



Herefordshire Football Association Strategy 2024-2028



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Introduction

CHAIR

The last 4 years have been transformational for the HFA and we intend to build on this over the next strategic cycle.

The HFA cannot do this alone and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to the development of this strategy. I would particularly like to thank all Board members, who provide excellent direction on a voluntary basis, together with all Council members for their ongoing support.

I would also like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who spend so much time and energy on the game we all love. Football in Herefordshire is in a strong place thanks to this essential group, together with the HFA team, who work extremely hard and are passionate about the power of football.

As we head towards compliance with the FA's Governance Code, a gold standard in sport governance which is now mandatory, it is fair to say that there have been a lot of changes,

both at Board and Council. We now have a majority of Independent Directors who bring a wealth of knowledge from a variety of areas, complementing the knowledge of Council-elected Board members and feedback from Council, all of whom represent a specific part of the game.

As set out within this strategy, the last 4 years have been a successful period. This is despite a number of challenges, not least a significant reduction in our FA grant, which has impacted all smaller County Football Association's.

Despite this, we now have more people participating on a regular basis, across a variety of formats of the beautiful game. We have secured significant investment into facilities and have delivered a wide range of projects to benefit all parts of our community.

The next 4 years promise to be an exciting period, as we work together to deliver this strategy.

Steve Willmot



Steve Willmot
Chair

CEO

Over the last strategic cycle, I am pleased to be able to report the successful delivery of all key goals, as set out within this strategy.

As mentioned by Steve, this simply would not have been possible without the support of everyone involved in the game across the county, including all grassroots volunteers, Board, Council and the HFA team. I would like to place on record my sincere thanks to all and am excited to see how the HFA and wider game will continue to develop across the next strategic cycle.

The HFA has a clear plan for the next 4 years to achieve this. Recognising the fact that the HFA is the custodian of the game, rather than the owner, it was felt important to ensure that the football community played a role in developing this strategy. Many thanks go to those from across the game who have contributed to what it is hoped will be viewed as a clear and concise approach. In developing this strategy, the HFA has also been mindful to ensure that it supports the respective strategies of its key partners the Football Association, the Football Foundation, Active Herefordshire & Worcestershire and Herefordshire Council.

One key area of success over the last strategic period has been the diversification of our income streams. This has been necessary to offset a reducing FA grant and I would like to place on record my thanks to all key partners who provide such fantastic support, allowing us to continue to invest in the development of grassroots football across Herefordshire

With a number of major milestones delivered, such as both the redevelopment of the SSAFA County Ground and 3G pitch and passing external NSPCC safeguarding assessments, and with a number soon to be achieved, such as the next stage of the Equality Standard and the Governance Code, it is an exciting time for the HFA and football across the county.

I know all at the HFA are looking forward to working with the football network and all of our partners over the next 4 years, to deliver this strategy.

Craig Oakley



Craig Oakley
CEO

About Herefordshire

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county, with the fourth lowest population density in England (88 people per square kilometre).

The resident population is estimated to be 187,100, with over a third (76,700) living in Hereford City. Just under a fifth (33,700) live in one of the three largest market towns, with the remainder (82,400) living in areas defined as 'rural'.

Herefordshire has a strong farming heritage, with 95% of the county's 842 square miles' land area being classed as 'rural'. In general, the county has a relatively large proportion of employment in sectors such as 'wholesale and retail' and 'agriculture'. Self-employment is more common than nationally, particularly in 'agriculture', 'arts, entertainment and recreation, and other service activities' and 'construction'.

The split between male and female is 49:51. The population of Herefordshire is 97.5% white, with 96.9% defining themselves as white British. Persons under the age of 18 account for 18.9%, lower than the national average. Persons aged 65 and over account for 23.7%, higher than the national average.

Herefordshire is in the seventh most deprived decile of upper tier (county or shire council) authorities, being ranked 97th most deprived out of a total of 151 such bodies. Certain areas of Herefordshire are also in the top 10-25% most deprived areas nationally.



Herefordshire Football Association

Herefordshire Football Association Limited (HFA) is a not-for-profit limited company and one of 50 regional football associations, responsible for developing, supporting and regulating the game of football across the County of Herefordshire.

Founded in 1893, the HFA has been based at its offices next to Widemarsh Common since 1985. Whilst one of the smallest County Football Associations, it serves a membership of over 340 affiliated teams, nearly 6,000 players, over 100 match officials and a wide volunteer support network.

The HFA has a board of directors consisting of 9, including 5 independent non-executive directors and the CEO. The HFA also has a Council consisting of 23 representatives from the game. The HFA employs a team of 5 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff. In addition, the HFA operates its own 3G pitch, which opened in 2019 following an investment of circa £800,000, the HFA SSAFA Super Sixes small-sided competition and the HFA Girls Development Centre.

At the AGM in June 2021, the HFA Members unanimously voted to change the HFA's Articles of Association to adopt the Football Association's Code of Governance for County Football Associations. These changes came into effect from the AGM in 2022 and full compliance with the Governance Code will be achieved by 30 June 2025.

Strategy 2021 - 2024

HOW WE DID



REGISTERED FEMALE PLAYERS
30% INCREASE



REGISTERED MALE PLAYERS
RETAINED



SAFEGUARDING
OPERATING STANDARD MET

95%

OF YOUTH
TEAMS WITH A
QUALIFIED COACH



REGISTERED DISABLED PLAYERS
25% INCREASE



EQUALITY STANDARD
PRELIMINARY LEVEL
APPLICATION SUBMITTED

Strategy 2021 - 2024

HOW WE DID

HFA HQ
REFURBISHED

ANNUAL PROGRAMME
TO ASSIST CLUBS WITH THE
REFURBISHMENT
OF FACILITIES



51 'GOOD'

QUALITY
GRASS PITCHES

75% of
RESPONDENTS TO AN
ANNUAL SURVEY TO
RATED SERVICE OF HFA
'GOOD' OR ABOVE

PORTFOLIO OF
PROJECTS FOR THE
BENEFIT OF THE
HEREFORDSHIRE
COMMUNITY



OPERATED AN
INCLUSION
ADVISORY GROUP

Strategy 2024 - 2028

PURPOSE

“Creating a community united by the power of football through the development, promotion and supporting of positive, safe and inclusive football opportunities For All’

VALUES

- We are Welcoming
- We act with Integrity
 - We are Open
- We strive for Excellence
 - We are Progressive

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

1. IMPROVING PLAYING CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITIES

► Support the youth game to grow and thrive

- Support local youth leagues and other organisations to deliver fit for purpose football opportunities for young people
- Working with the HSFA, influence the delivery of a fit for purpose competition structure for all young players in education
- Deliver an attractive youth HFA cup programme

► Continually evolve team based football for adult male players

- Provide small sided, walking football flexible competitive opportunities to fit modern lifestyles and life-stages
- Support local leagues and other organisations to deliver fit for purpose football opportunities for adult male players
- Work with local youth leagues and other organisations to support young people to transition from youth into adult football
- Deliver an attractive HFA cup programme

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

1. IMPROVING PLAYING CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITIES

► Develop opportunities to play safe, inclusive, casual football

- Provide small sided, walking football and flexible competitive opportunities to fit modern lifestyles and life-stages

► Support the disability game to grow and thrive

- Working with the HSFA, influence the delivery of football opportunities for disability players in education
- Provide opportunities for people with disabilities of all ages to play football casually in fun and safe environments
- Increase the quality and quantity of team-based opportunities for people with disabilities to play

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

2. DELIVER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN & GIRLS TO PLAY

2

► Create more team based playing opportunities for Women & Girls

- Continue to grow the number of girls teams and clubs ensuring access to high quality competition opportunities.
- Grow the number of adult women's teams playing 11v11, small sided and alternative games
- Actively improve the transition of girls from youth to women's open age football.
- Deliver an attractive HFA cup programme

► Extend and enhance casual opportunities to play for Women & Girls

- Grow the number of young people engaging in casual football opportunities (i.e wildcats)
- Expand the casual football offer for adult women

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

3. BUILD MORE & IMPROVE EXISTING FACILITIES

► Transform grass pitch quality

- Provide support to allow groundskeepers to enhance every pitch .
- Empower groundskeepers with workshops, courses, and an online community.

► Build more 3G pitches

- Support the development of an two 3G pitches

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

4. TACKLE POOR BEHAVIOUR

► Apply tougher sanctions

- Work with an external discipline services provider to ensure those that commit misconduct are dealt with appropriately

► Promote positive behaviour

- Explore and implement tangible ideas to reward positive behaviour

► Drive effective responsibility

Empower and support parents and

- coaches to set standards and lead by example

- Support clubs to deal with difficult situations and build positive culture

- Support referees to manage behaviours

across

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

5. DEVELOP A VALUED NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS, COACHES AND REFEREES

5

► Grow the number of people running the game

- Utilise major football events as a catalyst to attract new volunteers, coaches and referees
- Support clubs and leagues to recruit and train a knowledgeable and supported workforce

► Support those running the game to learn and develop

- Support clubs and leagues to develop role specific support and development plans for volunteers and coaches

► Celebrate and reward those running the game

- Expand and build our reward and recognition scheme reaching as many volunteers as possible

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

1. SUPPORT THRIVING COMMUNITY CLUBS



► Ensure clubs provide a quality experience through England Football Accreditation

- Supporting clubs to drive up the number of accredited clubs
- Support 1*, 2* and 3* England Football Accredited clubs to increase female and disability provision
- Offer clubs a greater role in supporting the development of coaches, referees and volunteers
- Recognise the role 1* and smaller clubs play in providing football opportunities

► Help clubs to become more sustainable

- Improve the finance & business acumen in clubs by providing a range of tools and education
- Enable more clubs to build and take ownership of facilities, such as 3Gs, grass pitches and clubhouses
- Provide access to expertise and best practice via communities and subject matter experts
- Support clubs in creating commercial and sponsorship opportunities

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

2. CONNECT & SERVE PARTICIPANTS

► Improve our customer service and communications

- Provide clear, timely and tailored communications so that participants receive the right information, at the right time and in the right way.
- Create and implement a high standard of customer service that participants can expect when contacting or working with the HFA
- Improve our overall communications and social media presence to both showcase the brilliance of the grassroots game, but also act as a useful information tool.

► Enhance digital opportunities to

- Explore opportunities with partners to improve the experience of playing, volunteering and running the game

enhance

STRATEGIC DRIVERS

3. PROGRESS THE GAME'S GOVERNANCE

3

► Promote the highest levels of governance

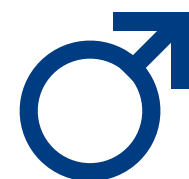
- Achieve compliance and remain compliant with The FA's Code of Governance and Equality Standard.

► Support the game to be safe and well-run

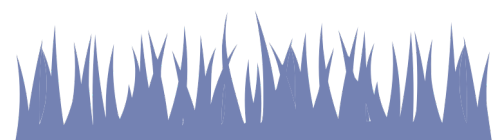
- Drive consistent standards, culture and practice, e.g., the Safeguarding 365 and Anti-Discrimination Standards.
- Support clubs and leagues by developing guidance on complaint and conflict management including Low-Level Concerns.

TARGETS 2024 - 2028

WHAT WE ARE AIMING FOR



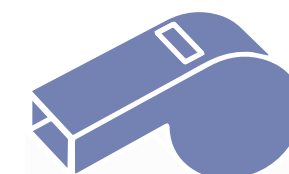
REGISTERED FEMALE PLAYERS
45% INCREASE



ADDITIONAL
20% 'GOOD'
QUALITY
GRASS PITCHES



REGISTERED DISABLED PLAYERS
20% INCREASE



REGISTERED REFEREES
16% INCREASE

REGISTERED
COACHES

13%

INCREASE



REGISTERED MALE PLAYERS
10% INCREASE

REGISTERED
VOLUNTEERS

13%

INCREASE

TARGETS 2024 - 2028 cont.

3

THRIVING 3*
SUSTAINABLE
COMMUNITY CLUBS

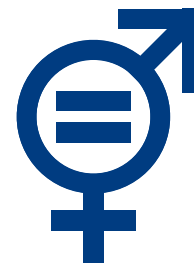
80% of

RESPONDENTS TO AN
ANNUAL SURVEY TO
RATE SERVICE OF CFA
TO BE 'GOOD' OR ABOVE



SAFEGUARDING
FA STANDARD COMPLIANCE

TACKLING
POOR BEHAVIOUR
FA KPI – TBC IN APRIL
2025



EQUALITY STANDARD
PRELIMINARY LEVEL ACHIEVED

FA

GOVERNANCE
CODE
COMPLIANCE

Summary

As set out in this strategy, the HFA is committing to a range of ambitious targets, to ensure that both the HFA and the game continues to flourish. There are sure to be some challenges ahead, but together as one football family, the HFA is positive that these targets will be achieved and football in the county will be stronger than ever, come the end of this strategic period.

We look forward to working with everyone from across the game to deliver the targets set out within this strategy, ensuring the game we all love continues to flourish in the county and the HFA continues to lead the way locally in terms of supporting our community.
The HFA Board.



Thank you

