

NORTH RIDING COUNTY FA

# BUSINESS STRATEGY 2024-2028



ENGLAND  
FOOTBALL



# FOREWORD

**The next four years will undoubtedly bring new opportunities and challenges for all of us with an interest in the game across North Riding. This new four-year strategy for grassroots football provides a framework for us to work together to continue to grow football across Teesside and North Yorkshire, with the aim of also widening participation.**

During our consultation with local stakeholders from the grassroots game, we heard loud and clear that tackling poor behaviour is one of the key issues that you would like us to address. Providing a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment, where players, coaches, referees and volunteers can thrive, is at the forefront of our thinking as we look ahead.

Developing a network of valued coaches, referees and volunteers is also paramount to the success of the game. Without these people grassroots football could not exist, and our job is to ensure that we support our existing workforce, whilst also making it attractive for new people to take up various roles within football. Supporting the continued growth of women and girls' football remains a key focus for us. Participation has increased rapidly since the Lionesses success at the Euros in 2022 and we will strive towards providing equal opportunities across football for females to play the game.

Working with our partners at the Football Foundation, and alongside Local Authorities, clubs and other stakeholders, we will continue to assist in building more, and improving existing, facilities. Providing good quality grass pitches, developing more 3g pitches and enhancing off-field facilities such as changing rooms and social areas, remain vital in supporting the game to flourish.

To achieve our goals within this strategy it is vital that we support a thriving network of community clubs, who provide pathways for all to play the game. By championing and facilitating improvements in club governance structures, we will strive to develop a network of sustainable clubs that are at the heart of their communities.

By connecting and serving our participants through The FA's digital technology platforms, we will also aim to make football more easily accessible and reduce the administrative burden for volunteers. We look forward to working with you to 'Enhance football by developing an inclusive game that inspires people and communities'.

**Steven Wade**  
Chief Executive, North Riding FA.



# OUR VALUES

## **Excellence**

Provide and promote the highest standards.

## **Pride**

Love the game, have a sense of purpose, and be proud of what we do.

## **Inclusion**

Provide opportunities FOR ALL.

## **Respect**

Listen and show empathy.

## **Positivity**

Adopt a positive approach at all times.



# OUR PURPOSE: **ENHANCE FOOTBALL** BY DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE GAME THAT INSPIRES PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.

## STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Improve playing Choice  
& Opportunities



Deliver Equal  
Opportunities For Women  
& Girls To Play



Build More & Improve  
Existing Facilities



Tackle Poor Behaviour



Develop A Valued  
Network Of Volunteers,  
Coaches & Referees

## STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Support Thriving Community Clubs  
Connect & Serve Participants  
Progress The Game's Governance



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FOOTBALL**

# IMPROVE PLAYING CHOICE AND OPPORTUNITIES

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
<b>EVOLVE THE YOUTH GAME</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Implement new pathway formats and deliver coach, league and parent awareness campaigns to support this change</li> <li>· Create exciting and inspiring opportunities for U5s and U6s to play</li> <li>· Influence the delivery of a fit for purpose competition structure for all young players in education</li> <li>· Promote and develop The FA's new small sided competition offer for teenage players</li> </ul>
<b>IMPROVE TEAM BASED FOOTBALL FOR ADULT MALE PLAYERS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Provide small sided, walking football and flexible competitive opportunities to fit modern lifestyles and lifestages</li> <li>· Explore with small sided football providers opportunities to collaborate and add value to the playing experience</li> <li>· Improve the appeal of the traditional 11v11 format to attract and retain players (e.g. establish midweek flexi leagues)</li> <li>· Support young people to transition from youth into adult football (e.g. create additional under 19/21/ 23 leagues)</li> </ul>
<b>CREATE MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY SAFE, INCLUSIVE, CASUAL FOOTBALL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Develop a range of casual football offers to include small sided, fun &amp; fitness, walking football and futsal by expanding The FA's Just Play provision and through our Active Through Football provision.</li> <li>· Work with the provider network (including MFC Foundation, York City Foundation, leisure industry and commercial football providers) to deepen the reach of casual football (e.g. in communities we don't currently reach)</li> </ul>
<b>SUPPORT THE DISABILITY GAME TO GROW AND THRIVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Provide FA resources to support the provision of more opportunities for disabled people to play football in schools</li> <li>· Provide opportunities for disabled people of all ages to play football casually in fun and safe environments</li> <li>· Increase the quality and quantity of team-based opportunities for disabled people to play in grassroots clubs and leagues</li> <li>· Harness the power of major events including The FA Disability Cup and Men's Euro 2028 to inspire participation</li> </ul>



# DELIVER EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO PLAY

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
SUSTAIN AND GROW MORE PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES IN SCHOOLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support primary school extra-curricular programmes to provide a pathway to Wildcats and community clubs.</li> <li>• In secondary schools, maintain the successful KS3 offer, roll out The FA offer for KS4 girls and evolve the competition structure for girls.</li> <li>• Retain the Girls Football Schools Partnership Network.</li> </ul>
CREATE MORE TEAM BASED PLAYING OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to grow the number of girls teams and clubs that offer a full female pathway, ensuring access to high quality competition opportunities.</li> <li>• Grow the number of adult women's teams playing 11v11, small sided and alternative games (with a focus on those aged 35+).</li> <li>• Actively improve the transition of girls from youth to women's open age football.</li> </ul>
EXTEND AND ENHANCE CASUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow the number of girls engaging in the youth pathway 'Play Phase' and embed Wildcats in England Football Club Accreditation.</li> <li>• Expand the delivery of the teenage programme 'Squad' and ensure all girls up to 16 years have a casual football offer.</li> <li>• Expand the casual football offer for adult women to include small sided, walking football and fitness sessions (e.g. expansion of the Women's Recreational League)</li> </ul>
DELIVER SAFE AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS TO THRIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve the awareness of female health and wellbeing for players.</li> <li>• Promote specific support for female players through different life stages to sustain participation.</li> <li>• Continue to influence policies and standards across the grassroots landscape that support female participation.</li> </ul>



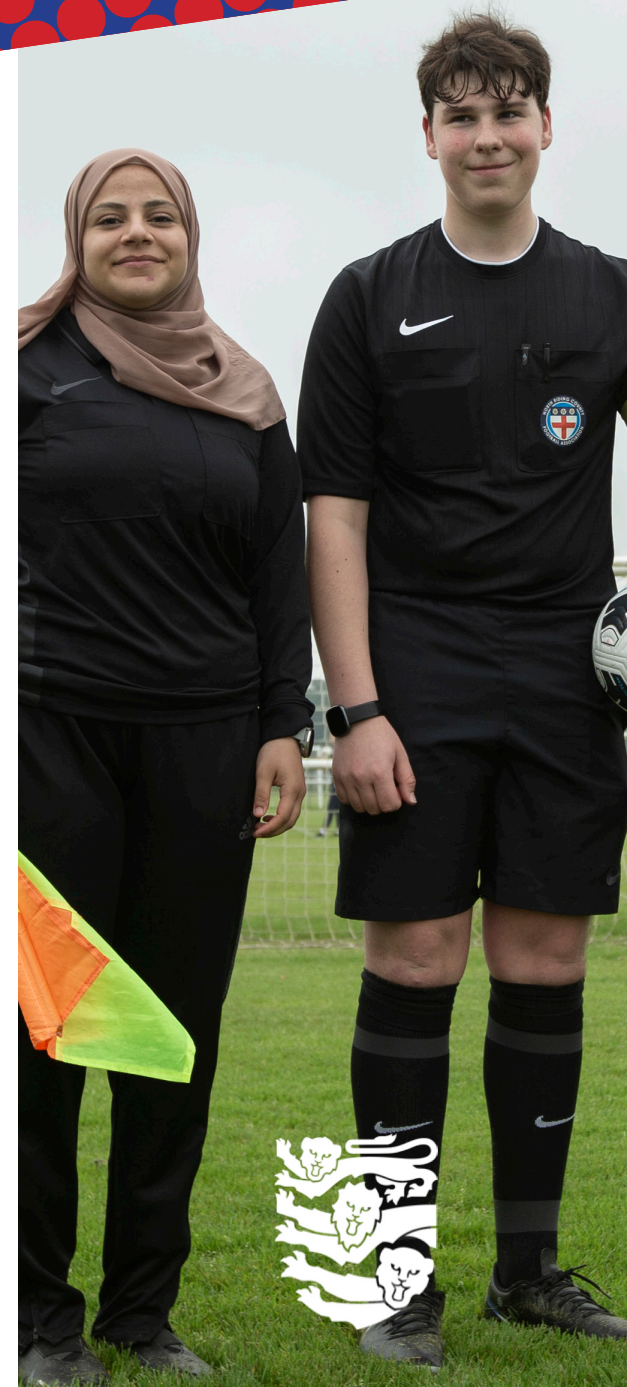
# BUILD MORE & IMPROVE EXISTING FACILITIES

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
TRANSFORM GRASS PITCH QUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support clubs to access expert advice and recommendations to enhance every pitch.</li> <li>• Support clubs to access grants for pitch maintenance and equipment upgrades.</li> <li>• Empower groundskeepers with workshops, courses, and an online community.</li> </ul>
BUILD MORE 3G PITCHES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold an intrinsic role in developing Playing Play Strategies and Local Football Facility Plans to ensure developments are accurate and fit for the future</li> <li>• Be creative and collaborate with non-traditional parties to unlock funding and opportunities to build more 3G pitches.</li> <li>• Support all Local Authorities and connected stakeholders</li> </ul>
CREATE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote standards for new build facilities and support improvements to existing facilities to provide better access for women and girls.</li> <li>• Identify key developments and build a culture of a welcoming, inclusive and accessible clubhouses.</li> <li>• Prioritise funding to help tackle inequalities and support communities with the greatest need.</li> </ul>
IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance and support to help improve environmental sustainability.</li> <li>• Equip facility providers with innovative tools and support to reduce and manage energy consumption.</li> <li>• Promote the adoption of renewable energy sources for long term environmental and financial benefits.</li> </ul>



# TACKLE POOR BEHAVIOUR

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
APPLY TOUGHER SANCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Explore options for addressing parents' poor behaviour, including through education.</li> <li>· Publicise sanctions more openly (e.g. points deductions for serious offences should be widely known to act as deterrent).</li> <li>· Amplify sanctions including simplifying sin-bins, points deductions and heavier weighting towards offence history.</li> </ul>
PROMOTE POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Explore and implement tangible ideas to reward positive behaviour (e.g. fair play points).</li> <li>· Celebrate positive behaviours (e.g. local and national awards).</li> <li>· Develop and embed a long-term comms and campaign approach to amplify best practice, showcase the values of the game and provide clear messaging on behaviours (e.g. Matchday Assistants, Positive Football)</li> </ul>
DRIVE COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY ACROSS THE GAME TO RAISE STANDARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Support clubs to deal with difficult situations and individuals, and to build positive cultures.</li> <li>· Support referees to manage behaviours (e.g. referee coaching and development, greater support and engagement with disciplinary process).</li> <li>· Empower and support parents and coaches to set standards and lead by example.</li> <li>· Work with leagues to reinforce the powers and systems they have to tackle poor behaviour and increase accountability.</li> </ul>



# DEVELOP A VALUED NETWORK OF VOLUNTEERS, COACHES AND REFEREES

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
GROW THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE RUNNING THE GAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with education and football partners to support and deploy young people &amp; young adults into roles in clubs and leagues (e.g. Middlesbrough College)</li> <li>• Develop and retain a knowledgeable and influential workforce who can champion change &amp; deliver targeted opportunities for disabled people.</li> <li>• Drive equal opportunities by supporting and growing the number of female coaches and referees.</li> <li>• Utilise major football events as a catalyst to attract new volunteers, coaches and referees.</li> <li>• Lead a local recruitment drive to utilise the power of The FA's reach for the benefit of local clubs.</li> <li>• Work with The FA and a network of specialists to drive volunteer development plans locally.</li> </ul>
IMPROVE THE DIVERSITY OF THOSE RUNNING THE GAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver a sustainable increase in the number of female referees and referees from underrepresented ethnic groups.</li> <li>• Support clubs and leagues to create sustainable plans and welcoming environments for all volunteers from all backgrounds.</li> <li>• Deliver regular campaigns and activation projects that demonstrate volunteering in football is for everyone.</li> <li>• Ensure qualifications and support effectively meet the needs of coaches working in the female game.</li> </ul>
SUPPORT THOSE RUNNING THE GAME TO LEARN AND DEVELOP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop role specific support and development plans for volunteers, coaches and referees</li> <li>• Provide training for those running FA Programmes (e.g. Wildcats, Squad, Comets)</li> <li>• Support the pilot a club-based volunteer leader programme.</li> <li>• Provide appropriate access to FA qualifications to support regulatory need.</li> </ul>
CELEBRATE AND REWARD THOSE RUNNING THE GAME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Showcase and raise the sense of value placed on voluntary roles</li> <li>• Deliver reward and recognition schemes reaching as many volunteers as possible (e.g. For the Love of the Game, NRCFA Long Service Award)</li> <li>• Deliver celebration events for all voluntary roles (e.g. NRCFA Grassroots Football Awards, Referee Recognition Event)</li> </ul>



# SUPPORT THRIVING COMMUNITY CLUBS

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
ENSURE CLUBS GROW OPPORTUNITIES AND PROVIDE A QUALITY EXPERIENCE THROUGH ENGLAND FOOTBALL ACCREDITATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhancing benefits and services that clubs value to drive up the number of accredited clubs</li> <li>Support 1*, 2* and 3* England Football Accredited clubs to increase female and disability provision.</li> <li>Offer clubs a greater role in supporting the development of coaches, referees and volunteers.</li> <li>Recognise the role 1* and smaller clubs play in providing football opportunities in both rural &amp; urban areas</li> </ul>
HELP CLUBS TO BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the finance &amp; business acumen in clubs by providing a range of tools and education.</li> <li>Support more clubs to build and take ownership of facilities, such as 3Gs, grass pitches and clubhouses.</li> <li>Provide access to expertise and best practice via communities and subject matter experts.</li> <li>Support clubs in creating commercial and sponsorship opportunities.</li> </ul>
SUPPORT THE CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATION OF CLUB LEADERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deliver a bespoke club leadership programme.</li> <li>Provide club leaders with EDI training to support them in building inclusive environments.</li> <li>Identify, support and develop the club leaders of the future.</li> <li>Provide training for dealing with difficult situations as a club leader, including escalation processes and support available e.g. media and press management</li> </ul>
EQUIP CLUBS TO ADD VALUE TO THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support clubs to maximise and demonstrate their social and economic impact.</li> <li>Support clubs to provide mental health signposting support for their members and communities.</li> <li>Support clubs to create wider community opportunities if they choose to do so and link them with other community organisations where relevant i.e. NHS forums, policing and local refugee groups.</li> </ul>



# CONNECT AND SERVE PARTICIPANTS

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
MAKE IT EASIER TO FIND INFORMATION AND OPPORTUNITIES TO PLAY, VOLUNTEER AND LEARN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Promote The FA's digital platforms for all useful information on grassroots football, by role or interest.</li> <li>· Encourage use of 'Find football' to make it the number 1 place to find opportunities to play and volunteer in football (including small sided providers).</li> <li>· Ensure our participants have the knowledge to book pitches and places to play, that suit them.</li> </ul>
IMPROVE OUR CUSTOMER SERVICE AND COMMUNICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Provide clear, timely and tailored communications so that participants receive the right information, at the right time and in the right way.</li> <li>· Create and implement a high standard of customer service that participants can expect when contacting or working with North Riding FA.</li> <li>· 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.</li> </ul>
DEVELOP OUR DIGITAL TOOLS TO MAKE RUNNING THE GAME EASIER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Continue to improve our current apps and systems to improve the user experience, ensure they are accessible, and make it easy to run the game.</li> <li>· Consider future opportunities to improve the experience of those administering and engaging in the game.</li> </ul>
EXPLORE DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE FOOTBALL EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Promote opportunities with partners to improve the experience of playing, volunteering and running the game (e.g. personalised playing stats in Match Day, sharable videos of game play with Veo Cam etc).</li> </ul>



# PROGRESS THE GAME'S GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVE	INTERVENTIONS
PROMOTE THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE ACROSS THE GRASSROOTS NETWORK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support leagues in being modern, progressive and customer-centric organisations.</li> <li>• Explore and prioritise governance risks with a particular focus on safeguarding and leadership in open age clubs.</li> </ul>
SUPPORT THE GRASSROOTS GAME TO BE FINANCIALLY ROBUST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support the reinvestment of surplus funds within football for the benefit of the grassroots game.</li> <li>• Explore partnership opportunities that benefit the football network by seeking ways to bring in additional investment and improve the exposure and relevance of North Riding FA.</li> <li>• Promote the Cost-of-Living Resource Hub to provide the game with ongoing support.</li> </ul>
SUPPORT THE GAME TO BE SAFE AND WELL-RUN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drive consistent standards, culture and practice across grassroots leagues and clubs (e.g. safeguarding, anti-discrimination)</li> <li>• Connect Low-Level Safeguarding Concerns, Discipline cases and club visit data to identify issues and manage cases.</li> <li>• Support clubs and leagues by developing guidance on complaint and conflict management including Low-Level Concerns.</li> <li>• Work with private coaching providers to support and drive standards and quality.</li> </ul>





**ENHANCE FOOTBALL BY DEVELOPING AN INCLUSIVE  
GAME THAT INSPIRES PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES.**

**EXCELLENCE, PRIDE, INCLUSION, RESPECT, POSITIVITY**

**NORTH RIDING COUNTY FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION LTD**

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