the development of our league network and to ensure our service delivery is fit for purpose.
- To recognise and reward the work of our grassroots community and increase collaboration through the sharing of best practice.
- To provide ongoing, regular, and streamlined communications to our clubs and leagues network, providing a high quality of service to support the volunteer workforce.
- To utilise Manchester FA's Fund4Football to align investment to incentivising and supporting the development of England Football Accredited clubs and leagues.

## Key Success Measures:

To increase the number of adult teams playing within accredited clubs from **54%** to **70%**.

To increase the number of youth teams playing within accredited clubs from **88%** to **90%**.

To ensure **90%** Manchester FA youth leagues are accredited and at least **60%** of adult leagues



*Initially I was nervous about stepping onto the committee, however the support offered by Manchester FA has instilled confidence and helped me understand how I can perform best in my role.*

*We value the collaboration between Manchester FA and our league committees. They are always there to listen to our views, open to innovative ideas and support us with any issues*

The Enablers

# GREATER MANCHESTER & STAKEHOLDERS

Our 2024 Goal:

Within Greater Manchester, there are important partners that Manchester FA work with on a regular basis, and not just with a football agenda. It is important to recognise the strategic influence partners like Greater Sport and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities can have in supporting our strategy, but also where the connectivity between organisations is beneficial to both and support priority GM projects like the GM Local Delivery Pilot. We currently work closely with six out of the ten Local Authorities that make Greater Manchester – Manchester, Salford, Tameside, Oldham, Stockport, and Trafford and work with our partner CFAs when working on GM focused outcomes.

Using the recently released Ward data from The FA, we are beginning to understand a fuller GM picture and where our focus needs to be. This ward priority profiling exercise will help us understand not only the equality and diversity of each ward but how we should be using the data available to encourage physical activity, and in turn develop football opportunities to support football growth. Ward



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## Strategic Objectives:

- To complete a full stakeholder map of Greater Manchester, football and non-football related stakeholders
- To create football networking opportunities on the back of the successes and legacy of the Women Euro's
- To review our brand and engagement across Greater Manchester.

## Key Success Measures:

**More players, More Coaches, Safer Environment, Meeting our Purpose**



“

*It's great to see Manchester FA working collectively and collaboratively with Cheshire and Lancashire County FA's for the good of football*

*Manchester FA as an organisation helps in so many ways Greater Manchester be 'Greater'. Helping communities enjoy the game and have fun in safe way is at the heart of what they do, I am proud to see the work they have achieved particularly helping young people and those disadvantaged in our Great City*

## The Enablers

# COMMERCIAL

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘A robust Commercial Strategy with a host of partners that enable Manchester FA to provide continued investment to the Grassroots game across Greater Manchester’**

Diversifying and growing commercial revenue is always important and never more than now do Manchester FA have to execute a robust plan. We have two specific reasons for an effective commercial strategy, these are:

- To ensure financial sustainability of Manchester FA
- To develop funds that can be reinvested back into grassroots football.

Investing back into Grassroots football is essential and is defined in our purpose and this is particularly important in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. If the grassroots game is to ‘survive, revive and thrive’, to quote the title of The FA Grassroots Strategy. Our position of reinvesting is to create commercial revenue to continue to release our Discipline Income, something that we have successfully done over the last few years investing £100k back into the grassroots game.

Our Strategy for the coming three years is to simplify our approach and create valuable partnership relationships. We have two principle areas, 1.) Creating Partners for the Manchester FA assets 2.) Increasing the valued offer of Membership to our Leagues, Clubs, Teams, Players and Volunteers.

Prior to Covid we recruited a partner (En2End) to support Manchester FA with developing a comprehensive asset list and then acquiring new partners. During the pandemic this work was deferred and in early June 2021 we will recommence our delivery. In addition, we will be using the SNAP commercial platform to manage and promote our asset portfolio.

The word 'partnership' is consciously used as opposed to sponsorship. That's because the word partnership is now firmly part of football's terminology. Partnerships are much deeper two-way relationships, rather than companies in effect buying various forms of advertising, packaged into sponsorship agreements. In turn, partnerships tend to last longer, as they draw upon the immutable benefits of football has, being its ability to bring people together, promote mental and physical wellbeing, create lifelong friendships and combat social issues, such as discrimination in its many forms.

Partnership also extends beyond agreements with commercial organisations. There are also highly beneficial two-way partnerships to be made with non-commercial entities, such as local authorities and numerous kinds of non-for-profit organisations, such as educational institutions and charitable trusts.

## Strategic Objectives:

- Identify and value our assets
- Identify roles and responsibilities
- Identify the resource internal and external to support our Commercial Strategy
- Develop the offer
- Identify potential partners
- Develop the pitch and recruit the Partners
- Deliver the agreed partnership offer

## Key Success Measures:

To create an asset portfolio and recruit new Partners

To accumulate over the 3-year period a minimum of **£100k** of partnership funding.

To reinvest directly into our Grassroots Clubs and Leagues investment via **Fund4Football** (Discipline Income).

“

*Being a Partner of Manchester FA and Grassroots Football is hugely positive, we can see how important our investment into grassroots football is*

*It's great to feel that Manchester FA County Cups are valued*

*I am proud to be a member of Manchester FA the benefits that are offered to us as a Club are relevant and appreciated*

*Having access to Manchester FA's Fund4Football is important to me and my players, so I can see how the investments Manchester FA receives is enabling them to invest back in the game*

## The Enablers

# MEMBERSHIP

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To establish a fit for purpose and fit for the future membership scheme for the benefit of all members within Greater Manchester’**

## Strategic Objectives:

- Develop a ‘Greater Manchester’ focussed membership proposition, representing localised benefits that support all 10 boroughs, both as a collected and on a localised level, whilst ensuring that the benefits offered are both desirable and valued by all Manchester FA members.
- To create greater link for Manchester FA members to those of other GM governing bodies, through effective stakeholder mapping and management.
- Transition to a revised membership offer following completion of the affiliation review, raising standards across the game and providing a scheme which supports the development of the game in Greater Manchester through continued enhancements to our membership rules.
- To complete a full review of our existing Manchester FA partners, ensuring common goals and shared values with the desire of enhancing our membership offer year on year.
- To apply an adaptive approach to membership categories reviewing annually, whilst linking customer service metrics such as SLA periods and dedicated member support.
- Adoption and transition to the ‘FA Accredited Provider Network’ and ‘Small sided affiliation models’ ensuring that our existing Private Provider members are supported through the transition whilst focussing on increasing the membership category year on year.
- Continue with planned F4F enhancements as outlined in the clubs and leagues section of this strategy. Improving benefits for members in our higher categories whilst using the scheme to support in driving standards across the whole game.



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- To develop an enhanced insurance proposition which is valued and protects Manchester FA Clubs, Leagues and participating members at a competitive price included within their membership fees.
- To provide members greater opportunity to shape the member offer of the future through the re-launch of the Membership Working Group (Our Game IN Manchester) and re-introduction of a new-look annual membership survey. s for members to shape the membership of the future

## Key Success Measures:

For general satisfaction of our membership offer to score higher each year than the previous in the annual MFA membership survey.

To adapt and launch a valued membership offer following conclusion of the affiliation review



“

*We truly value our membership with Manchester FA and access the provided benefits frequently*

*We find our membership offer to be competitively priced and accessible, making our club and league management easier*

*We appreciate that we receive an improved service and access to greater benefits due to Manchester FA's commitment to Grassroots football*

## The Enablers

# CUSTOMER EXCELLENCE

## Our 2024 Goal:

**‘To adapt to our customers and the business’  
ever-changing needs, simplifying systems,  
analysing insight and developing processes to  
improve customer experience – driving  
towards self-help and 24/7 support’**

## Strategic Objectives:

- To develop, onboard and integrate our technological systems which support ambition of 24/7 support – ensuring that Manchester FA is available when our customers need us most, whilst ensuring that communications methods are simple to use and access for our members and team.
- To develop a genuine and active online football community for our member bases using available technology which is accessible and easy to use for all.
- To enhance our existing customer knowledge bases promoting self-service whilst ensuring that our portals are re-branded in line with England Football. Supporting team members in the creation of useful solutions that are accessible for all through a variety of media.
- To achieve the Government customer excellence standard and FA operating model, whilst introducing our own Manchester FA customer service charter.
- To develop a tiered approach to customer service that is driven fundamentally by our membership categories, providing our members enhanced service levels appropriate for their needs
- To use insight collected across several platforms to support customers when they need us most, ensuring that our team availability matches period where demand on service increases. Using
- To use CSAT feedback collected from our events and customer interactions across platforms to raise standards of service delivery.

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- Champion and reward exceptional service to grassroots community through a team reward and recognition scheme, driven by customer feedback and QUESTS which are populated in the systems available for our use.

## Key Success Measures:

Achieving an **80%+** customer satisfaction rating (CSAT)

Achieving an **80%+** resolution time v agreed SLAS (ticket volumes & call logs)



“

*Manchester FA are there when I need them, and I can rely on my queries being resolved in a timely manner*

*I feel connected to the community created by Manchester FA and know where I can go for help and support*

## The Enablers

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

## Our 2024 Goal:

**'To develop a unified voice for every participant within greater Manchester, making information readily available for all'**

## Strategic Objectives:

### **We will create diverse content across multiple communications platforms**

- We will create and share regular localised stories focussing on each of the participants in each borough, providing our members with a platform to share their successes and content to wider audiences
- We will more closely align to the FA Calendars and key dates through activation ensuring a consistent approach that is inclusive for participants.
- We will ensure that all published content is accessible for all using technology to support with multiple languages and availability of visual and auditory aids. (High Vis, Large Text, Spoken articles)

### **We will create consistent and high-quality content across channels and branding**

- We will ensure our communication channels remain effective and uphold the brand identity and quality that we expect from Manchester FA, supported by a review of all current communication platforms
- To implement 'England Football' and 'Greater Manchester Football' branding across all available assets, ensure that the team and our members have access to a variety of approved material to support them within their own business areas.
- Develop and re-fresh an affective Internship programme which will support Manchester FA with content creation and communications priorities throughout the strategy and beyond



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- We will develop a template and localised image bank for use across the whole business for projects and initiatives throughout the season with a focus on our members.

**To focus on becoming better connected with each of the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester**

- Through and to support Membership objectives, we will seek a partner organisation in each of the 10 boroughs that align to our values and approach to support the wider grassroots game through tangible benefits

- We will identify and build relationships with local media, that can support our members and ourselves in identifying and sharing stories across Greater Manchester

- We will use the submission of this Business Strategy to support the formation of a New Communications Strategy by Year 3.

## Key Success Measures:

Increased engagement across platforms

Greater focus on marketing campaigns and linking to increased participation





# GREATER MANCHESTER FOOTBALL

## **Manchester Football Association**

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