Our Vision

An outstanding sport where everyone can participate and perform in an accessible, inclusive, enjoyable and safer environment
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Chair’s Foreword

In 2017 the BAFA board took the unprecedented step of open and frank dialogue with its membership. The feedback and viewpoints received during the consultation have been refined and incorporated onto the strategy review and help form many parts of our goals as we move forward with the changes initiated in 2016.

The board wishes to stay engaged with the members as we drive the changes into effect, with set year one targets as part of the 4 year plan, to reinvigorate and develop the sport in the UK. We plan to engage and build on a great start and build a national governing body that meets and exceeds best practice and supports all levels of the sport.

There is still much to do, but we are committed to growing and improving the sport for all. We will need people from within the sport as well expert help from outside to ensure that we achieve our goals and form a lasting change that keeps us on track and meet the expectations of the people who play, coach, officiate and manage the sport.

We need you the members to work with us and help develop and grow the sport that we all love

Martin Cockerill
Chairman
British American Football Association (BAFA)

Thank you to all those who supported the development of this strategy.
Strategic Context

Setting the scene

The sport continues to see year on year growth and trends indicate untapped demand. We currently have circa 18,000 members across University and National League American Football, and approximately 1,050 registered coaches and 150 referees that make the sport happen. As a National Governing Body of Sport, we are unfunded by Sport England, however, we continued to strive for growth and development that benefit our existing and potential members.

The BAFA Board have recently taken stock of the sport’s current position, and as such, started the process of establishing a new strategy to drive the sport forward. This has been entered into with an awareness of the challenges the sport faces and limitations of the current infrastructure. There is a passion to enable the sport to maximise its potential. Key to the success of developing this new strategy, has been a consultative process with the American Football community. The strategy sets out the future for the sport of American Football and it is therefore a strategy for American Football and everyone involved in the sport. A full detail of the consultation process can be seen in appendix A.

There is a collective awareness that the key strength of BAFA over the last few years has been the positive and passionate volunteer workforce, which is respected for enabling opportunities to play the sport. However, there is the realisation that the sports’ next phase requires effective governance and additional capacity that can drive forward strategic priorities. Consultation revealed significant improvements are required, particularly in the player pathway, workforce and communication.

The sport recognises opportunities to further grow the sport, access funding grants and create commercial revenue. There is also the opportunity of NFL endorsement and support. These opportunities can only be realised with effective strategy, tactics and implementation. We are at a turning point for the sport.
Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework

**Vision**
An outstanding sport where everyone can participate and perform in an accessible, inclusive, enjoyable and safer environment

**Mission**
Grow Sustainable American Football

**Strategic Framework**

The following diagram illustrates the strategic framework the BAFA Board will manage and drive. The strategic themes identify the aims required that will enable delivery and organisational objectives to be achieved. These themes will act as the five foundations for a change that will drive participation and increase performance.

The aims will be underpinned by both organisational and delivery objectives. Organisational objectives will focus on finance, governance, marketing, communications, business development and business processes. Delivery objectives will focus on competition structures, national teams, workforce, schools development and clubs.
Aims

Overarching:
1. Participation; high levels of activity in a variety of American-football related contexts that allow people to enhance their physical, mental and social well-being.
2. Performance; highly effective performance pathway in which players, coaches, officials and other staff can learn develop and thrive.

Foundations:
1. Commercial and Marketing; utilising enterprise to grow the game and thrive in the increasingly competitive sports marketplace.
2. Finance and Operations; compliance with all regulations and have appropriate finance controls, whilst organising high quality events and experiences.
3. People; developing a resilient sporting habit in our players, coaches, officials, volunteers and spectators.
4. Communication and Transparency; transparent and accountable, engaging effectively with stakeholders.
5. Leadership and Governance; diverse, skilled and experienced decision-making, which contains independence voice and operates effectively.
Consultation with the American Football community and a facilitated Board Away Day has culminated in four year objectives and actions for the first year. Annual action plans will be created to continue to drive the four year objectives forward.

**Finance**

4-year objective: **To ensure the organisation is on a sound financial footing**

Year 1 actions:
1. Recruit a Director of Finance
2. Clear shared budget set and adhered to

**Governance**

4-year objective: **For BAFA to be a well governed organisation**

Year 1 actions:
1. Establish a newly defined governance structure, with appropriately skilled and competent people fulfilling new Board roles.
2. Review and implement policies and procedures
3. Move towards Sport England’s Sports Code for Governance

**Communications**

4-year objective: **An organisation that communications well with its members and stakeholders**

Year 1 actions:
1. Identify best methods for communicating with members to enhance levels of communication and member satisfaction
2. Clear regular concise and transparent communication to members

**Business Development**

4-year objective: **Develop effective partnership that lead to business development opportunities**

Year 1 actions:
1. To review existing and potential partnership relationships and establish key benefits
2. To establish a commercial strategy

**Business Processes**

4-year objective: **One usable database that underpins the operation of BAFA**

Year 1 action:
1. Establish needs (output) and investigate feasibility of a new combined system.
2. Define and establish a specification for the system that meets the needs of the sport.
Consultation with the American Football community and a facilitated Board Award Day has culminated in four year objectives and actions for the first year. Annual action plans will be created to continue to drive the four year objectives forward.

**Delivery Objectives**

**Competition**  
4-year objective: **To provide well organised appropriate competitive opportunities for all formats**  
Year 1 actions:  
1. Appoint a management team for competitions

**National Teams**  
4-year objective: **To be recognised in the top three in Europe in all international formats**  
Year 1 actions:  
1. Appoint a national programme lead  
2. Create a clear player pathway

**Workforce**  
4-year objective: **Recruit and retain a competent and motivated workforce**  
Year 1 actions:  
1. Develop a training programme for team managers and administrators  
2. Create a coaching licensing programme ready for implementation

**Schools**  
4-year objective: **Inspire more young people to take up the sport**  
Year 1 actions:  
1. Maintain American Football in the School Games

**Clubs**  
4-year objective: **Support the development of sustainable clubs**  
Year 1 action:  
1. Establish a club development programme with three tiers for performance, development and participation  
2. Provide incentives for clubs to engage their volunteers in coaching and officiating courses
Appendix 1: Strategy Consultation Stakeholder Event

The BAFA undertook a consultation exercise with the membership and key stakeholders in the sport to test the vision, mission and strategic themes.

The consultation aimed to draw out any discontentment, but more importantly, to gauge the direction of the sport through the next four years. The stakeholders came generally from a range of clubs, officials and administrators in the sport.

The event held over a day had the following key objectives:

What did the stakeholders feel about the sport?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Potential for growth, (4 years)</td>
<td>• Board continuing to run operationally</td>
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<tr>
<td>• NFL endorsement and support</td>
<td>• Other sports</td>
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<td>• Sport England money</td>
<td>• Facilities issues</td>
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<td>• Sponsorship deals and commercial arrangements</td>
<td>• Poor member behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Staffing</td>
<td>• Current culture of membership</td>
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<td>• Operational processes</td>
<td>• Repeating past mistakes/ past decisions</td>
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Stakeholders were given the strategic themes of, **people, participation and performance**. They were tasked with developing the action points to achieve strategic objectives, specifically, some key actions that should be addressed in the coming year. The findings from this stakeholder analysis are detailed below and could be used to shape the first-year action plan.

### People: Developing a resilient sporting habit in our players, coaches, official, volunteers, and spectators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Players</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Change of culture of the membership towards BAFA.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaches</th>
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<tr>
<td>• National education system</td>
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<td>• Licensing of coaches including minimum standards</td>
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<td>• Mentoring of coaches</td>
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<td>• Financial investment in coaching workforce.</td>
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<th>Referees</th>
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<td>• Accessibility of courses and access</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Education and process</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Review best practice. Education and recruitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recruitment campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial investment in upskilling referees</td>
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<td>• Recognition of volunteers/ management</td>
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<td>• Accreditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job descriptions e.g. medics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Revise standards of paid staff,</td>
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### Participations: High levels of activity in a variety of American football-related contexts that allows people to enhance their physical, mental, and social well-being.

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- Clear player pathways
- Strategy towards age groups
- Regional staff- e.g. development officers
- School - clubs link advice tool kit
- Level of youth’s development
- Incentives or requirement for full player pathway
- Clear development plan
- Club legislation, criteria for investment and chartered standard style format.
- Clear marketing of participation of American football product e.g. Touchdown football
- Coaching at all levels
- Inclusivity at all levels.
- Evaluation of programmes and new entrant numbers

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<tr>
<th>Performance: Highly effective performance pathway in which players, officials and other staff can learn, develop, and thrive.</th>
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<td>• Appoint national programme director to align all teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Structures, set a long-term calendar</td>
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<td>• Align all games to formats in Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Implement plans for a national performance centre</td>
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<td>• Develop camps incorporating coaching development</td>
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Key findings

Culture
- Stakeholders do respect the work BAFA has achieved over the last few years
- American football has a membership culture which threatens the future of the sport
- Stakeholders are passionate about the future of BAFA and want to see and support change.
- Stakeholders are realistic, they want a professional, accessible, suitable, organised BAFA, that is respected as a NGB.

The Game
- American football has a passionate and committed volunteer workforce at all levels
- Many opportunities for American football to grow exist
- American football has several workforce gaps that are effecting the development of the sports at all levels
- The player/competitive pathway is unclear – thus stakeholders are unclear of the pathway of participants from grassroots to high performance, this impacts all levels of the game but is particularly the case in the transition between the junior and adult game.

Leadership
- American Football has clear strategic themes, but needs clear strategic actions on how to achieve these.
- Although the vision is understood a new sharper focused vision and objectives should be considered.
- Board roles need to be clarified based on the functions needed to guide and deliver the strategic plan.
- This new form could lead to different levels of governance dealing with the business and the game.
- BAFA has a Board and stakeholder culture thinking and behaving operationally which need to be changed if the sports is to progress.

Thank you to all those who supported the development of this strategy.