



**ENGLAND
FOOTBALL**

ROYAL AIR FORCE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION **2021-24 BUSINESS RESET STRATEGY**

REGENERATE, EVOLVE, EXCEL



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1. INTRODUCTION

This 'reset' business strategy sets out the strategic direction of the Royal Air Force Football Association (RAF FA) over the period 2021-24.

It describes the core values and principles of the Association and what it will deliver for the benefit of the Service and its personnel.

It does not describe in detail how these aims are to be met, but sets out what is to be achieved, including agreed FA targets, and the operational strategy for doing so.

Upon reading this document, the reader will have an understanding of: the nature of the RAF FA; its direction of travel; and the type of Association it aspires to be in 2024.



2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Whilst COVID-19 has undoubtedly impacted upon the RAF FA, specifically on pitch activity, notable progress has been made in developing the various platforms and mechanisms which are critical to progressing the sport.

This provides the foundation for the aspirations outlined in this plan, which sets deliberately ambitious targets to develop the game across the 4 broad themes of: participation, excellence, a safe and inclusive environment, and organisational reform.

This will ensure that by 2024 the RAF FA will be meeting the FA's intent and will be a leading example of sports delivery within the RAF.



3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION

RAF FA VISION	Accessible football for personnel of all standards
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MISSION	To provide effective and efficient leadership with the organisational gearing to allow all forms of football to thrive within the RAF, in a safe and inclusive environment.
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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES.			
 <p>Re-generate, evolve and expand participation at all levels, providing opportunities for all.</p>	 <p>A platform for excellence to enable everyone to fulfil their potential.</p>	 <p>A safe and inclusive environment and culture.</p>	 <p>A trusted, effective and efficient organisation optimised for the future.</p>

VALUES

The RAF FA embodies the core values and standards of its parent organisation - the Royal Air Force - as defined in Air Publication 1. A summary of these values, in the context of RAF Football, is as follows:



RESPECT

Self and mutual respect, regardless of individual characteristics, is at the heart of RAF life and behaviour, irrespective of the environment or situation.



INTEGRITY

Integrity is about being honest and having strong moral principles. It is the basis for the trust that is essential for the RAF to operate effectively on and off the pitch, and it reflects the key principles of moral courage, honesty and justice.



SERVICE

The willingness to serve others before ourselves, epitomising the values of loyalty, commitment, teamwork and courage. Football provides a perfect platform to foster this value in RAF personnel, but also serves as a reminder that sport is always secondary to our role protecting the nation.



EXCELLENCE

The Royal Air Force has a reputation for excellence in all that we do, including striving for personal excellence, discipline and pride. RAF Football is a powerful means of further instilling this culture into our personnel, for the benefit of the service, the individual and the community.

4. BACKGROUND

The impact of COVID-19 – the headlines. Like all aspects of society, RAF Football has been impacted by the consequences of Covid-19.

The primary areas affected have been:

ON THE PITCH

In line with HMG direction, limited football has been played, coached or officiated since Mar 20.

This has clearly had an impact on many of the Association's plans and aspirations.

However, at the time of writing this strategy, the Association is well set for re-starting football and making up lost ground.

FINANCIAL

Like many County FAs, the cuts to core-FA funding are a concern which is likely to impact the support offered by the Association to our community, putting a heavier burden on our volunteer workforce.

However, a combination of reduced expenditure and the sustainment of much of our sponsorship portfolio means that, at the macro level, our financial position is stable.

The future of this sponsorship income is the principal variable in shaping our financial planning over the time period of this strategy, specifically with regard to workforce structures.

ORGANISATION

The reduction in on-pitch activity has allowed a greater focus on organisational aspects of the Association.

This has included a transformation event focused on the HQ, allowing the modernisation of many business processes, with greater focus on governance, in line with the FA operating model.

Whilst good progress has been made, the pace of activity has been limited by the capacity of the volunteer workforce, many of whom have been heavily involved in Defence's response to the COVID crisis.



5. PROGRESS AGAINST THE 2018-21 STRATEGY

The RAF FA strategy in 2018 had 5 key objectives: be safe, be viable, provide opportunity for all, be competitive, and plan for the future. A brief synopsis of progress against these aspirations is as follows:

BE SAFE

We have met the Safeguarding operating standard and our approach is seen as the benchmark of excellence within RAF sport. Our safety management system is robust and takes best practice from RAF air safety management organisation, considered by many as world leading.

BE VIABLE

We have grown and strengthened our sponsorship portfolio; have implemented a cash reserves strategy; and developed enhanced financial management processes to improve oversight and accountability. As a result, the Association faces no foreseen risks to its viability in the medium-term horizon (1-3 year), albeit some activity may be constrained.

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

We have continued to provide opportunities for all within the Service to participate in every area of football. Although constrained by the global pandemic, the pause in activity has allowed more detailed plans to be developed to expand the range of opportunities, which will be implemented over the 2021-24 timeframe.

BE COMPETITIVE

At the Representative level there has been considerable success, especially within the Women's and U23s areas. Internally, the standards of football remain high – and highly competitive, albeit against a backdrop of improved disciplinary standards. More widely, our referees and coaches continue to perform at senior levels within national football.

PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

Arguably the area where the RAF FA has made the greatest progress is the development of a more strategic outlook in its approach to governance and organisational design. Whilst still a work in progress, the RAF FA's plans to continue this transformational journey, outlined in this strategy, are robust and encouraging.

6. GOVERNANCE

The current Board of Directors, including short pen pictures, is at Annex A.

The delivery of RAF FA Governance is a key area of reform, which will see the Association aligning with much of the direction from the National Governing Body for County FAs by summer 2022.

The current structure and the proposed change (which is subject to board and membership approval) is at Annex B.







7. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)

The RAF FA is extremely proud of the progress it continues to make in enhancing ED&I within the Association; specifically its award of the Preliminary Level of the Equality Standard for Sport in 2020.

The Association has a strong Inclusivity Advisory Group (membership at Annex C) and is making steady progress towards achieving the Intermediate Level by the end of 2022.

A detailed action plan for how this will be achieved is available [here](#).

In addition, the RAF FA will seek to remove money as a barrier to all forms of participation and self-development wherever possible, including initiatives such as coaching bursaries, thereby aiding social mobility.

8. FINANCE

SOURCES OF FUNDING

FA FUNDING

The National Game Board have agreed to freeze the RAF FA's total funding 2021/22, 2022/23 and 2023/24 seasons at 2020/21 levels, which is £85,672.49.

COACHING & DEVELOPING INCOME

The new RAF coaching and development framework will enable the RAF FA to receive a 20% dividend for the personnel registered as an Association member who participate in these courses. The potential amount of revenue generated via this means is uncertain.

RAF CENTRAL FUND

The RAF Central Fund (RAF CF) is a key source of funding for operational activity, such as travel costs and venue hire. The level of this funding is expected to remain broadly stable during the period covered by this plan. Funding is provided for the Association through bids on an annual basis and in line with the RAF CF's funding policy.

SPONSORSHIP

The RAF FA is currently sponsored by 5 diverse partner organisations, many of whom have been in partnership with the Association for over 8 years. This portfolio is assessed as broadly stable, with none of the stakeholders signalling a reduction in support. Negotiations remain ongoing with a 6th organisation which, if agreed, will provide greater financial resilience.

OTHER

In addition to the core funding streams identified above, the Association is also able to bid to several other organisations for specifically focused funding, such as the FA Innovation Fund.

SELF-ASSESSMENT AGAINST COUNTY FA STANDARDS

The RAF FA Financial Management principles are underpinned by the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice and the FA financial standards. The Association Board of Trustees approves an Annual Financial Plan at the start of every FY, governing expenditure from the various sources of income. The RAF Sports Federation administers the Association's finances, and in consultation with the RAF FA's Finance Director, ensure statutory accounting requirements are met, including an Annual Independent Examination in line with the Charities' Commission guidelines.

INVESTMENT

The RAF FA holds Reserves to cover any liabilities incurred as a result of the organisation ceasing to operate. There is an aspiration to invest some of the Association's reserve holdings in order to generate an additional passive income line. In future, this may offer a buffer to aid the Association to cover shortfalls, especially if the pandemic continues to impact the level of income received from the FA, charitable sources and sponsorship for the next 3 years.



9. WORKFORCE

The RAF FA has three employees who work as part of the Association HQ at RAF Brize Norton: the County Secretary (Mr Vince Williams), Football Development Manager (Mr Sam Wheeler), and a part time Football Development Assistant (Mrs Sheila Haining).

The line manager of these personnel is the Association Chief of Staff (Wing Commander Jim Sheldon).

The way this workforce is employed and supported has been a key focus during 2020-21, with a dedicated series of HQ transformation events.

The recommendations from this work included numerous HR enhancements, such as the implementation of personal annual appraisals and development plans.

These measures, many of which are ongoing, are included as a key work-strand within this business plan. During the pandemic, these staff have principally worked from home, with regular interaction from their line management, HR specialist and the Association senior management, to ensure welfare requirements were managed.



In addition to the HQ staff, the Association makes extensive use of RAF personnel who provide voluntary support as a 'secondary duty'.

The optimum future workforce approach, specifically the balance between employed and volunteer staff, remains undetermined and will be subject to further review in summer 2021.

10. BUSINESS PLAN 2021-24

PERFORMANCE TARGETS

In order to aid the Association in realising its strategic objectives outlined at para 5, a series of specific performance targets will be used to anchor activity and monitor progress. Some of these are set by the National FA as part of the 2021-24 delivery contract. Performance targets for the 2021-24 business plan are.

GOVERNANCE

Implement a governance structure which is coherent with the FA operating model by Jan 2022.

STAFF SATISFACTION

Improve on the result from the 2020 State of Play survey (75%).

ED&I

To achieve the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport by the end of 2022.

SAFEGUARDING OPERATING STANDARD

Continue to meet the Safeguarding Operating Standard.

SPONSORSHIP INCOME

To increase sponsorship income to >£50,000 per annum throughout Financial Years 21/22, 22/23 and 23/24.

SUCCESS ON THE PITCH

Win two Inter-Service titles each year.

PARTICIPATION

(1) Male Player Registration.

Mar 21 Baseline	2021/22 target	2022/23 target	2023/24 Target
2,112	2,112	2,112	2,112

(2) Female Player Registration.

Mar 21 Baseline	2021/22 target	2022/23 target	2023/24 Target
131	131	150	170

REFEREE EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Specific County FA targets for the recruitment, conversion, retention and progression of referee measures for 22/23 and 23/24 will be distributed to County FAs on 8 Jun each year. The targets for 21/22 are:

Baseline Registered Referees	Baseline registered L5-L7 referees	Recruitment measure target 2021/22	Conversion measure target 2021/22	Retention measure target 2021/22	Progression measure target 2021/22
85	57	21	13	68	5

COACH EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Continuous professional development KPIs are to be set by The FA and are to follow.

ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION – LEAGUES

As a secondary (non-mandated) measure the RAF FA have set an internal target for 75% of RAF FA affiliated leagues to achieve England Football League Accreditation status by 2024.

The baseline and secondary measures for the RAF FA are as follows:

Mar 21 Baseline	2021/22 target	2022/23 target	2023/24 Target
0%	25%	50%	75%

ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION – ADULT CLUBS

As a secondary (non-mandated) measure The FA's Club Network Strategy 2020-30 includes a target for 70% of Adult teams to be within an England Football Accredited Club by June 2024. The baseline and secondary measures for the RAF FA are as follows:

Mar 21 Baseline	2021/22 target	2022/23 target	2023/24 Target
59%	60%	65%	70%



10. BUSINESS PLAN 2021-24

PRIORITIES

Priorities will remain flexible and will be directed by the Board of Trustees in order to meet organisational need. As guidance for the implementation of this business plan, the standing priorities are to:

- a. Regenerate football participation to at least pre-COVID levels.
- b. Maintain a safe environment, including an effective safeguarding approach.
- c. Reform governance structures and modernise business processes.
- d. Successfully embed the new FA coaching model within RAF Football.
- e. To achieve the Intermediate Level of the Equality Standard for Sport.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MAPPING

How ways and means will be applied to the ends set out within this business plan, are mapped at Annex D; this document forms a visual roadmap for the implementation of this plan. The detailed implementation plans behind each of these work-strands are set out here.

This governance tool will be used by the Executive Board as the primary means to monitor and manage progress.

RISKS AND CONSTRAINTS

Key risks and constraints in the implementation of this strategy, which must be considered in the formation of delivery plans, are as follows:

- a. **Finance.** FA income will be reduced for the entirety of this planning cycle, which will constrain options to expand activity. Whilst sponsorship remains healthy, the impact of COVID on the commercial and charitable sectors may have a latent affect on this level of support.
- b. **Workforce.** The future structure and utilisation of the employed workforce within the RAF FA HQ is inextricably linked to the financial uncertainty outlined above. Outwith the HQ element, most work-strands are heavily dependent upon key RAF volunteers. The nature of Service life means that the capacity/availability of these individuals is uncertain, specifically if global events have a large-scale impact, as was seen with COVID.
- c. **Infrastructure.** The RAF FA has minimal influence regarding the allocation and condition of sporting facilities within the RAF, which are centrally funded as part of estate management contracts.
- d. **RAF Policy.** Whilst the RAF FA principally looks to the FA to align its strategy and processes (as seen with this business plan), the Association must also stay compliant with RAF requirements. Whilst the two are generally complementary (such as governance reform), areas of divergence may require the RAF FA to diverge from one of its 'parent' organisations.





CENTRAL FUND
ROYAL AIR FORCE football

 **Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund** | 1919 2019
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11. SUMMARY

As the RAF FA emerges from what is hoped to be the worst of the COVID-19 crisis, it is in a strong position to bounce-back swiftly and drive participation towards pre-pandemic levels.

Whilst this regeneration of football is the Association's immediate priority, the principle aims of this plan are to progress beyond this previous headmark, with an ambitious programme of reform and innovation.

Using the FA's strategy as a handrail, this plan will guide the RAF FA in its aspirations to: evolve participation; provide a platform for all forms of excellence; engender a safe and inclusive environment; and create a trusted, effective and efficient organisational core.

Success will allow the RAF to harness the maximum potential of football for mutual individual and organisational gain.

Wing Commander Jon Smith MSc MA RAF
Director Strategy RAF FA

ANNEXES:

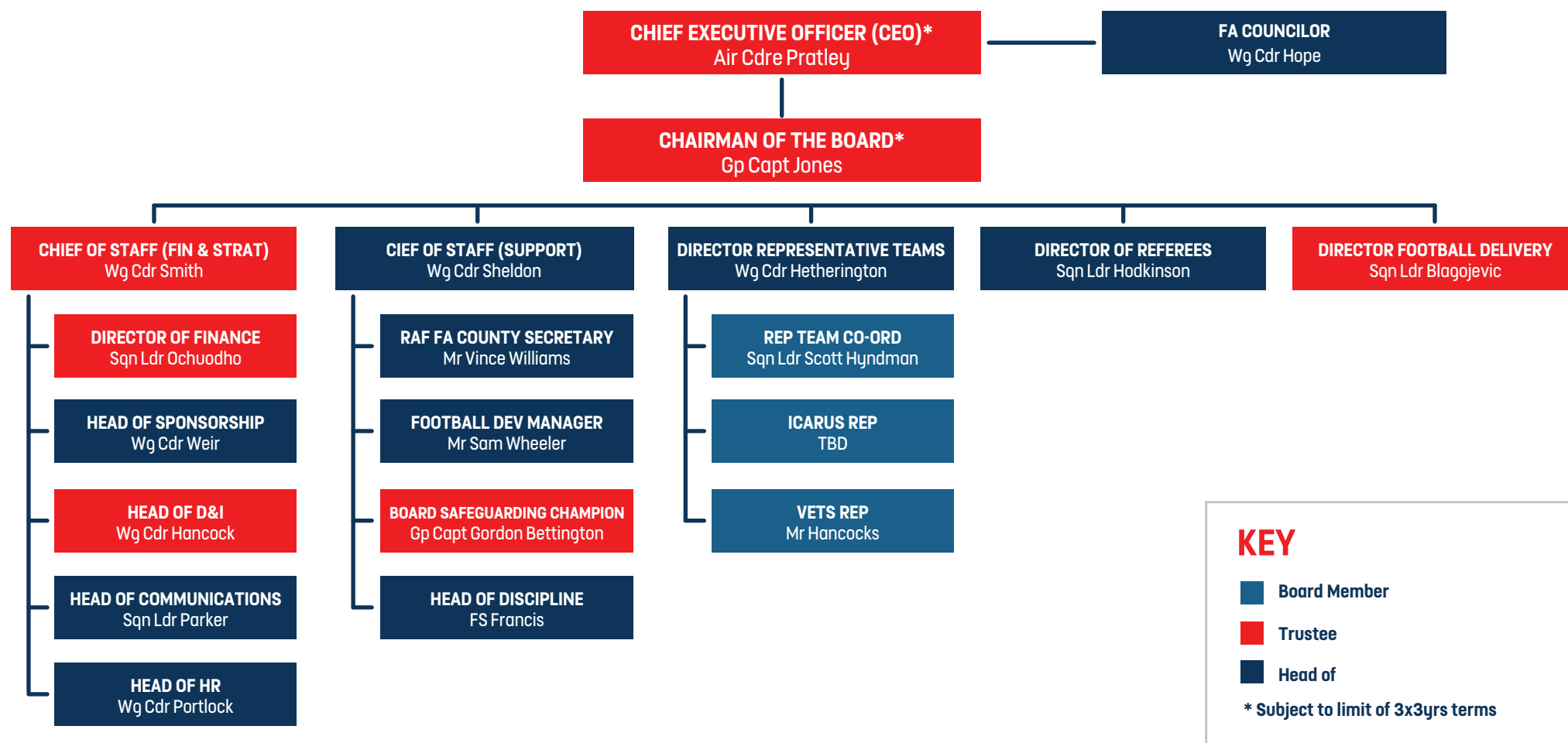
- A. RAF FA Directors.
- B. RAF FA Governance Structure.
- C. Inclusivity Advisory Group Membership.
- D. Strategic Objective Mapping.

Name	Role	Background
Air Commodore Rich Pratley	Chief Executive Officer (due to change to be Chairperson in new structure)	Rich is a logistics and planning specialist, who has spent the majority of his career in areas providing direct support to operations. He represented the RAF at all levels of football and has held several senior positions within the Association.
Group Captain Neil Jones	Chairman (due to change to be Chief Executive Officer in new structure)	Neil is a logistic specialist within the RAF who has focussed the majority of his 32 years in the RAF on operations. He has been involved with all forms of RAF Football since 1989 and has held Committee and Board positions since 2009.
Group Captain Gordon Bettington	Deputy Chairman and Board Safeguarding Champion	Gordon is a personnel specialist with a background in HR, recruiting and training. His involvement in RAF football began as a player, coach and manager. He has been involved at Board level since 2008/9.
Wing Commander Louise Hancock	Director of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	Louise is a logistics specialist with a broad background in operational logistics, movements and contract management. She has been involved with the RAF FA since 2007 with the Sponsorship team and now ED&I.

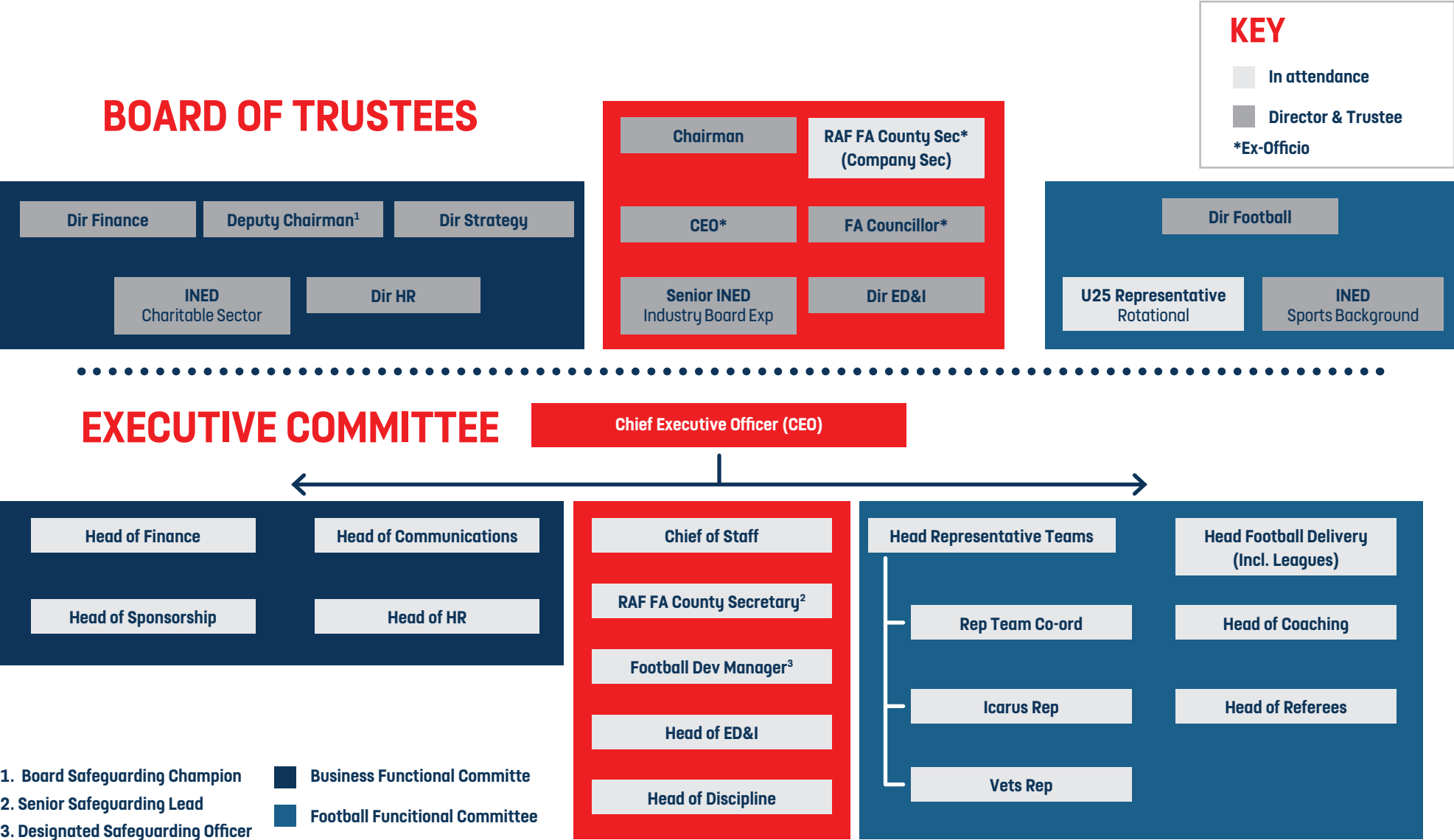
Name	Role	Background
Wing Commander Jon Smith	Director Strategy	Jon is a logistics specialist with a background in organisational transformation. He has been involved in RAF Football since 2008, including communications, sponsorship and corporate events.
Squadron Leader Martin Blagojevic	Head of Grassroots Football	Martin (Blago) is a Chartered Accountant with extensive experience in Infrastructure Portfolio management and MoD Finance. Holds an MBA from Cranfield and has held various roles with the Association since 2009.
Squadron Leader Joan Ochuodho	Finance Director	Joan is a Personnel Officer with HR, Finance and Facilities Management background. Her involvement in football started as a player and she has been part of the Board since 2018.

RAF FA GOVERNANCE TRANSFORMATION PLAN

Board Structure as of May 2021



PROPOSED FUTURE BOARD STRUCTURE



INCLUSIVITY ADVISORY GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Name	Role
Wg Cdr Louise Hancock	Dir EDI / IAG Chair
Sqn Ldr Katy Steed	IAG Vice-Chair / Sec
Gp Capt Neil Jones	RAF FA Chair
Wg Cdr Rachel Portlock	HR Director
Sqn Ldr Melissa Steed	IAG Trg Advisor
Sgt Sarah Thomas	Disability Rep
Mr Vince Williams	RAF FA County Sec
Mr Sam Wheeler	RAF FA Football Dev Mgr (FDM)
Wg Cdr Jim Sheldon	RAF FA COS
Wg Cdr Jon Smith	RAF FA Dir Strategy
Sqn Ldr Garf Parker	RAF FA Hd Comms
WO Sarah Cotman	IAG Independent Advisor
Sgt Michelle Perkins	Coaches Rep
Cpl Lauren Impey	BAME Rep
SAC Lauren Cassin	Women's Rep
SAC Sam Wylie	Women's Rep





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STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MAPPING

Ends					Ways	Means
Strategic Objective	Target / Measure of Effectiveness				How will the strategic objectives be delivered	Resources & dependencies required to enable the outcome
1. Re-generate, evolve and expand participation at all levels, providing opportunities for all.	Male players:				1.1 Restart of station and inter-station football, including tournaments and set-piece events, in line with government direction. 1.2 Just play initiative rolled-out across stations. 1.3 Branch League created around a flexible football format. 1.4 Women's league created around a flexible football format. 1.5 Refinement of the RAF FA annual football cycle. 1.6 Continue education of player registration and affiliation. 1.7 Make playing opportunities easier to find. 1.8 Development of small-sided football opportunities and 'flexible' football.	1.1.1 HMG and RAF permissions to play sport during the COVID-19 pandemic. 1.2-4.1 Enhanced Sports Fed Funding/ Sponsorship. 1.1-8.1 Utilising RAF FA IAG to promote opportunities to wider groups including female groups. 1.1-8.2 Enhanced partnership work with Station OICs and Ped staff. 1.1.8.3 Enhanced support of affiliated Leagues and their committees
	Baseline	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	2,112	2,112	2,112	2,112		
	Female Players:					
	Baseline	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	131	131	150	170		
	League Accreditation:					
	Baseline	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	0%	25%	50%	75%		
	Club Accreditation:					
	Baseline	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	59%	60%	65%	70%		
2. A platform for excellence to enable everyone to fulfil their potential.	Win two three inter-service titles each year.				2.1 Enhanced inter-service road map, including training camps. 2.2 Successfully implement the new FA education landscape. 2.3 Coaching and Education Plan. 2.4 Development of a player pathway. 2.5 Referee Development Plan. 2.6 Home for Sport Strategy. 2.7 Coaching Network. 2.8 CPD Program.	2.1.1 RAF CF grants / enhanced sponsorship. 2.2.1 HQ resource. 2.3.1 Coaching bursaries funded from Central Fund. 2.6.1 Sports Fed direction and permissions. 2.1-8.1 Utilising RAF FA IAG to promote opportunities to wider groups including female groups. 2.1-8.2 Enhanced partnership work with Station OICs and Ped staff.
	Referee Education and Development. FA targets are set annually: Recruitment (25%), Conversion (60%), Retention (80%) and Progression (9%).					
	Coach Education and Development: to follow					

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE MAPPING

Ends		Ways	Means
3. A safe and inclusive environment and culture	<p>Continue to meet the safeguarding operating standard.</p> <p>Achieve the Intermediate Level of the Equality for Sport by the end of 2022.</p>	<p>3.1 Safeguarding Action Plan.</p> <p>3.2 EDI Action Plan.</p> <p>3.3 Safety Management Plan.</p> <p>3.4 Coaching Bursary Initiative.</p>	<p>3.1.1 Safeguarding Team.</p> <p>3.2.1. Inclusivity Advisory Group.</p> <p>3.2.2 50% funding from The FA towards all Equality Standards.</p>
4. A trusted, effective and efficient organisation fit for the future	<p>Implement a governance structure which is coherent with the FA operating model by Jan 2022.</p> <p>To increase sponsorship income to >£50,000 per annum throughout Financial Years 21/22 – 23/24.</p> <p>Obtain a score of above 75% in annual State of Play surveys</p>	<p>4.1 Governance transformation Plan.</p> <p>4.2 Business Modernisation Plan.</p> <p>4.3 HQ Alignment Plan.</p> <p>4.4 Communication Plan.</p> <p>4.5 Sustainable Financial Plan.</p>	<p>4.1-4.1 Capacity within volunteer work-force.</p> <p>4.1-4.2 HQ staff resource & capacity.</p> <p>4.5.1 Sponsorship income, sustained or enhanced.</p>



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