

# PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE

THE FA's SUSTAINABILITY  
STRATEGY TO 2028



# FOREWARD



The climate crisis is one of the most pressing issues of our time. At its current rate, climate change will have a wide-reaching impact on all of us. In football, we’re already seeing matches affected due to extreme weather – particularly in our grassroots communities – but the climate crisis reaches far beyond our game. In fact, it’s not only the climate crisis but a range of sustainability topics such as biodiversity loss, waste, and social disparities that impact us and our planet.

At The FA, we believe there is a need to focus on how we can contribute to not only reducing our own carbon footprint throughout our operations, but also the footprint of football across England, from our national teams to County FAs and grassroots clubs. We recognise the responsibility we hold as the governing body of football and must play a leading role. Our mission is to use football as a platform to raise awareness, educate, and to drive long-lasting, meaningful change for the environment.

Now is the time to act. Our sustainability strategy, ‘Playing for the Future’, sets out our plan to make a positive impact on the environment and the communities in which we operate by 2028. We have set a target to be a net zero organisation by 2040 and recognise the extent of activity required to deliver this. This is a journey and the next phase of our strategy will look to build on work already delivered to identify how best to use our platform across the country. We will review this strategy every two years, provide updates and increase momentum where we can. We are fully committed to this strategy and will leverage the talent of our people, leagues, clubs, County FAs and partners to create a better world for future generations.

Thank you to everyone who will support us on this journey as we tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Mark Burrows,  
Deputy CEO



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# THE BIG PICTURE

It is no secret that the sport we love depends on the planet we call home.

As the governing body of English football, and with 13.5 million active participants<sup>1</sup>, we have incredible potential to make, and influence, positive **environmental and social change at regional**, national and international levels. As a leading voice, we understand our responsibility to help bring the football industry together in order to have a significant positive impact on the planet and a positive influence on society.

We are no strangers to sustainability. For over 10 years, we have focussed and worked hard at Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park to drive our operational sustainability efforts, particularly around waste, food and energy.

2018 saw the launch of our in-house sustainability team, FAST; and embedded our sustainability goals into our operational management system for Wembley Stadium achieving certification to the international sustainability standard, **ISO20121**. Since then, we've gone from strength to strength, signing the United Nation's Framework Convention on Climate Change (**UNFCCC**) in 2019 as our commitment to countering climate change and driving forward action in the sports industry.

## 1. SHOOT FOR NET ZERO



## 2. SAVE OUR RESOURCES



## 3. MAKE AN IMPACT



But we're not stopping there. There is a lot of work to be done, and this document signals the next step on our journey. Introducing our sustainability game plan: **Playing for the Future**.

The purpose of this strategy is to drive forward our environmental ambitions and be a role model in shaping a positive football future for all. We identify actions addressing challenges in our direct control, as well as actions to influence and collaborate with our wider stakeholder community to achieve our environmental ambitions. It has been created through extensive consultation with a wide range of football stakeholders and focuses on the following **3 core areas**:



<sup>1</sup>FA SROI Report 2021

# SUMMARY OF OUR OBJECTIVES

Three main focus areas and objectives within each of them will provide a solid foundation from which to launch the next phase of our sustainability efforts. We will continue to evolve our objectives to drive forward our environmental ambitions and be role models in the environmental space.



## 1. SHOOT FOR NET ZERO

**CO2e emissions within our operational control across Scopes 1, 2 and 3:**

- **To reduce emissions 50% by 2030** from a 2019 baseline.
- **To achieve full net zero status by 2040.**

**Energy (across Wembley and St. George’s Park):**

- **To reduce electricity consumption** by 30% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline.
- **To reduce gas consumption** by 20% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline.

*Net zero = Reduction of all possible carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3)\*, with remaining emissions compensated through offsetting.*



## 2. SAVE OUR RESOURCES

- **To minimise impact from waste** through procurement choices, avoiding waste, identifying reuse opportunities and maximising recyclability.
- **To reduce water consumption** by 30% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline (across Wembley and St. George’s Park).
- **To maximise water recycling opportunities.**
- **To protect biodiversity across our venues** – animals, wildlife, plants, and micro-organisms.



## 3. MAKE AN IMPACT

- **To create the operational framework to embed this strategy across our whole organisation and facilities**, demonstrating success to all stakeholders.
- **To increase awareness and environmental sustainability practices across football** - promoting mutual learning, driving broader sustainability awareness and delivering meaningful change.
- **To govern and support wider change** - embedding strong sustainability governance across football and support County FAs and leagues with their own sustainability ambitions/targets.
- **To ensure partners we work with are fully aligned with us and committed to our sustainability ambitions.**

\* For a full breakdown of Scope definitions please see Glossary





# 1. SHOOT FOR NET ZERO

## FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE AND REDUCE EMISSIONS

In line with our commitments as signatories of the UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action (S4CA) Framework, our goal is to achieve net zero status by 2040.



1

### OUR OBJECTIVES

**CO2e emissions within our operational control across Scopes 1, 2 and 3:**  
**To reduce CO2e emissions 50% by 2030 from a 2019 baseline**

2

**CO2e emissions within our operational control across Scopes 1, 2 and 3:**  
**To achieve full net zero status by 2040**

3

**Energy:**  
**To reduce electricity consumption by 30% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline**

4

**Energy:**  
**To reduce gas consumption by 20% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline**

### HOW WE WILL SUCCEED

- Continue efforts to reduce carbon emissions across major events and day-to-day operations, with full measurement, reporting and time-bound targets in place.
- Optimise logistics and employee travel to minimise carbon emissions; investigating use of biofuel wherever possible.

- Invest over £6.5m in energy retrofit projects across Wembley and St. George's Park, with full measurement and reporting of effectiveness in place.
- Invest a further £1m in wider energy management projects across Wembley and St. George's Park (e.g. improvements to metering, controls, etc.) with full measurement and reporting of effectiveness in place.
- Review current FA working practices and conduct broader culture review to identify options to incentivise overall reduced energy consumption.



To deliver our 2040 ambition we commit to  
**a total of £35m+ investment**



## 2. SAVE OUR RESOURCES

### OPTIMISE RESOURCE CONSUMPTION

We recognise the need to reduce resource consumption across Wembley and St. George’s Park, as well as to embed more sustainable practices in everything we do.



1

To minimise impact from waste through procurement choices, avoiding waste, identifying reuse opportunities and maximising recyclability

- Extend the useful life of football goods, materials and equipment wherever possible.
- Reduce our overall waste through procurement decisions and 100% elimination of single-use and short-life items across our operations.
- Work collaboratively to identify solutions that reduce waste.

2

To reduce water consumption by 30% by 2028 from a 2019 baseline (across Wembley and St. George’s Park)

- Explore the feasibility of, and commit to, water reduction initiatives across Wembley and St. George’s Park.

3

To maximise water recycling opportunities

- Pursue opportunities to source water from more sustainable sources, and look to recycle more water on our sites.

4

To protect biodiversity across our venues – animals, wildlife, plants, and micro-organisms

- Continue to deliver St. George’s Park’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), including a new woodland and wildlife pond.
- Identify the opportunity for biodiversity and rewilding across football.





### 3. MAKE AN IMPACT

#### DELIVER AND GOVERN CHANGE ACROSS FOOTBALL

As the governing body of English football, we are in a unique position to drive wider environmental and societal change across clubs, leagues, and with partners.



1

**To create the operational framework to embed this strategy across our whole organisation and facilities**, demonstrating success to all stakeholders

- Continue to evolve our sustainability management system to deliver on our sustainability targets, retaining our ISO20121 certification.
- Offer sustainability training to FA-Accredited coaches and other employees involved in sustainability projects.
- Sustainability training extended to age group teams (players).
- Regular reporting and performance reviews against our environmental ambitions.

2

**To increase awareness and environmental sustainability practices across football** – promoting mutual learning, driving broader sustainability awareness and delivering meaningful change

- Work across football, with broadcasters and corporate partners to encourage uptake of sustainability practices (e.g., annual roundtable with UK stadia).
- Collaborate on campaign activity, to educate fans and raise awareness of climate change issues and promote climate action.

3

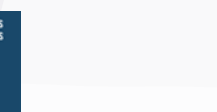
**To govern and support wider change** – embed strong sustainability governance across football and support County FAs and leagues with their own sustainability ambitions/targets

- Support County FAs and leagues with education and access to relevant materials.
- Support County FAs and leagues to understand their carbon emissions' impact and map out ways to reduce their carbon footprints.

4

**To ensure partners we work with are fully aligned with us and committed to our sustainability ambitions**

- Include sustainability within our procurement processes (including supplier screening).
- Hold sustainability workshops with suppliers and partners.
- Collaborate with suppliers and partners to reassess the need and quantities of products purchased and potential for reuse (pursuit of circular economies).



# ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE



## 1. SHOOT FOR NET ZERO

- ✓ Joined the UNFCCC Sports for Climate Action.
- ✓ Assessed Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse emissions in 2021 and developed a carbon reduction strategy.
- ✓ Installed a series of upgrades at St. George's Park (e.g. LED pitch lighting), reducing energy consumption.
- ✓ Installed a series of upgrades at Wembley Stadium (e.g. LED floodlights, electric mowers, etc.), reducing energy consumption by 40%.
- ✓ 100% of electricity at all FA sites is generated from renewable sources.



## 2. SAVE OUR RESOURCES

- ✓ Commitment to sourcing of local produce for Wembley Stadium, drastically reducing logistics associated with meat delivery (80% meat now sourced locally).
- ✓ Celebrated the 10-year anniversary of Wembley as a zero-waste-to-landfill venue in 2020.
- ✓ Continued the drive for recycling and resource reuse through facility enhancements and initiatives (e.g. donation of soil to local parks). Now successfully convert 30% of Wembley waste to energy and recycle 70%.
- ✓ Increased engagement of fans to raise awareness of importance of sustainable practices (e.g. through International matchday programmes).



## 3. MAKE AN IMPACT

- ✓ Our Sustainability Team (FAST) won 'Sustainability Team of the Year' in Sports Business Awards 2020.
- ✓ Revised procurement processes to ensure FA suppliers meet required sustainability standards (awarded CIPS Ethics Kitemark).
- ✓ Moved new contracts to suppliers offering employees the living wage.
- ✓ Maintained ISO20121, the Event Sustainability Management System, for Wembley Stadium.



# OUR FRAMEWORK...

| STRATEGY                                 | PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PURPOSE                                  | Drive forward our environmental ambitions and be role models in shaping a positive football future for all                                      |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                 |
| FOCUS AREA                               | 1. SHOOT FOR NET ZERO                                                                                                                           | 2. SAVE OUR RESOURCES                                                                                               | 3. MAKE AN IMPACT                                                                               |
| STRATEGIC GOAL                           | Fight climate change and reduce emissions                                                                                                       | Optimise resource consumption                                                                                       | Deliver and govern change across football                                                       |
| IMPACT AREAS                             | Energy and Emissions                                                                                                                            | Waste                                                                                                               | Sustainability Communication                                                                    |
|                                          | Transport                                                                                                                                       | Water                                                                                                               | Procurement Mechanisms                                                                          |
|                                          |                                                                                                                                                 | Food and Catering                                                                                                   | Human Resources                                                                                 |
|                                          |                                                                                                                                                 | Biodiversity                                                                                                        |                                                                                                 |
|                                          |                                                                                                                                                 | Product (merchandise, kit, etc.)                                                                                    |                                                                                                 |
| SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS' ALIGNMENT | <div><div>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</div><div>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</div><div>13 CLIMATE ACTION</div></div> | <div><div>9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE</div><div>12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</div></div> | <div><div>8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</div><div>17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS</div></div> |

# ...WHICH ALIGNS WITH UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Playing for the Future is one of five strategies that help us credibly contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 17 SDGs were adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The SDGs are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.

They are a globally-recognised blueprint often used by organisations to prioritise sustainable activities and make sure practices align to a better and more sustainable future for all.

Not all SDGs and their underlying targets are of equal relevance to every company, sector or geography. We have aligned the SDGs to our ambitions to form the strategic goals listed on the previous page. We recognise the role sport can play in enabling sustainable development and Playing for the Future will play its part towards its realisation.

## SDGS ADDRESSED BY CURRENT FA STRATEGIES

### ADDRESSED BY OTHER FA STRATEGIES

5 GENDER EQUALITY

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

### ADDRESSED BY 'PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE'

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

13 CLIMATE ACTION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

APPENDIX

HOW THE ‘PLAYING FOR THE FUTURE’ STRATEGY WAS CREATED

Stakeholders engaged:



Outcomes achieved:

|   |                                                                                                                   |
|---|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Holistic strategy aligns with sustainability objectives of our stakeholders                                       |
| 2 | Clear alignment on our sustainability role as an organisation, an event owner and as a governing body of football |
| 3 | Identification of three top-priorities to address through this strategy                                           |
| 4 | All stakeholders are fully supportive and prepared to support delivery                                            |

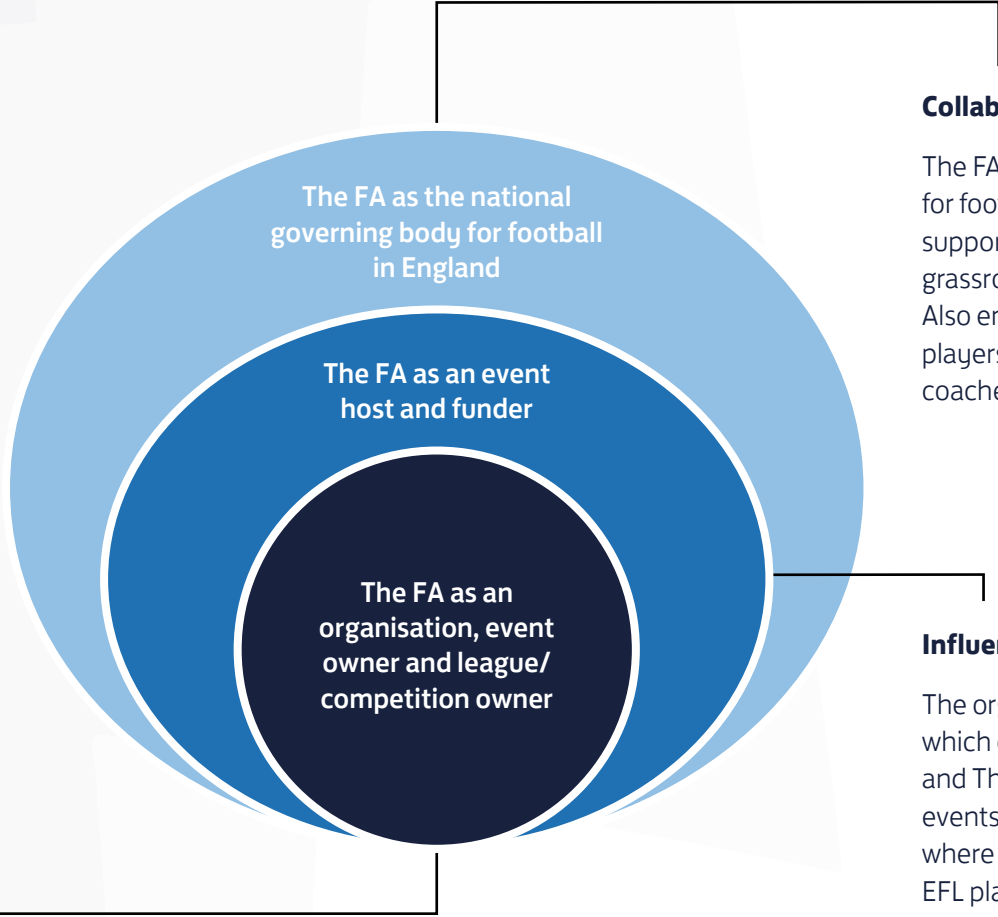
# THE SCOPE OF OUR SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

As the governing body for football in England, we understand the reach we have across the game. We also understand the different roles we play within the football landscape: over what we directly control, what we can influence and where we can collaborate.

For our sustainability strategy to be focused and effective, it is important to be clear on our areas of responsibility, as shown in the chart below.

### Direct Control:

The FA's day-to-day activities, governance, operation of owned venues (Wembley Stadium and St. George's Park), management of our national teams, and the work of our colleagues, wherever they work. It also includes the operations of the Women's Super League (WSL) and competitions The FA owns.



### Collaborate:

The FA's role as the national governing body for football in England, engaging with and supporting the football community, from grassroots to the game's professional level. Also engaging and collaborating with clubs, players and fans, volunteers, officials, and coaches.



### Influence:

The organisations which The FA helps fund but which operate separately, such as County FAs and The Football Foundation. It also includes events taking place at FA-owned venues, but where The FA is not the event owner (e.g. The EFL play-offs, concerts etc.).



# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

| TERM              | DEFINITION                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Net Zero          | Reduction of all possible carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3 – see below), with remaining emissions compensated through offsetting.                                                                                                                                                            |
| UNFCCC            | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| S4CA              | Sports for Climate Action.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| CO2e              | Carbon dioxide equivalent. This means our carbon inventory includes the impact of not just carbon dioxide but other greenhouse gases too.                                                                                                                                                      |
| Scope 1 emissions | Emissions arising from fuels combusted on an organisation's site or in its own plant or vehicles. This typically includes natural gas and heating oil, bottled gases, and petrol and diesel used in company vehicles.                                                                          |
| Scope 2 emissions | Emissions related to the purchase of energy (often electricity), where the primary fuel is combusted off-site in third-party facility/with their equipment.                                                                                                                                    |
| Scope 3 emissions | All indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of a reporting company. These are the result of activities from assets not owned or controlled by the reporting organisation. This typically includes purchased goods and services, upstream transportation and distribution, waste, etc. |



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