

# BUILDING A CULTURE OF SUCCESS:

A strategy for athletics in Scotland 2018-2026



**BELIEVE, BELONG, ACHIEVE TOGETHER**



**BRITISH  
ATHLETICS**

**sportscotland**  
the national agency for sport

**scottishathletics** 



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
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Our aim is to build an integrated and transparent system that supports our constituent members, as well as continuing to develop the sport of athletics in Scotland as a whole. This document provides an overall strategic vision for athletics in Scotland, from grassroots introductory level through to international level, and sets the context for future strategic decisions and identification of key programmes and projects.

We have seen significant growth and improvement within our sport over the past four years, with the number of people taking part in athletics (and running) across all disciplines increasing. This is thanks in the main to the significant contributions from our member clubs, event organisers and ‘athletics people’, the majority of whom devote their time voluntarily and for the good of others 52 weeks of the year.

**scottish**athletics currently has a membership base of 13,100 individual members, 20,000+ members of our 152 athletics clubs and more than 450 formalised jogging groups. We have also witnessed over 120,000 participants within licensed events annually for the past few years.

The strategy title, Building a Culture of Success, is not just about performances on the world stage, but is about the whole sport pulling together in the same direction and recognising the importance of all parts and individuals within the system. A system requires all parts to be working effectively together, with everyone valued equally. That includes clubs, coaches, officials, athletes, event organisers, partners, supporters as well as **scottish**athletics as an organisation.

Clubs and people will sit very much at the heart of our operations. We absolutely recognise that if we are to develop an integrated pathway and progressions for everyone in the sport, operating at all levels, then the system that is developed must have clubs, a progressive pathway and transparency at the centre. This sport is about people, and our role is very much about supporting people to be the best that we can be at every level of the sport.

Athletics is, and will continue to be, the most inclusive and popular sport in Scotland. To ensure this continues, we need to operate in a way that reflects our values, and recognises the role we play in Scottish society. We will continue to develop these values to ensure that equality and inclusivity remain at the heart of our activities. **scottish**athletics has been a leader in this area, not just within sport, but within the wider world. We will continue to strive to be as reflective of Scottish society as we can be, with the resources we have at our disposal.

Within the area of performance, without compromise, we want to continue to build a system that supports world-class coaches, working with world-class athletes, in Scotland, with world-class facilities. We also have a desire to create more opportunities for Scotland to compete in European championship competitions as a single nation, along with our other home country colleagues, as is evidenced and permitted by other international sports federations.

In delivering our vision and ambitions, it is crucial that we work in partnership with our key stakeholders, which obviously includes our clubs and volunteers at the centre. Nationally and internationally, the importance of partnerships must not be underestimated. The relationships with the Scottish Government, **sport**scotland, Commonwealth Games Scotland, local authorities, leisure trusts, UK Athletics, home countries athletics organisations, IAAF and European Athletics are hugely significant in delivering our ambitions and supporting the delivery of the system.

**scottish**athletics will provide clear leadership and work with our members in providing a strong national plan, that will enhance work already being done. But it is imperative that we create ‘whole system’ thinking. As such, everyone involved in the sport, or supporting the sport will have a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities with transparency and accountability.

As a result, we should produce an inclusive and integrated system for athletes, clubs, coaches, officials, volunteers and administrators.

From a business perspective and commercially, we must provide a viable and attractive organisation with effective business practices, that ensures increased commercial investment and strong partnerships across all sectors.

If we all work together to Build a Culture of Success, then undoubtedly, we will create an integrated, inclusive and adaptable model of athletics provision that inspires every community in Scotland to enjoy athletics and running. We will also provide a clear and transparent pathway that enables a culture of success at World, Paralympic and Olympic level events.

# KEY PILLARS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The 5 Key Pillars of the Strategic Plan form the strategic priorities for the Sport. Leadership and strong foundations will ensure the effective implementation of the Plan.

## LEADERSHIP –

Provide strong leadership and transparent governance representative of our membership and wider Scottish community, underpinned by clear and effective communication, that encourages behaviours that lead to a **‘culture of success’** throughout the sport at all levels.

### 01 CLUBS & PATHWAYS

Support and develop a strong, modern and sustainable club system that grows participation through the recruitment and retention of skilled and diverse club leaders, coaches and officials.

### 02 COMPETITION

Lead, regulate and provide a modern competition structure and pathway across all disciplines that enhances the experience for athletes, coaches, officials and spectators at all levels of the sport.

### 03 PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS

Provide an effective, transparent, consistent and uncompromising talent pathway and performance programme for athletes and coaches in Scotland resulting in world class performances and medals.

### 04 PARTNERSHIPS & COMMERCIAL

Provide a viable and attractive organisation with effective business practices that ensures increased commercial investment and strong partnerships across all sectors.

### 05 RECREATIONAL RUNNING & HEALTH

Influence the market, and provide opportunities for everyone in Scotland to enjoy the health benefits of recreational running events and social running programmes.

## PEOPLE –

Skilled and diverse people are the single most important factor in delivering the strategy and therefore crucial to our success. Recruitment, support and retention will be at the heart of our work.

## FOUNDATIONS –

Our Strategic Plan will be underpinned by a sustainable system throughout the sport, developing skilled and diverse people, building stronger partnerships through effective communications and supported by modern technology. Excellent training and competition environments will be a key part of this structure.





## VISION

Winning the hearts and minds of the Scottish community so that athletics (and running) is the first choice sport or activity in Scotland.

## MISSION

To build an integrated, inclusive and adaptable model of athletics provision that inspires every community in Scotland to enjoy athletics and running.

To provide a clear and transparent pathway that enables a culture of success at World, Paralympic and Olympic level events.

## PURPOSE

1. Provide strong leadership and transparent governance to ensure all our constituencies work together to support our sport's success.
2. Support and develop a strong, modern and sustainable club system that grows participation through the recruitment and retention of skilled and diverse club leaders, coaches and officials.
3. Lead, regulate and provide a modern competition structure and pathway across all disciplines that enhances the experience for athletes, coaches, officials and spectators at all levels of the sport.
4. Provide an effective, transparent, consistent and uncompromising talent pathway and performance programme for athletes and coaches in Scotland, resulting in world class performances and medals.
5. Provide a viable and attractive organisation with effective business practices, that ensures increased commercial investment and strong partnerships across all sectors.
6. Influence the market, and provide opportunities for everyone in Scotland to enjoy the health benefits of recreational running events and social running programmes.
7. Ensure we develop skilled and diverse people – who are the single most important factor in delivering the strategy – with the recruitment, support and retention of people at the heart of our work.

## WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE:

- A modern, sustainable and vibrant club system measured on retention, growth, social impacts and professional approach to developing clubs and athletes.
- A vibrant and effective competition structure that allows all athletes to compete regularly at the appropriate level.
- A balance of both skilled volunteer and professionalised (paid) coaching structures within clubs.
- A clear and transparent talent pathway for athletes, coaches and officials.
- Major championship medals annually and more regular opportunities for Scottish representative teams to compete internationally.
- A wide range of supported running opportunities for any member of the Scottish public who wishes to participate in the sport.

## A SYSTEM BASED ON THE FOLLOWING VALUES:

- Strong and transparent leadership.
- Value the importance of volunteers.
- Equality and inclusion.
- Accountability.
- Resilience.



# LEADERSHIP

Provide strong leadership and transparent governance, representative of our membership and wider Scottish community, underpinned by clear and effective communication, that encourages behaviours that lead to a **culture of success** throughout the sport at all levels.

## LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE

- Provide a strong leadership and transparent governance, to help steer the sport by setting the direction of travel.
- Ensure a clear vision and strategy is widely communicated to the sport and our partners, and is aligned to our objectives and delivered successfully.
- A nationwide approach to strategic direction, policy development and implementation.
- Develop further strategic relationships with key partners, including the Scottish Government, **sports**scotland, Commonwealth Games Scotland, UK Athletics, European Athletics and the IAAF.
- Provide advocacy to the Scottish Government and local authorities in areas such as health impacts, community club impacts and education, promoting the benefits of athletics and the need for engagement within their areas of influence.

## COMMUNICATION

- Engage closely with the membership of the sport by providing clear platforms for communication.
- Use all forms of communication to promote the sport and its successes to the wider media and Scottish public.
- Create, develop and maintain strong stakeholder communication with local, national and commercial partners.
- Provide national platforms and resources to our membership that enables effective communication and innovation within, and across clubs.

## CULTURE BEHAVIOURS

- We will be effectively connected to our members and partners as an organisation.
- We will share accurate information with our members and partners and provide transparency around leadership.
- We will all work together and know which direction we are moving in.

# 01

## CLUBS & PATHWAYS

Support and develop a strong, modern and sustainable club system that grows participation through the recruitment and retention of skilled and diverse club leaders, coaches and officials.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Provide support opportunities at an appropriate level to every member club in Scotland.
- Evolve and deliver a national club modernisation programme to support development in clubs.
- Support and provide training opportunities for club committees and boards to ensure highly skilled leaders in clubs.
- Raise the standards of coaching by supporting the training of all volunteer coaches, as well as the professionalisation of coaching structures/career development opportunities within clubs, where demand exists.
- Recruit, retain and support new officials into structured competition programmes.
- Junior Pathway: a national entry level concept programme of support and resources for clubs in communities linking with local partners (schools/local authorities/leisure trusts).
- Lead and facilitate a national schools athletics programme with Active Schools, the Scottish Schools Athletic Association and teachers.



### ACTIONS

- Ensure an appropriate national club framework, with support programmes and resources available for clubs at every stage of the development spectrum.
- Expand the club modernisation programme of workshops, resources and online support to more clubs (40+) as well as introducing more formalised mentoring/buddying support between clubs.
- Deliver the National Club Leaders' Academy annually and expand to include specific workshops and resources for specific club roles.
- Provide resources, business and human resource support to help clubs implement paid coaching structures where appropriate.
- A targeted national programme, in partnership with clubs, to recruit and retain new officials into regional and national event programmes annually.
- Implementation of 'Funetics' athletics programme to Scottish clubs and their partners (schools/local authorities/leisure trusts) targeting children 5–12 years.
- Ensure the implementation of the national schools programme including teacher and future teacher education support.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Increase in overall national club membership.
- Improved (and measured) retention of athletes, coaches and volunteers.
- Increase in junior club members aged between 5 and 12 years of age.
- More clubs operating as 'businesses' and increasing the number of club sessions weekly.
- An increase in the recruitment and retention of new officials within structured competition programmes, measured annually.
- Implementation of paid coaching and club roles within clubs where required and where demand exists.
- Maintenance or increase of schools athletics delivery within Active Schools monitoring data.



# 02

## COMPETITION

Lead, regulate and provide a modern competition structure and pathway that enhances the experience for athletes, coaches, officials and spectators at all levels of the sport.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Support and influence the competition structures and pathways across all disciplines (including Paralympic) in Scotland, working with event organisers and leagues as appropriate.
- A National Championships competition programme across all disciplines with athletes and supporters at the heart of the experience.
- An event-specific series and virtual club leagues allowing everyone to compete and contribute, no matter age or ability.
- A national competition programme supporting participation, talent development and higher level performance.
- Provide clear development and support pathways for coaches, officials and administrators.
- A strong working partnership and delivery between **scottishathletics** and UK home countries in implementing a range of national events series.



### ACTIONS

- Implement a national series of events (including championships) of high quality, in partnership with clubs and commissions.
- An ongoing review project to increase quality (experience) of competitions available across the country for existing members and attract new participants and spectators to our sport.
- Work with partners to develop online/app technologies to provide high quality live competition updates and results via mobile phones and tablets.
- Provide an event-specific series for track and field that provides a range of competition opportunities across Scotland, that will allow all athletes to participate at their desired level.
- Provide clear guidelines, recommended structures and education (age and stage) for parents, for primary school aged competition within and between clubs.
- A national retention, recruitment and development programme for officials with clear targets and outcomes.
- A system for identified junior athletes with a strengthened and tiered competition structure (age and stage specific) that link district to Scottish Schools to national to a UK series of event opportunities.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

- A National Series implemented with support of our commissions and clubs.
- More officials recruited, retained and developed nationally through the officials development programme.
- Local to national competition structures across the country, supporting athletes of all abilities, as well as development and pathway progression opportunities.
- UK Series for progressing athletes on talent pathway, attracting sustained commercial support, brand recognition and media coverage.

# 03

## PERFORMANCE ENVIRONMENTS

Provide an effective, transparent, consistent and uncompromising talent pathway and performance programme for athletes and coaches in Scotland, resulting in world class performances and medals.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- A system measured against world class standards and performance indicators to ensure a more robust and measured evaluation.
- A system with a clear and transparent system of talent development that works in synchronisation with clubs, universities, coaches, athletes and partner organisations.
- A robust and effective approach to identification and preparation of athletes in Scotland by Scottish coaches to achieve World Class performances annually.
- Recruit, develop, retain and support the best Scottish coaches with the potential to deliver medal outcomes from a Scottish base.
- Support and facilitate where appropriate, paid coaching structures/environments for coaches working with talent environments.
- Provide a well-integrated performance environment across all disciplines with excellent facilities, including physical training and preparation bases for event groups where appropriate.
- Provide quality competition supporting development, and international competition opportunities across all disciplines.
- Explore opportunities for Scotland to compete as an independent nation (alongside other UK home countries) in European Championship events.
- Operational support – ensure quality management structure, budgets, support systems and management of resources with our partners (UKA/Scottish Institute of Sport etc.).



### ACTIONS

- Increased integrated support to be provided to Scottish potential medal athletes and coaches based on Scottish programmes – world class athletes being developed in Scotland in world class facilities.
- Develop a world class coaching system with effective coaching support, development and education.
- Introduction of a professional coaching qualification, setting standard for paid coaches.
- Ensure clear and transparent sets of standards and guidelines for athletes and coaches to better understand selection criteria for performance support programmes and international teams in Scotland.
- Ensure that all National Academy athletes, coaches and parents, experience and are inducted into, world class training environments.
- Introduce the concept of 'physical' national training centres/hubs for event group disciplines and specific events with the best Scottish coaches and athletes training and preparing together.
- Ensure communication channels between **scottish**athletics, UK Athletics & the **sport**scotland Institute of Sport are open and transparent.
- Ensure best competition opportunities are available to athletes progressing through the talent pathway.
- Education approach to support athletes transitioning from school/university to working careers, coupled with athletics training, as well as helping those athletes transitioning towards retirement.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Medals achieved: An Olympic, Paralympic, World, European and Commonwealth medal(s) at every championship.
- Scotland to rank as strongest UK nation (by population percentage) across all athletics disciplines.
- Continued improvement of system measures including Scottish training environments (including facilities), coach performance measures and service provision measures.
- Improvements in pathway system measures including athlete numbers and progression from the pathway into national teams, competition performance of pre-elite athletes, with respect to UK teams and rankings, and capacity building of the system as a whole.
- Introduction of physical training centres/hubs for event groups.



# 04

## PARTNERSHIPS & COMMERCIAL

Provide a viable and attractive organisation with effective business practices that ensures increased commercial investment and strong partnerships across all sectors.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Continue to develop strong and effective partnerships with the Scottish Government, **sportscotland** and UK Athletics.
- Promote the **scottishathletics** brand through our communications plan and all communication and media platforms.
- Continue to develop, maintain and service all commercial partnerships and sponsorship acquisitions.
- Commercialise assets and properties at all levels of the sport including recreational running, participation, events and performance.
- Explore opportunities and benefits of charitable status for **scottishathletics** or components/projects within the organisation.



### ACTIONS

- Increase funding streams from both the government and commercial sectors to enable the delivery of the strategic plan at all levels of the sport.
- Introduction of a board sub-group with co-opted members with responsibility to lead and drive the commercial strategy.
- Coordinate national marketing, communication, public relations and brand promotion of **scottishathletics**.
- Attract longer-term sponsors and commercial partners, and commercialise the assets of **scottishathletics**.
- Increase the promotion of athletics activities and our events to the general public.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

- An increase in, and consistency in, Scottish Government/**sportscotland** funding.
- An increase and sustainability in annual commercial partnership income.
- The **scottishathletics** brand nationally recognised and valued as one of the country's favourite sports.

# 05

## RECREATIONAL RUNNING & HEALTH

Influence the market, and provide opportunities for everyone in Scotland to enjoy the benefits of recreational running events and social running programmes.

### STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

- Increase in runners participating in structured and supportive social running groups across Scotland.
- Utilise running as an interception/out-reach opportunity to increase runners and athletes, including those, proportionately from under-represented groups.
- More athletes having great experiences at more athletics and running events.
- More people and organisations aware of the positive role athletics plays in improving health and physical activity, as well as social impacts within local communities in Scotland.
- Play an influencing and supporting role within emerging projects and running markets (e.g. Schools, Daily Mile, new events etc.).



### ACTIONS

- Continue to develop the jog**scotland** programme alongside new social running networks and online platforms.
- Work in partnership with organisations who have experience and resources available to target under-represented groups, with a focus on BME, LGBT and deprived groups, and work with those organisations to make sure our sport is promoted in an attractive, accessible way.
- Continue to provide support and IT solutions for licensed running events in Scotland.
- Work with **sport**scotland and the Scottish Government to effectively measure the impact of athletics on the health of the nation against the appropriate government frameworks.
- Explore the opportunities to develop a social running membership for non-club members that links directly to clubs.

### SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Growth in jog**scotland** participants, social running programmes and event participation in Scotland.
- Increase in participants from under-represented groups.
- Evidence of athletics achieving the outcomes as measured by **sport**scotland and the Scottish Government.



# FOUNDATIONS

Our Strategic Plan will be underpinned by a sustainable system throughout the sport, developing skilled and diverse people, building stronger partnerships through effective communications and supported by modern technology. Excellent training and competition environments will be a key part of this structure.

## PEOPLE

- Invest resources in motivated and effective people, clubs and organisations who can continue to take the sport forward.
- A strong, skilled, inclusive and effective staffing team within **scottishathletics** who can support the great work and efforts of the sport's significant workforce.
- Work with clubs and groups to ensure a safe and regulated workforce including licensing, safeguarding and welfare services to the athletics and running community.

## EQUALITY & INCLUSION

- An inclusive and accessible sport, embedding equality and diversity into the foundations of the organisation through policy and targeted projects (in line with our annual targets).
- Address areas of under-representation – particularly ethnic minorities – across all areas of the sport to increase balanced representation.
- Ensure clubs are inclusive and integrated with a clear pathway for athletes by providing equality and inclusion support and advice where appropriate.
- Targeting greater female representation across core areas of the sport – particularly senior and team management roles and upper level coaching/ official qualifications.
- Addressing equality and inclusion group representation within licensed and championship events.
- Equality and diversity training made accessible to all involved in the sport as well as consulting with the Equality and Diversity Advisory Group (and partners) for guidance on equality issues.

## PARTNERSHIPS

- Strong working partnerships with Scottish Government, **sportscotland**, UK Athletics, Commonwealth Games Scotland, local authorities/leisure trusts and schools.
- Attract new and develop, maintain and service, commercial partnerships and sponsorship acquisition.
- Strong working relationships between **scottishathletics**, clubs and local authorities/leisure trusts.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Ongoing digital review process and structure to improve websites and CRM systems across the whole sport.
- Keep up-to-date with delivery mechanisms and platforms for communicating both internally and externally.
- Work with partners to ensure we are at the forefront of new media and technology to further enhance the sport.

## SUSTAINABLE SYSTEM

- Ongoing review and implementation of the National Facilities Strategy for Athletics in Scotland – world class facilities must be available for coaches and athletes when required.
- Ensure appropriate structures (including staffing) to ensure the strategy can be implemented and delivered successfully.
- Strong governance and financial structures in place to enable the strategy to be implemented and measured.





## REVIEW MECHANISMS FOR THE STRATEGIC PLAN

- The Strategic Plan will be monitored regularly as part of the agenda at every board meeting.
- The Strategic Plan will be formally reviewed annually and reported via the Annual Report.
- The Strategic Plan will, in effect, be a two year rolling plan. It will be reviewed with the sport and partners every two years and adjusted and updated where appropriate.

## SUPPORTING PLANS AND STRUCTURES

- The Strategic Plan will be supported by the appropriate sub-plans (e.g. performance, club development, workforce, recreational running, facilities, equality and inclusion and commercial).
- The **scottishathletics** board will oversee the delivery of the strategic plan.
- **scottishathletics** will ensure its committees and commissions, operating structure and position descriptions reflect the goals, priorities and success indicators of the Strategic Plan.
- **scottishathletics** staff will develop and deliver agreed operational plans outlining tasks and activities, timelines, key performance indicators and resource requirements and provide reports as required.
- **scottishathletics** will continue to further develop effective partnerships with UK Athletics, IAAF/European Athletics, **sportscotland** and the Scottish Government and will align plans and systems, roles and responsibilities, resources and performance indicators in delivering the goals and priorities of the Strategic Plan.

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

**scottishathletics** recognises an ever-changing environment within the Scottish and UK sporting and political landscape. We will continually evolve and adapt to opportunities within this environment, but will also take control of our own destiny by ensuring we constantly set and review our own priorities.



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