FOOTBALL AND ITS COMMUNITIES: FINAL REPORT

For the Football Foundation
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Dr Gavin Mellor is Research Fellow at the Manchester Institute for Popular Culture at Manchester Metropolitan University. He has published numerous articles on football, community and social identity. He is co-editor of Soccer and

Disaster: International Perspectives (with Paul Darby and Martin Johnes) published by Routledge in 2005; and his first single-authored book, English Football and its Supporters, is due for publication by Manchester University Press in 2007. Gavin was lead researcher on the Football and its Communities research project.

Dr Tony Blackshaw is employed as Senior Lecturer in Social & Cultural Studies of Sport at Sheffield Hallam University. He teaches and researches in a range of areas related to community, sport and social exclusion. His most recent publications include Leisure Life: Myth, Masculinity and Modernity (Routledge, 2003), New Perspectives on Sport and 'Deviance': Consumption, performativity and social control (with Tim Crabbe) (Routledge, 2004) and Zygmunt Bauman (Routledge, 2005).

Chris Stone is a full-time doctoral student at Sheffield Hallam University whose PhD focuses on the relationships between football and 'everyday life'. Chris has conducted research for the Football and its Communities project as part of his studies.

This is the final report from the Football and its Communities research project. The research was funded by the Football Foundation Community and Education (C&E) Panel and ran from October 2002 to October 2005. It has been carried out by a team of five researchers from Manchester Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam Universities.

The aim of the research has been to provide the Football Foundation C&E Panel and the wider football industry with a new vision and understanding of how to engage with 'communities' of various types. To do this, the project team has carried out longitudinal case studies with three major English football clubs - Leeds United, Manchester City and Sheffield United - and has conducted a range of broader research in this area.

This report follows three interim reports which were prepared for the Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Interim Report 1 is a full survey of the community activities of the three case study clubs, and a review of other community sports programmes in the cities of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield.

- Interim Report 2 is a thorough and extensive mapping and analysis of the different 'communities' of the case study clubs.

- Interim Report 3 is an analysis of community issues associated with stadium moves, specifically in the context of Manchester City's move to the City of Manchester Stadium in summer 2003.

The report is introduced with a consideration of how relationships between football and 'communities' have become more obscure and challenging in recent years due to a number of changes in social, sporting and political contexts. In light of these, the report suggests the need for a new national strategy to inform football's approach to community development and engagement which goes beyond current motivations in this area.

To draw out the implications of this suggestion, the report presents detailed analysis which is followed by specific recommendations in seven areas:

- Strategic Frameworks
- Club Organisation
- Partnerships
- Stadia and Facilities
- Supporters
- Social Inclusion
- Skills and Knowledge

Strategic Frameworks

Section 2 of the report presents a detailed analysis of the need for a coherent strategic framework to inform English football's approach to community development and engagement. It outlines the need for the Football Foundation, the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and clubs to work together to spread a coherent message across football about the need for a 'step change' in relation to football's response to new social agendas. More specifically, it suggests that the Football Foundation C&E Panel should

consider developing more focused approaches to funding and engaging with new social agendas through a review of its:

- Aims and Objectives
- Strategic funding priorities
- Development and training
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

The key recommendation in this section relates to the need for the C&E Panel to establish a coherent set of strategic funding priorities.

Club Organisation

Section 3 outlines ways in which clubs at all levels of football can develop new structures and methods of working which will enable them to develop better relations with their multiple communities. The proposed approach is based around two connected strategies:

- The first is the creation of new and independent community organisations at clubs which will be 'outward facing' and will work on developing community interventions in areas such as health, education, community safety and regeneration.

- The second is the development of a more holistic approach towards community issues which cuts across the full range of football clubs' activities.

The section outlines a number of practical issues around adopting these strategies, and makes recommendations for how the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel can help clubs to adopt them.

Partnerships

Section 4 considers different levels of partnership working across English football and makes recommendations for how new styles and cultures of working can help to create more effective partnerships. Specifically, the section analyses institutional, formal club and frontline delivery partnerships and outlines how the Football Foundation C&E Panel and the football authorities can help to implement skills and education training around these areas. The section also discusses practical issues in relation to the balance of power in partnership working, and makes recommendations for how

the football authorities and football clubs can work more successfully together, and in partnerships with a range of outside agencies/groups.

Stadia and Facilities

Section 5 evaluates the role that stadia and other football facilities can play in relation to community engagement and development. It does this in four main areas:

- Residential communities
- Fan communities
- Business communities
- Communities of disadvantage

The section outlines a range of possibilities for how stadia/facilities can be useful resources for clubs' multiple communities, and makes specific recommendations for the Football Foundation C&E Panel, the leagues and football clubs which are designed to better regulate and promote 'community use' programmes and approaches.

Supporters

Section 6 explains that football supporters are rarely seen by clubs as 'communities', and are now, in fact, more often identified as individual customers. The section is based on detailed mapping and research with fans and suggests a range of ways in which supporters can be understood and engaged with as communities. It makes a number of recommendations for how supporters can be mobilised, for example as 'community volunteers', in support of their clubs. It also identifies different ways in which clubs and English football more generally can develop policies which support the generation and maintenance of fan communities, and recommends specific actions for the government, the Football Foundation C&E Panel, the leagues and clubs in this regard.

Social Inclusion

Section 7 addresses the developing social inclusion agenda in football, and outlines a new approach for the game. It investigates increasing expectations on football clubs to work with 'hard to reach' and 'at risk' young people in estate and street-based settings, and identifies the need for a more strategically informed, pro-active and flexible approach. Using best practice examples, the section makes a number of recommendations for the government, the Football
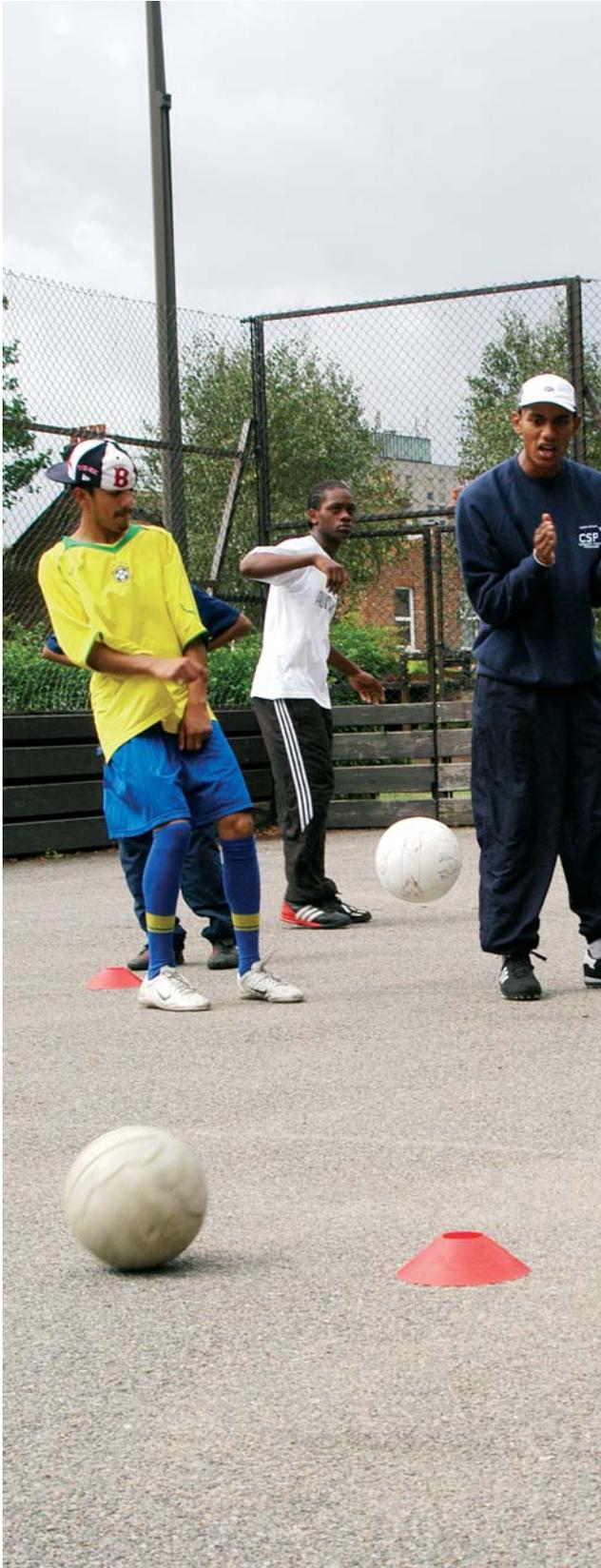
Foundation C&E Panel and the football authorities to facilitate this work; and for football clubs in terms of frontline delivery.

Skills and Knowledge

Section 8 notes that if English football is to implement the new approaches outlined in the report, it will need to identify and meet a wide array of training and education needs across its workforce. It recommends that the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel should take different roles and responsibilities in working with Sector Skills Councils and training providers to meet these training needs. The section also makes recommendations for how the Football Foundation C&E Panel and the football authorities can support and fund clubs to enable them to develop new levels of knowledge and understanding of their multiple communities.

Next Steps

The report concludes with a series of 'next step' recommendations for the government, the Football Foundation C&E Panel, the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and clubs. These are designed to facilitate the implementation of the report's wider and more detailed recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Research

This is the final report from the **Football and its Communities** research project. The research was funded by the Football Foundation Community and Education (C&E) Panel and ran from October 2002 to October 2005. It has been carried out by a team of five researchers from Manchester Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam Universities.

The aim of the research has been to provide the Football Foundation C&E Panel and the wider football industry with a new vision and understanding of how to engage with 'communities' of various types. To do this, the project team has carried out longitudinal case studies with three major English football clubs - Leeds United, Manchester City and Sheffield United - and has conducted a range of broader research in this area.

The research has been conducted using a wide range of methods:

- Large numbers of formal and informal interviews have been conducted with representatives from every level of the football industry including senior league and governing body representatives, county football associations, Supporters Direct, club officials, frontline community staff, and football supporters and their representatives.

- Interviews have also been conducted with various representatives from national and local government, the health and education sectors, Sport England and other bodies who are engaged with the community sport agenda.

- The research team has undertaken extensive observation and participant observation exercises in a range of club and non-club settings which have helped our understandings of, amongst other things, football-themed health, education and other interventions; supporter cultures and communities; and the experience of working in a range of football club departments.

- Where appropriate, the research team has also employed more quantitative methods such as statistical analysis and digital mapping exercises to determine, for instance, the socio-economic profile of football supporters and other communities at the case study clubs.

- All of this information has been supplemented by detailed documentary research which has focused on the current state of thinking around sport and community in Britain and what this means for English football.

Prior to this final report, the research team prepared three interim reports for the Football Foundation C&E Panel. Electronic versions of these reports are available at www.substance.coop.

Interim Report 1 is a full survey of the community activities of the three case study clubs, and a review of other community sports programmes in the cities of Leeds, Manchester and Sheffield. The report comments upon:

- The development of 'football and community' schemes from the 1970s.

- The sporting and political contexts in which football clubs are increasingly expected to engage with new agendas including health, education, social inclusion, and crime reduction.

- A baseline study of those activities at the case study clubs which are designed to engage with 'traditional' (football coaching/development) and 'non-traditional' (social inclusion) agendas.

Interim Report 2 is a thorough and extensive mapping and analysis of the different 'communities' of the case study clubs. It concentrates specifically on four types of 'community' and their relationships with the football clubs and each other. These communities are graphically and statistically mapped.

The report comments upon:

- The character/nature of the case study clubs' residential communities and their relationships with the clubs.

- The make-up of 'business communities' around the case study stadia and their relationships with the clubs.

- The case study clubs' understandings of 'communities of disadvantage' and their work in areas of high deprivation.

- The geographical and socio-economic make-up of the clubs' supporters, and the clubs' engagement with supporters as 'communities'.

Interim Report 3 is an analysis of community issues associated with stadium moves. Specifically, it concentrates on Manchester City's move to the City of Manchester Stadium (CoMS) in summer 2003. The report comments upon:

- The place of the stadium move in the social and economic regeneration of East Manchester (the geographical location of the CoMS).

- The formal community obligations and partnerships placed on Manchester City as a result of the move.

- The emerging relationships between Manchester City and regeneration agencies in East Manchester.

- The effects of the stadium move on residential and geographical communities in Moss Side (the location of the club's old stadium) and East Manchester.

- The effects of the stadium move on supporter communities.

In contrast to these interim documents, this report is not designed to provide detailed research data on the case study clubs. Rather, it will draw together research findings to provide a new strategic framework for English football in relation to community development and engagement, and will provide a number of recommendations for the Football Foundation, football clubs, the Football Association, the FA Premier League, the Football League and central government. Specifically, the report will cover seven main areas:

1. Strategic Frameworks
2. Club Organisation
3. Partnerships
4. Football Stadia and Facilities
5. Supporters
6. Social Inclusion
7. Skills and Knowledge

1.2   The Need for a New Strategy

English football is currently at an important stage in the development of its understanding of how to engage with 'communities' and wider social policy agendas. Football clubs in England have historically been understood as popular, civic organisations which represent people from various urban communities. From the 1970s, clubs began to develop organised community schemes which sought to respond to social and sporting change by placing the relationships between clubs and 'their communities' on a more formal footing. These schemes helped to inform the development of the national Football in the Community (FitC) initiative which was launched in 1986 by the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) through the Footballers' Further Education and Vocational Training Society (FFE&VTS) and now has schemes at 94 professional clubs.

During this time many football clubs, mainly through their FitC schemes, have undertaken worthy and successful projects, predominantly based around football coaching and widening access. Indeed, during our research we have observed sessions in which young people have actively engaged with football coaching programmes and have spoken very positively of them. Rather than jettison this work, football needs to recognise its place whilst understanding the need for a 'step change' in 'community' interventions. A number of clubs have begun to work beyond coaching and widening access schemes, and the national FitC programme has also recognised the need for a possible reconsideration of the type of work it supports.[1] Many clubs have engaged with the national Playing for Success initiative (a partnership between the FA Premier League, the Football League, the Football Foundation, the Department for Education and Skills, local education authorities and clubs); and a number of FA Premier League and Football League clubs have had varying levels of engagement with the Home Office's Positive Futures projects. However, a fuller re-conceptualisation of how football clubs should respond to the changing circumstances and policy requirements of the 21st century is still required.

In the past 20 years, the relationship between football clubs and their communities has become more obscure and more challenging in at least four ways.

1. The question of who football clubs' communities are is not as straightforward as it once may have seemed. British society has changed radically over the past few decades, and the ties that traditionally bound people together such as social class, loyalty to 'place', family and kinship have become less stable. The 'problem' for football and its orientation to 'community' - who to engage with and how - is more complicated than in the past as notions of what we mean by 'community' are increasingly open to interpretation.

2. Although football has frequently used discourses of inclusion, changes to the organisation of the game over the past 15 years have actually contributed to the exclusion of some groups in society, especially on economic grounds. As clubs have become more 'liberal' economically, there has been increasing confusion about what clubs' community responsibilities are, and, indeed, whether they have any at all.

3. As the very term 'community' has itself become the focus of renewed interest within popular discourse and amongst academics, politicians and policy makers, it is increasingly unclear what is actually meant by the term. 'Community' has in fact emerged as something of a 'buzz word'; a term that is routinely 'sprayed on' to all manner of initiatives to indicate feelings of inclusiveness and the overcoming of social deprivation. If any initiative, service or programme of work can be interpreted as community-focused just because the word 'community' has been attached to it, one can forgive football clubs for not having

[1] Maguire, B. & Fenoglio, R. (2004) Football in the Community: Resources and Opportunities. (Manchester: Footballers' Education Society).

particularly clear ideas of who their communities are and how they should respond to them.

4. Since the election of the Labour government in 1997 there has been increasing interest in the contribution that sport in general, and football in particular, can make to the tackling of social problems (often in association with the word 'community'). It has been assumed that the 'power' and popularity of football in the UK puts it in a unique position to build and sustain communities, and that the game can have positive influences on social and economic regeneration, public health, educational standards, community safety, crime reduction and the tackling of social exclusion. However, there has been little strategic thinking from government, sport or football's governing bodies on how the game as a whole or individual clubs should organise responses to these policy agendas.

Understandably, these changing circumstances have produced a lack of clarity in English football with regard to its status as a 'community sport', and a concomitant lack of confidence when engaging with new social agendas. The various national English football bodies have consistently shown a willingness to engage in 'community' activities in the past 20 years - as evidenced by the increasing amount of community work undertaken by clubs - but this enthusiasm has not been sufficiently informed by considerations of the changing conditions outlined above. This has resulted in a lack of strategic direction which has been further exacerbated by an absence of guidance from central government, which regularly funds and encourages community sports interventions, but sometimes with only limited understandings of the work.

Since its creation in 2000, the Football Foundation has had a specific aim 'to strengthen the links between football and the community and to harness its potential as a force for good in society'.[2] Whilst the Foundation has delivered significant investment in grassroots football and 'community' projects over the past 5 years, its role has not been to provide the overall community strategy for the game which is currently lacking. This has resulted in the absence of a strategic national framework and other forms of guidance which has only been met partially by other English football bodies, such as the FA

and the leagues. As a result, some fundamental questions have remained unanswered such as:

- Who are English football's communities?

- What responsibilities does the game have for different groups?

- Why and how should football clubs tackle social problems and help to engage communities?

1.3   Mixed Messages

A clear case for why football should be concerned with 'community issues' must be established if strategic leadership on the question of the game's relationship with its communities is to be developed. It is to the Football Foundation's credit that it has recognised this point and commissioned this research project to provide a way forward. It is also to the credit of the FA Premier League, the Football League and the Football Association that they have provided support for the research in the form of a Steering Group which met regularly with the research team during the course of the project.

Throughout this research, we have encountered a range of understandings of why the football industry should engage in community projects or programmes (however defined). Few of these, however, have been expressed coherently and have often appeared to be 'after the event' rationales, rather than 'up front' strategies.

Below we outline some of the motivations which we have encountered during the course of this research. Industry and club personnel have reported some of these to us, whilst others have been found in more 'theoretical' literature around sport's responsibilities to its 'communities'. We do not accept that any of these motivations are on their own sufficient to build a coherent case for why English football should engage with 'community' concerns. They are worth considering here, however, because they show the different and at times contradictory rationales that currently operate around the game.

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[2] Football Foundation website: http://www.footballfoundation.org.uk/about-the-football-foundation.

1.3.1 Ethical/Ideological Motivations

THE HISTORICAL CASE: Professional football in England has historically been a focus for the expression of 'community' identities. Many of today's most successful clubs have their origins in community organisations, and most clubs emerged from their formative years with names shared with towns, cities or areas of cities. It is the case, therefore, that football clubs gain legitimacy from their historical claims to 'represent' the populations of specific geographical areas.[3] For some, this means that clubs have a moral obligation to 'give something back' (over and above football entertainment) to the people who they claim to represent.

THE 'CITIZENSHIP' CASE: It has become something of a cliché to suggest that football is now a business, and some have suggested that this 'new' commercial status should effectively exempt clubs from onerous community or social obligations. However, recent writings on corporate citizenship (CC) have suggested that businesses, just like people, have responsibilities as well as rights as 'citizens' in specific communities, and should always be mindful of the social and - community effects of their business practices.[4] For some, this means that all businesses (including football clubs) have moral obligations to engage positively with every group with which they come into contact.

THE 'COMMUNITARIAN' CASE: The present British government has borrowed heavily from various communitarian thinkers when establishing a range of social policies.[5] Great emphasis has been placed on the power of strong, inclusive communities and their abilities to contribute to the tackling of social problems. As football clubs are amongst the most recognised symbols of 'community identity' in contemporary Britain, some have suggested they have an important role in building and sustaining communities of various types.

THE RADICAL CASE: In contrast to the communitarian approach, some groups suggest that social problems in Britain and elsewhere will only be overcome through a more fundamental restructuring of social and economic arrangements. In the context of football this position has most commonly been expressed in terms of the need for more co-operatively organised forms of fan ownership of clubs. In some cases such moves have emerged under the guidance of Supporters Direct as a response to financial crises and the failure of existing private ownership models. In other cases, such as at FC United of Manchester, broader based and more ideologically influenced objections to the governance and prevailing culture of English professional football have prompted the development of a more radical alternative model. The importance of re-asserting ties with locality, nurturing new generations of supporters and bonding fans into the governance and social fabric of the club lies at the heart of such an approach.

THE 'POWER' OF FOOTBALL: English professional football currently has an unprecedented public profile. As a result of this popularity - which cuts across class, gender, 'race', ethnicity, and age – some claim that football has an almost unique ability to 'engage' people, and especially the young. For some, this means that football has a moral obligation to use its power to help those groups who might be identified as more difficult to engage in other circumstances.

1.3.2 Business Motivations

SUSTAINABILITY: The high public profile which English professional football currently enjoys cannot be taken for granted. Attendances could fall significantly if individual clubs and football as a whole does not now plan for the future and address important industry 'risks'. For some, new forms of community engagement could help to achieve this long-term sustainability. If English football clubs engage consistently with stakeholder groups in a 'just and fair' manner, whilst also developing innovative social programmes, they could become re-embedded into the very fabric of different 'communities' across the country. If they do not do this, they could lose their relevance and be overtaken by other forms of leisure.

REPUTATIONAL ADVANTAGE: The contemporary leisure market is more competitive and fragmented than ever before and individual football clubs are constantly battling to grab the attention of potential supporters. Research has shown that engagement with 'social' or 'community' issues can help in this as many people increasingly want to be associated with 'brands' which express 'good qualities' such as social and

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[3] See Russell, D. (1997) Football and the English: A Social History of Association Football in England, 1863-1995 (Preston: Carnegie Publishing).
[4] See Zadek, S. (2001) The Civil Corporation: The New Economy of Corporate Citizenship (London: Earthscan).
[5] For an introduction see Etzioni, A. (2004) The Communitarian Reader: Beyond the Essentials (Portland, OR: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers).

environmental responsibility.[6] For some, football clubs should engage with community concerns in order that they can position themselves as 'citizen brands'. If they do this, the argument is made that clubs will be rewarded with larger and more loyal supporter bases.

THE 'GOOD WILL BANK': Research shows that businesses which are perceived to be trustworthy and socially responsible are relatively protected from sudden downturns in trade or hostile public criticism when they perform poorly or negatively affect the lives of stakeholders in one way or another.[7] Over time, such businesses can build up 'good will banks' of positive feelings and experiences on which their stakeholders can draw. For some, this means that football clubs should spend time building strong, mutual relationships with their various communities in order that they are relatively protected when difficulties arise. This is clearly important in the case of supporter communities as throughout history football clubs' attendances have generally been tied closely to success on the field of play.

1.3.3 Political and Legal Motivations

GAINING FAVOUR WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT: In the past 25 years, the British government has sought to build new partnerships with private sector firms to deliver social policies. It is well known that the football industry has been identified as a potential partner in areas such as health, education, community regeneration and community safety. For some, the football industry should embrace these opportunities in order that it can ensure continued support from government in a range of areas.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS: In recent years, English football has argued for exemptions from certain aspects of national and European law (for instance, to maintain the transfer system and collective TV negotiations) on the basis that existing arrangements are of public benefit. Indeed, the formation of the Football Foundation was itself part of a process in it which was offered as a 'demonstration' by English football and the government of the benefits of the collective negotiation of football's TV contracts. Given ongoing concern over the regulation of football, some suggest that English football needs to continue to develop and support

community work in order to maintain current regulatory and business practices around the game.

1.4 Developing a New Strategy and Practical Recommendations

The motivations outlined above are all currently rehearsed to varying extents within English football as rationales for undertaking community-focused work. Some of them, however, are radically opposed to one another and will lead clubs in very different directions in terms of how they understand their community obligations, how they design programmes of work, and what returns (if any) they expect to get from such work. Ethical motivations focus on clubs' obligations to their communities and put the needs of communities at the forefront. Business and political/legal motivations focus on business practice for football clubs and put the needs of clubs at the forefront.

The aim of this report is to provide a clear direction for English football through this climate of relative confusion. Through the development of a more coherent approach, the report offers a new national framework for the 'community agenda' in football, and provides practical recommendations which will help the Football Foundation, football clubs, the FA, the leagues and other key stakeholders respond to a new vision of how the game can positively influence people's lives.

[6] See, for instance, Maignan, I. & Ferrell, O.C. (2001) 'Corporate Citizenship as a Marketing Instrument', European Journal of Marketing, 35, 3/4, pp. 457-484.
[7] See, for instance, Fombrun, C. J., Gardberg, N. A. & Barnett, M. L. (2000) 'Opportunity Platforms and Safety Nets: Corporate Citizenship and Reputational Risk', Business and Society Review, 105, 1, pp. 85-106.

2.0 Strategic Frameworks

2.1 The Need for a Coherent Strategic Framework

A raft of new sport-based social inclusion policies, funding initiatives and interventions have been launched in the last decade which have emanated from a wide array of agencies, many of which have undoubtedly produced good work. At least five government departments;[8] government agencies such as Sport England and the Youth Justice Board; major voluntary sector and charitable bodies such as Nacro and the Princess Trust; private companies; and the Football Foundation and other English football authorities have all been actively involved. However, this plethora of activity within which the Football Foundation operates has been characterised by a lack of overall strategic planning from government, sport and football.

To date no single body has been able to take a lead in coordinating or directing this expanding portfolio of work. Across sport, new programmes have been initiated, often without sufficient dialogue, research or planning, and there is now a myriad of funding streams available for projects which aim to use sport to address social problems. Whilst there have been some good initiatives, the inevitable conflicts of interest and institutional rivalries that go with such a crowded 'market place' have at times resulted in the duplication of work and the funding of some poorly thought-through projects. Overall there has also been a lack of attention paid to the need for sustainability and coherence of objectives. In the long term, this situation runs the risk of leading to a lack of consistent evidence of the achievements of funded projects, which will ultimately put the future of sport-based social development programmes at risk.

Apart from protecting current funding arrangements, there are other reasons why English football needs a more coherent and strategic approach to meeting these new agendas. One is that English football chooses to portray itself as a community-focused sport and regularly makes statements on the social good that it can deliver. This has been done in a variety of contexts including the UK courts, the European Commission, the media and in the annual reports of various football authorities and clubs. These statements mean that the game must be convincing in living up to the expectations that it itself has helped to establish. Part of this will involve creating a clearer and more widely shared understanding of the 'community agenda' within English football; as well as developing a framework within which the Foundation, the leagues, the FA, clubs, supporters and others can deliver social inclusion work.

With respect to the Football Foundation's role in this process it is important to recognise its founding principles. Established as a national charity in 2000 through a partnership between football and government, the Foundation was launched with a bold mission to improve facilities, create opportunities and build communities. It has a broad remit to use 'football as a vehicle for tackling issues including crime, drug abuse and social exclusion'; as well as a wider desire 'to strengthen the links between football and the community and to harness its potential as a force for good in society.'

In attempting to achieve this, the Foundation has emerged as the UK's largest sports charity supporting over 1,900 projects worth over £360m. Its principal function has been to distribute grants for football facility improvement, which it does through the Football Stadia Improvement Fund (a separate limited company) and its Grass Roots Advisory Group. These account for a majority of the Foundation's grant giving expenditure, with the remaining 12.5% reserved for community and education projects. The research which informs this report was specifically commissioned by the Community and Education (C&E) Panel to advise it about how it might use these remaining funds to have a better impact within the increasingly difficult and congested field of sport-based social inclusion work.

It is clear that the Football Foundation itself cannot alone play the leadership and coordinating role that we would suggest is needed in relation to developing football's position in the social inclusion/sports agenda. It has primarily been a grant giving body for facility development, and under its current constitution would find it difficult to play this role. However, our research 'on the ground' has shown that there is a need for greater coherence and coordination across government and football to which the Foundation, the leagues, the FA and others need to contribute. As such, together, the football authorities need to provide greater strategic leadership and begin to spread a coherent message across football at all levels about the need for a 'step change' in relation to football's response to new social agendas. Within such an

approach different organisations will clearly need to take responsibility for different areas of work (e.g. FA - the national game; FAPL - Premier League clubs; and the Football League – Football League clubs).

It is important to note that there have been a range of community and education schemes and interventions run by the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA, and other organisations, beyond those supported by C&E Panel funding. Indeed, the role of the Panel has until now been largely to 'fill the gaps' in funding community and education initiatives that other football organisations cannot or will not support individually.

As such the C&E Panel has been primarily a grant-giving body aimed at:

- Funding projects in partnership with interested parties that are focused around:

  - Increasing participation and volunteering in sport.

  - Encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyles by creating opportunities for all.

- Identifying and promoting good practice.

- Assessing applications and recommending the appropriate level of grant aid and conditions.

- Devising post-project monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure delivery of results and value for money.

Projects focused on disability, minority ethnic communities, young people, social inclusion and education are highlighted as priorities within themes, but there is little immediate guidance on what is expected in relation to each category. Whilst the C&E Panel has revised its role and funding priorities, it has also funded other agencies which it sees as delivering its objectives, such as Nacro and the Princes Trust. Further, whilst it has its own priorities for funding, these could have been communicated better to potential applicants and do not really constitute a transparent funding framework for community and education projects in football.

The Panel is served by two development managers and since summer 2005 has been overseen by a new Director of Grant Programmes who covers both C&E projects and facility development. This has helped to create better synergy and coherence between facility improvement and C&E priorities, whilst maintaining the separate funding streams.

If the C&E Panel is to develop schemes of work more focused around new social agendas, it faces a number of choices in relation to its role. These are, in the broadest terms:

1. To remain as it is - a grant giving body which responds to applications.

2. To redefine its role in light of changing contexts and this research by outlining new strategic aims, conceptions of 'community' and funding priorities. Applications can then be called for around these new priorities.

In either case the C&E Panel needs to continue to clarify its role in relation to its partners and in particular the FA, the FA Premier League, the Football League, FitC and clubs. This report is structured so that where we feel responsibility lies with any of these organisations rather than the Panel we indicate this, which we hope will help clarify appropriate roles within a new strategic framework. It is also important to note here appointments and developments by the leagues that could help foster a more coordinated and strategic approach across football, namely:

- The FA Premier League's Head of Corporate and Community Affairs and Head of Customer Strategy whose roles are to develop a national strategy with their

clubs and to disseminate information and opportunities through regular meetings with CEOs, club charter contacts and community contacts at each club.

- The Football League's Customer Services Manager who performs a similar role and is a key point of contact for the dissemination of best practice and new opportunities.

However, if the Panel itself chooses to review its structure and redefine its role as we recommend, it needs to consider:

- Aims and objectives
- Strategic funding priorities
- Project development and training
- Reporting, monitoring and evaluation

We will briefly address each of these elements in terms of a new framework for the C&E Panel in this section, before considering the practical implications in the remaining sections of this report.

2.2   Aims and Objectives

If the C&E Panel is to take on the second of the two choices outlined above, then it needs to undertake a systematic review that begins with a re-assessment of the mission to 'create opportunities' and 'build communities'. In order to fulfil this mission, the Panel will need to establish a clearer picture of what it means by these concepts and why it wishes to pursue them. In this regard our research has uncovered some of the problems of defining 'communities' in too rigid a fashion but has also revealed how the practice of community work can benefit from drawing certain distinctions between different areas of work.

Academic literature on 'community' has attempted to 'unpack' the concept by being more specific about what we mean by it and identifying different formations - or types - of community.[9] In the broadest sense, sociological literature has often defined community as having three dimensions:

- Community as locality: e.g. communities based around specific geographical locations.

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9 For a summary see Delanty, G. (2003) Community (London: Routledge).

- Community as social networks: e.g. 'neighbourhood communities', face-to-face relations, friendship groups and, increasingly, 'communities of interest'.

- Community as communion: e.g. spiritual feelings of a collective identity, shared common roots and senses of belonging.

Within our research, in order to make some practical sense of the terminology of 'community' and how football might regard its 'communities', we have found it useful to conceive of a number of broad 'areas' of potential intervention for clubs and football more generally. These are:

- Residential communities – considered both in terms of residents in close proximity to football stadiums but also in terms of the diversity of views and needs associated with the demographic variations amongst those residents. Residential communities might include interests as diverse as those of disaffected teenagers and those of elderly organisers of residents' associations.

- Supporter communities – considered both in terms of the common bond with the club - including the ways in which support for a team can unite people from different backgrounds, however temporarily - but also the diversity of needs associated with different groups of supporters.

- Business communities – considered in terms of those businesses which are brought to the heart of the club for commercial reasons, but also in terms of those in the locality of stadia whose trade is more inadvertently affected by the presence of the club.

- Communities of disadvantage – considered in terms of those individuals and groups who are excluded from contact with clubs on the basis of economic disadvantage, as well as those who are socially marginalised for a range of reasons and might benefit from clubs' wider social initiatives.

These are very broad categories which we have found useful. However, they are not a rigid framework or a new orthodoxy, and must be considered as categories which are open to change. The challenge is to identify the ways in which football can respond to new conceptualisations such as these. For the C&E Panel, this means creating an associated developmental framework for investments, grants and other interventions.

2.3   Strategic Funding Priorities

The C&E Panel currently has a series of funding schemes and has recently reviewed its own funding priorities. From our research it seems that further work is needed in clearly communicating and informing potential funding applicants about new social policy agendas and Panel priorities.

Currently it is really only in relation to initiatives led by partner agencies but supported financially by the Foundation, such as Positive Futures, that prioritised programmes of activity are identified to which prospective applicants can respond. If the C&E Panel is to redefine its role, then it could be more proactive in establishing funding priorities and making them a raison d'être. These will reflect the guiding mission of the Panel.

Thus in addition to a more discretionary, open fund - which allows funding for more 'left-field' proposals or ones which do not fit easily into another criteria - the Panel could identify a series of policy areas in which it wishes to target awards. Our research suggests that these should include:

- Club organisation
- Partnerships
- Stadia and facilities
- Supporters
- Social inclusion
- Skills and knowledge

Under each of these headings more detailed indications of the particular aims that the Panel is pursuing within each category might then be provided in order to guide potential applicants towards current funding priorities. This report will make recommendations about funding priorities for the Panel (as well as for the government, the leagues, the FA, and clubs) in each of these areas. Table 2.1, below, is an illustrative example of how new schemes might be mapped on to structured and strategic funding priorities.

	Club Organistion Fund	Partnerships Fund	Stadia and Facilities Fund	Supporters Fund	Social inclusion Fund	Skills and knowledge Fund	Open discretionary Fund
Purpose?	The creation of new independent community organisations at clubs (See Section 3).	Ensuring that funded projects have the most appropriate partnerships, as outlined in Section 4.	Maximising community use of stadia and other facilities, as outlined in Section 5.	Promote fans as 'communities' and projects that increase fan involvement in club outreach work (Section 6).	Promote estate-based outreach work with 'hardest to reach'.	Help promote better skills and knowledge, especially in relation to new agendas (Section 8).	Fund projects which do not fit in other categories
Examples of How?	Dissemination of good practice, how to guides etc. Liaise closely with the work of the leagues and FA.	Only fund those with appropriate partnerships. Dissemination of good practice.	Funding for projects which promote community use. Dissemination of good practice	Funding for fan volunteering projects. Funding for fan organisations which show ability to deliver on C&E Panel objectives.	Funding for work with the most challenging groups. Funding for community development schemes. Dissemination of best practice in engagement.	Funding for training gaps not met by the leagues/FA. Funding for projects with appropriate skills or identified training needs.	Experimental, pilot projects

Table 2.1: Proposed Football Foundation Funding Priorities.
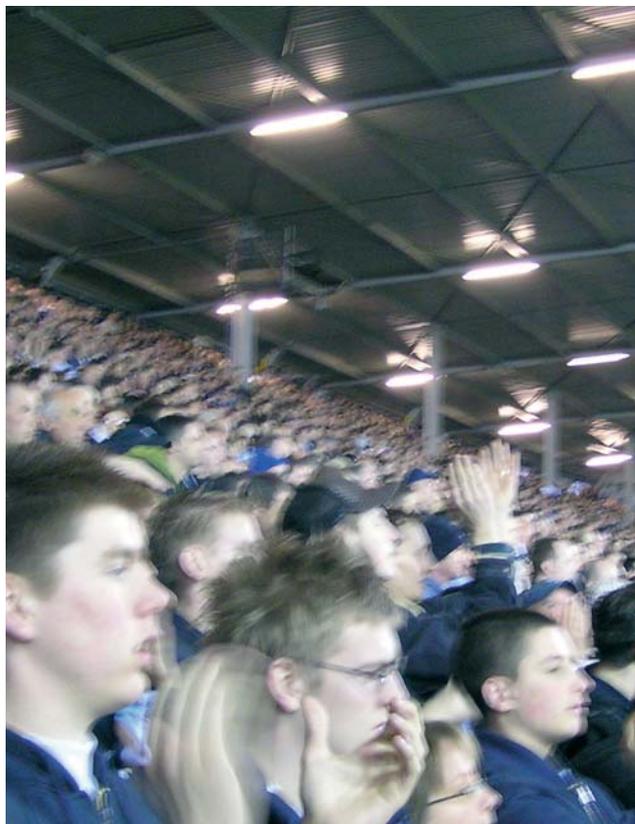
2.4   Project Development and Training

A funding priority approach suggests that rather than applicants just coming up with their own proposals there is a need for a method through which the Panel can target specific aims, commission work, set funding priorities and deliver more projects which employ new kinds of engagement with communities around new social agendas.

Rather than assuming that football clubs and other applicants will readily recognise what it is seeking, the Panel needs to continue its good practice of engaging with projects prior to the application stage - both in terms of making clear its priorities as well as suggesting alterations or even alternative/partner funders where appropriate. However, it needs to do this through a framework established in line with its own priorities. Pre-application development and even training should continue to be seen as it is, as an investment in the quality of projects that the Panel supports, and not as an administrative cost.

Whilst the C&E Panel's two development managers as well as other staff currently conduct useful pre-application work with potential applicants, techniques to develop this further around new priorities and agendas could include the following:

1. Information packs produced and disseminated to all senior and 'community' staff across English football. These should include statements on who football's communities are and the game's obligations to them.

2. Ongoing collation and dissemination of best practice in community relations and development work. The benefits of these examples, in terms of social justice and sustainability, should be disseminated to senior and 'community' staff across the industry at regular intervals.

3. Specific 'calls' for funding proposals in line with designated priorities.

4. Use of research evidence, one-to-one consultations, seminars, web-based resources and newsletters to help applicants tailor their proposals towards C&E Panel priorities.

5. Support for the creation of regional clusters of clubs to ensure smaller clubs' involvement and economies of scale in the development of larger projects.

6. Adoption of the 'critical friend' approach towards the ongoing support of projects which is currently employed by DfES in relation to Playing for Success centres.

Taken together, and linked to other recommendations in this report, the adoption of these approaches will contribute to the C&E Panel meeting new challenges with regard to football's community engagement and wider social development activity.

2.5   Reporting, Monitoring & Evaluation

Public sector policy and investment more generally are increasingly 'evidence-based' and rely upon robust monitoring and evaluation. In practice, this means that funding decisions and the direction of policy are tied up with research-based assessments of what we can expect to achieve as a result of particular interventions. In this context, monitoring and evaluation has two principal but divergent roles:

1. To inform the 'evidence base'. By providing new information about the effects of different styles of intervention, a clearer picture of effective practice can emerge.

2. To assess the degree to which individual projects have met the expectations and associated benchmarks, aims and objectives which have emerged from the 'evidence base'.

One of the difficulties associated with monitoring and evaluation is that it has tended to rely upon the 'measurement' of rather fixed and inflexible sets of 'inputs', 'outputs', 'performance indicators' and 'outcomes' which do not necessarily reflect the complex and evolutionary nature of interventions, especially with disadvantaged groups. Whilst current practice of the C&E Panel has improved monitoring and evaluation of projects, it still suffers somewhat from this widespread problem.

As with many grant giving organisations, there need to be more formal attempts to obtain a fuller picture of the ways in which participants have benefited from new projects. Latterly some effort has been made to encourage funded projects to reflect on 'how the local community [has] benefited from the project'; how the project has 'improved community relations'; and how the project has 'contributed to the improvement of health, education and social development'. However, projects need further guidance on how to think about or evidence these achievements and the C&E Panel needs a reliable mechanism for the independent assessment or verification of statements made.

Furthermore, rather than being a post-event justification, good evaluation should in any case actively contribute to developing responsive, effective programmes whilst also providing a reliable, verifiable means to assess their contribution. It should provide a basis for self-reflection and a window into the working of a project from which others can learn. In this light, the C&E Panel could:

- develop a more sophisticated means of establishing the impact of its investments; and

- resource further research into new areas of work, monitoring and models of implementation.

Whilst different football governing bodies and individual clubs will inevitably have responsibility for their own policies and monitoring frameworks, the C&E Panel should be responsible for ensuring that its funds are spent in accordance with its own strategic priorities. In addition to the existing methods for assessing how funds have been spent, C&E Panel development workers and other staff, with appropriate resources, may need to work more closely with funding recipients 'post-grant' (following their work in the application stage) to ensure that grant conditions are being met and to provide advice when problems are encountered.

This will need to be backed up by the development of a new set of revised and robust monitoring systems capable of revealing the wider contribution made by funded projects. Ideally this will involve the use of a range of monitoring tools and reporting mechanisms and will take account of the government's new Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework for assessing the impact of children's and young people's services.

Crucially this will require the employment of more 'participatory' methods in order to 'give voice' to those who have engaged with C&E Panel-funded projects. Projects should be encouraged to find ways to tell young people's 'stories' and to reveal the 'journeys' and 'distances' they have travelled, in addition to more general data on the numbers and social profiles of participants. In order to ensure public confidence and transparency, this kind of information could be utilised and represented in an annual, independent review of the Panel's investments which should report to the Football Foundation Board and other stakeholders.

One model for the Panel to consider is provided by the Positive Futures programme which has developed a robust monitoring and evaluation system which embraces:

- A log book with session registers.
- A participant engagement matrix for assessing young people's progression.
- A participatory monitoring 'toolkit'.
- A project database.
- An electronic annual reporting format.
- Ongoing longitudinal case study research.

Without the benefit of this kind of evidence the ability to communicate what the C&E Panel has achieved remains a significant challenge. Ultimately it is the ability to tell the story of the programmes, projects and people that have been funded that will secure continued support for the Panel's work.

A robust monitoring and evaluation framework and the ongoing commissioning of more focused research will enable the Panel to produce the kind of high quality publications, seminars and conferences that will raise its profile and generate wider confidence in its work. Furthermore, such an approach can help enable the Football Foundation to move toward an example of best practice in monitoring funding for sports social inclusion projects.

2.6   Summary of Recommendations

2.6.1   Central Government

- Ensure better coordination of sport-based social inclusion interventions across government departments.

- Encourage the Football Foundation C&E Panel to respond to relevant Public Service Agreement Targets and the Every Child Matters Outcomes Framework.

2.6.2   Football Foundation

- Keep Board membership under review.

- Ensure implementation of new monitoring and evaluation procedures for the C&E Panel.

- Continue the closer working between the Foundation's two panels.

2.6.3   Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Review the Panel's aims and objectives.

- Establish a fresh set of strategic funding priorities, as described.

- Identify and adopt a more robust, independent and versatile framework for monitoring, evaluating and reporting the Panel's work and investments.

2.6.4   FA Premier League, Football League, FA and Football Clubs

- Respond to new community engagement and social policy agendas through the adoption of more holistic approaches to community work.

- Contribute to discussions about the C&E Panel's new strategic funding priorities.

- Identify and adopt more participatory approaches towards the monitoring and reporting of clubs' community work.

- Disseminate good practice.

3.0 Club Organisation

3.1 Context

English football clubs are not homogenous institutions. They vary in size, company structure, organisation and financial management. This is an inevitable consequence of clubs' unique histories, the unequal resources which are available to clubs at different levels of the game, and the varying business (and other) principles which motivate different club hierarchies.

Throughout our research, this variance across English football has occasionally been used to explain the differing levels of engagement with community issues seen at clubs. Indeed, it has been suggested that a common, national approach to community development and engagement at club level is difficult, if not impossible, to develop because clubs are so dissimilar from one another.

In this section, we outline ways in which clubs at all levels of the game can develop new structures and methods of working which will enable them to develop better relations with their multiple communities. We explain a range of potential changes which will enable clubs to create more appropriate and holistic ways of engaging with community issues, and outline the responsibilities of the different football authorities in guiding and encouraging community-focused developments at club level.

3.2   Present Club Structures

Throughout this project, we analysed the structure and financing of 'community work' at our case study clubs. Inevitably we discovered a variety of models of working and there are undoubtedly more. At all three clubs we found well-established Football in the Community (FitC) schemes, located in community departments, which aim to provide, amongst other things, schools coaching programmes and other football development activities. We also found study support centres at all three clubs which had been established in line with the national Playing for Success initiative. However, the management of these schemes and centres and their relationships with other sections of their clubs was different in each case study setting.

At our first case study club, the FitC scheme and the study support centre are only two of a number of community initiatives that permeate many areas of the organisation. These include an Enterprise Centre, a local community partnership and community activities which are run from the club's academy. These activities do not operate under a single management system, and as a result often function in relative isolation from one another. The advantage of this approach is that many people in different departments across the club are frequently involved in community-focused work in one way or another, thereby ensuring that large numbers of staff feel some responsibility for the club's relationship with its stakeholders. The disadvantage is that there is little strategic planning of community work at the club which could produce failures in terms of planning and overall direction.

The second case study club developed a new approach to organising its community work in 2002 when its FitC scheme became an independent charitable organisation. All staff who work on the scheme are employed by the charity rather than the club. In order to bridge relations between the charity and the club a Social Responsibility Manager was appointed within the club in 2003 to oversee the club's other community developments and initiatives. These include the study support centre which as a result of the new management structure is now working more closely with the community department. In 2004, the club and the charity jointly published a new five-year strategic plan for their community work which set out priority 'themes' for their work and established geographical boundaries for where they would target interventions. A business plan was also developed which established the principle that the charity would become a self-funding organisation at the earliest opportunity.

The advantages of this approach are mainly in terms of the relative split between the club and its community department. This enables charitable trusts to set their own strategies and aims and objectives, and to work with relative independence from the financial pressures which clubs may be facing at any given time. This can be vital if clubs want to place community work on a secure and long-term footing. However, it can be disadvantageous if it appears to absolve the rest of the club from responsibility for community relations. Nearly every activity in which a football club engages has potential consequences for one community/stakeholder group or another, and it is important that clubs do not only designate community responsibilities to one department or organisation.

In the early stages of our research, the third case study club had three main community sections or departments – namely, a FitC scheme, a study support centre and a community affairs department – which were all centrally managed together from within the club. The different departments all had specific areas of expertise and responsibility, but worked closely together to an overall strategic plan. The community affairs department was centrally placed in the club's organisational structure, and was, therefore, able to represent the importance of community-focused approaches and interventions to the club's directors on a regular basis. This was important as it enabled the

community affairs department to procure substantial financial backing from the club for their work and for the work of the other two community departments.

The advantage of this system of working was that it placed community considerations at the centre of the club. The head of the community affairs department had sufficient status and authority to represent the importance of community-focused work to the rest of the club, and to develop cross-departmental schemes and activities when appropriate. However, the financial dependence of the FitC scheme and the community affairs department on the club left them in a potentially precarious position if the club's financial situation or its priorities changed. This sequence of events did indeed occur during our research, which led to a reduction in financial support for the FitC scheme and the gradual collapse of the community affairs department. The study support centre remained comparatively unaffected because of its relative financial independence from the club.

The football clubs which were analysed for this project provided the research team with three distinct approaches to structuring, managing and financing community-focused work within football clubs. Whilst all the clubs have faced different challenges in implementing their programmes of work:

- The first club showed the value of spreading the responsibility for community work across football clubs.

- The second showed the importance of independence and strategic planning in community departments.

- The third showed the need to place community-focused approaches at the centre of a club's operations.

The different approaches of the case study clubs enabled the research team to identify two fundamental and connected questions which must be considered if clubs at all levels are to reach their potential in terms of engaging effectively with their different communities. These are:

- Where should community work be located within football clubs and how should it be strategically and financially managed?

- What should the spread of community responsibilities be across football club departments?

3.3   A New Approach

In answer to these questions, we recommend that English football clubs are now encouraged to move towards a new way of organising their community departments and other community-focused work. In this section we will outline this new approach and explain how it could help develop clubs' relationships with their communities. The proposed new approach is essentially based around two principal strategies.

1. The first is the creation of new and independent community organisations which will be 'outward facing' and will work (often in partnership with appropriate agencies – see Section 4) on developing community interventions in areas such as health, education, community safety and regeneration. These organisations will have structural and financial independence from clubs and will have their own forms of strategic management.

2. The second strategy is the development of new and alternative ways of doing business within all departments across football clubs. This will spread responsibility for clubs' community impacts across different areas of work, produce more holistic approaches to community relations and deliver a range of other direct and indirect benefits.

3.3.1   Independent Community Organisations

In recent years, a small but growing number of English football clubs' community departments have been re-established as relatively independent organisations. These 'divorces' between clubs and their community departments – which have most often seen the departments re-constituted as independent charitable trusts – have been enacted for a variety of reasons. Rather than dwelling on these, however, it is more instructive here to outline a number of founding principles which can guide existing community departments who wish to develop independence from their clubs:

1. Community departments at football clubs should seek to develop organisational and financial independence from their clubs. This will protect them from fluctuations in performance at clubs and provide them with freedom to develop their own ways of working.

2. Once constituted, independent community organisations should retain the names of football clubs in order to benefit from the 'kudos' of the professional game. The 'glamour' of football provides a 'hook' for various forms of engagement (which always needs to be backed up by professionalism and consistency).

3. Independent community organisations should establish strategic plans which outline their priority themes and geographical areas for delivering interventions.

4. This strategic planning should allow for flexibility as organisations may need to adapt their priorities in order to appeal to funders. This does not mean, however, that organisations should simply 'chase' money. A balance must be found.

5. Sound business principles and high levels of professionalism must underpin strategic planning. Community organisations are by their very nature frequently reliant on short-term funding. Good business planning will enable them to avoid financial problems.
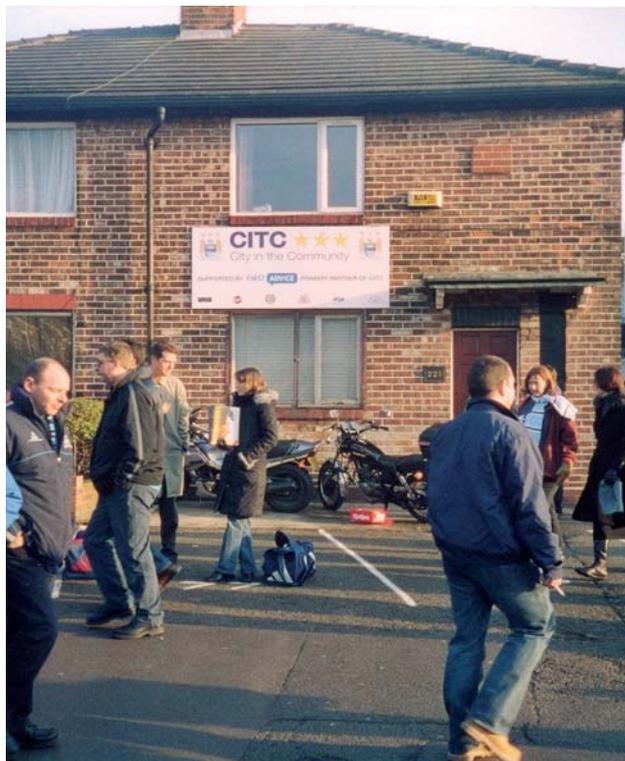
6. Independent community organisations should employ specialists in fields such as youth work, but must also be willing to work in partnership with other specialist agencies who can deliver interventions on the organisation's behalf (see Section 4).

7. Independent community organisations should be built with 'community' support. They will be more credible and successful if they have excellent relations with a range of football's multiple communities. This can be achieved through formal partnerships with community organisations, agencies, individuals and supporters organisations, as well as through more informal methods.

8. To help in this, trustees and/or steering group members must be drawn from a wide range of backgrounds.

Taken together, these founding principles express the spirit and defining features of independent community organisations. There are a number of advantages of this approach for clubs' community departments and for clubs more generally. These include the following:

- Separation from club finances - Independent community organisations will enable football clubs to overcome some of the tensions between 'commercial' and 'community' motivations in their work. If community departments at clubs have little organisational or financial independence, their work can be tied exclusively to the commercial objectives of the club. Independent community organisations will be able to establish their own institutional aims which are tied less to commercial objectives. This is vital if such departments/organisations are to successfully deliver programmes which are designed primarily to meet the multiple needs of different communities, rather than the direct needs of football clubs.

- New ways of working - Independent community organisations will be able to develop new cultures and methods of working which embrace principles such as openness, inclusiveness and flexibility. This process can start in the very constitution and development of organisations and flow through all of their work. Football's multiple communities can be invited to contribute to and

influence the work of independent community organisations as trustees, steering group members or volunteers.

- Credibility - If independent community organisations are developed in this 'inclusive' way and are based on the needs and concerns of football's multiple communities, they will be able to develop credibility in their local areas and with potential partners and funding agencies.

- Shared Responsibilities - The development of independent community organisations will mean that clubs no longer have to take direct responsibility for some areas of 'community work' which by their very nature are commercially fragile and politically sensitive.

- Publicity - As independent community organisations will retain the names of football clubs, clubs will benefit from the 'free' publicity that will be accrued from having their names attached to organisations whose primary focus is supporting football's multiple communities. This will produce public relations 'capital' that could encourage potential supporters and other groups/partners to become involved with the club. This capital will also be invaluable if clubs need to counter media reports of problems on or off the pitch with more 'positive' messages.

- Local Partnerships - If independent community organisations can demonstrate a real commitment to tackling social problems, clubs will benefit from better relations with local authorities and regeneration companies (both of which are important in terms of stadia and facility development); and commercial sponsors who are committed to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes.

Beyond our case study clubs, in many ways it is Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (**LOCSP**) that has come to exemplify this approach. LOCSP was constituted as a not for profit company limited by guarantee with its own board of eight trustees in 1997 and has since gained charitable status. The organisation has gone on to lead pioneering forays into the worlds of the 'socially excluded' with spectacular success.[10]

At the time that LOCSP established its independence from the club it was clear there was little chance of the community scheme surviving unless it made commercial sense to the club's new owner. Rather than develop a commercial response which was consistent with the club's wider plans, 'going independent' seemed to offer greater benefits to both the scheme and the club.

It was clear that the new programme would benefit from its association with a professional football club without being tied to its commercial objectives or playing second fiddle to the primary focus of all professional clubs: the performance of the 'first team'. On the other hand the club lost responsibility for what appeared to be a commercially fragile but politically sensitive operation whilst gaining the attributed benefit of the free publicity associated with the community scheme's work. Furthermore, with a 'smaller' club like Leyton Orient there was far less prospect of an independent organisation working from within the club's premises and carrying its name damaging the 'brand' in the way that might be feared at a bigger corporate club facing high profile media interest. Indeed whilst charitable funders might also shy away from donating money to a big Premiership club, it was precisely the association with football at a club with a more local, 'community' feel that quickly helped to lever in resources for LOCSP. Between 1998 (the year LOCSP was established as a charity) and 2004, the gross income of the organisation grew almost year-on-year from around £340,000 to over £1,000,000. It has also been able to generate additional revenues linked to specific initiatives, such as the SCORE project for which £8.5 million was raised.

3.3.1.1   Practical Issues – Different Business Models

Collectively, these points represent the main theoretical benefits which can be gained from creating newly independent community organisations at football clubs. However, the practical issue of how to create such organisations remains. Community departments which have so far adopted this approach have frequently opted to re-establish themselves as independent charitable trusts. If all clubs are to follow this lead, however, they must understand the full consequences of their decisions. Charities do enjoy certain advantages over other types of organisations, but they also encounter limitations which can restrict the types of work in which they can be involved.

The main advantages which football clubs' community departments can accrue by adopting charitable status are as follows:

1. They will benefit from a number of favourable tax rates/regimes.

2. They will be able to raise funds from the general public, grant making trusts and local government which may not otherwise be available.

3. They can build public confidence as the Charities Commission monitors them.

4. They are supported by and can seek guidance from the Charities Commission.[11]

These are important advantages which could help football's independent community organisations in a number of ways. The access to funding which charities have is an especially important consideration for community organisations which are seeking to have financial as well as organisational independence from parent clubs. The support they can receive from the Charities Commission will also prove to be invaluable to organisations which are 'going it alone' for the first time.

There are, however, a number of limitations that may affect independent community organisations which chose to adopt charitable status. The most important of these is the fact that charities must have exclusively charitable purposes. Most

[10] Crabbe, T. & Slaughter, P. (2004) On the Eastside: Research Report into the Estate Based Social Interventions of Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme (Sheffield: Sheffield Hallam University).
[11] Adapted from the Charities Commission's notes on Registering a Charity. See http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk/publications/cc21.asp.

community departments at football clubs currently engage in a range of activities, some of them 'charitable', some of them not. To become charities, these departments/organisations would either have to:

* stop non-charitable activities;
* hand them over to other sections of their clubs; or
* create 'trading arms' within their own organisations.

This point is especially important in terms of the future of Football in the Community programmes at football clubs. At present, these schemes commonly undertake a range of club promotion activities, as well as more 'community-focused' initiatives. If clubs establish independent community organisations as charities, they will need to think carefully about what this means for the various elements of their FitC programmes and make strategic decisions on where these will be located in the future and who will manage them.

This debate about the advantages and disadvantages of charitable status is important as it reminds us that the 'independence' that charitable organisations enjoy is partial and incomplete. An independent community organisation may be able to gain organisational and financial independence from its parent club if it adopts charitable status, but it will still be governed by the strict rules which apply to trading by charities. These rules are somewhat cumbersome and bureaucratic and can hinder innovation.

From the information above, it is clear that there are potential benefits and limitations of charitable status. The same could be said of almost every organisational and/or business model that independent community organisations could adopt. They could, for instance, be established as not-for-profit companies limited by guarantee, but they would still face a balancing act in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing such a strategy. It is not possible, therefore, for us to recommend one model which independent community organisations should adhere to when they are being established. Clubs must decide on the appropriateness of different strategies for themselves in consultation with 'communities', supporters and other appropriate groups.

3.3.2   Spreading Responsibility Across Football Clubs

If football clubs' community departments are re-constituted and made independent, they will be able to take responsibility for the vast majority of the social intervention work to which football clubs are now asked to contribute. These will be the organisations that engage in and, where appropriate, lead health, education, drugs, and community safety work. It is important that independent organisations take responsibility for these schemes of work as football clubs themselves are not currently well set up to deliver in these areas. However, community responsibilities do not end for football clubs with social intervention work. If football clubs are to continue to claim to be community-focused organisations, then they must recognise that all their decisions and activities have potential repercussions for 'their' communities, and that these repercussions must be successfully managed for the benefit of stakeholders wherever possible.

This means of course that potentially every department and member of staff in a football club has an opportunity to take responsibility for the club's relationship with its communities. This responsibility will be most keenly felt by senior, decision-making staff, but it can also be embraced by staff at all levels of clubs. In order for this to happen, clubs must be able to inform their staff on how their decisions can positively or negatively affect different stakeholder groups. This entails new forms of training which will sensitise staff to community issues and establish new priorities and influences for clubs' decision making processes (see Section 8).

In practical terms, the spreading of responsibilities with regard to community relations could produce a variety of positive outcomes for football's multiple communities. A number of these are outlined in Table 3.1, but this is not designed to be prescriptive. Rather, it provides a number of 'sketched' ideas that can be developed by clubs who wish to work in more innovative ways.

Area of Work	Iniative/Way of Working	Benefits for 'Communities'	Benefits for Clubs
Stadium/Operations	The provision of 'joined up' transport plans to reduce traffic around stadia (see Section 5).	Reduced traffic nuisance for residential communities and improved transport systems for supporter communities.	Fewer complaints from residential communities and supporter communities.
Stadium/Operations	The development of 'stadium dressing' schemes, led by supporters.	Greater sense of stadium ownership amongst some supporter communities.	Better match-day atmosphere and more 'engaged' fans.
Stadium/Operations	Open up facilities (such as conference facilities) to communities of disadvantage at preferential rates (see Section 5).	Improved access to stadia for communities of disadvantage and a greater sense of engagement with clubs.	Better relations with various communities which could benefit clubs in terms of future planning applications, generating new supporters, and improved community relations.
Purchasing	The creation of preferential purchasing agreements with local suppliers (see Section 5).	Improved local economic conditions for residential communities and business communities.	The development of good relations with reliable local suppliers.
Human Resources	The creation of sustainable and realistic preferential employment agreements for local people (see Section 5).	Higher rates of employment amongst residential communities.	The development of good relations with a reliable local workforce.
Ticketing	The development of ticketing policies which recognise economic as well as other types of exclusion (see Section 6).	More affordable access to matches for residential communities, communities of disadvantage and supporter communities.	An ability to build and retain as wide a base of supporters as possible.
Advertising	The creation of spaces within stadia, websites, and programmes which are available for adverts for local companies.	Improved local economic conditions for residential communities and business communities.	The development of good relations with local companies.
Marketing	Specific marketing for local residents.	A greater sense of engagement with the club for residential communities.	Generates new local supporters and increased attendances.

Table 3.1: Possible community-focused initiatives at football clubs.

The varying sizes and organisational structures of English football clubs means they have differing levels of staffing and resources available to implement initiatives such as these. A large, top level Premier League club may be well placed to develop new and innovative ways of doing business on a department-by-department basis, but a smaller lower league club may have one member of staff acting in multiple roles with little time to consider new ways of working.

The issue of resources is clearly important, but it should not preclude football clubs of any size from moving towards more community-focused ways of operating. The important issue to consider is that all clubs can become more community-centred, even if they are constrained by certain structural and/or financial factors.

Whatever the size of a football club, it is vital that community-focused ways of working are coordinated across different areas of work in order that 'joined-up' strategies and, where appropriate and relevant, cross departmental programmes can be developed. This means that one member of staff (or a team of people if possible) within the football club must have a coordinating responsibility for developing and overseeing community-focused ways of working and communicating their benefits across departments. This person can also act as a bridge between new independent community organisations which clubs may have established and the main body of the club. Ultimately, it is vital that clubs' community development and engagement activities are well planned and strategically managed. This may be easy in a small club that only has a few members of staff, but larger clubs with multiple departments will need more formal management structures in place.

In summer 2003, Manchester City FC appointed its first Social Responsibility Manager, who had been with the club since January of that year, and was originally appointed as Project Manager to oversee the club's move to the City of Manchester Stadium.

In his new role, the Manager is, amongst other things, responsible for bridging relations between MCFC and City in the Community (CITC) – a charitable trust established by the club in 2002 to deliver outreach work and football development activities. As part of this work, a new strategic document entitled the Blue:Print was developed in 2003/04 which helped to establish community priorities for CITC and the football club as a whole. Since 2004, the Manager has continued to investigate ways in which coherent and strategic schemes of work can be established between MCFC and CITC, whilst also leading the development of more community-focused ways of working across the football club's departments.

Whilst these developments have raised some questions about the nature of CITC's independence from MCFC, the seniority of the Social Responsibility Manager's position in the club has undoubtedly helped to raise the profile of community work across different departments, and has also helped to bring a new level of strategic management to the relationship between the club and CITC.

3.4   The Role of the Football Authorities

The responsibility for developing these new structures and ways of working rests principally with individual football clubs. These are the 'frontline' organisations of the football industry and will have to be comfortable with the recommendations made here if they are to be successfully implemented. This is where the different football authorities have important responsibilities. As pointed out in Section 2, the Football Foundation, the FA, and the leagues have central future roles in establishing and communicating values across English football about the efficacy of community-focused approaches.

In order to facilitate the development of independent community organisations and more holistic club-based approaches to community development and engagement, we recommend that that the FA Premier League and the Football League should take primary responsibility. Both leagues communicate regularly with their member clubs and have relatively long records of developing and leading common initiatives in a variety of areas. We now suggest that such leadership should be extended to embrace the more thoroughgoing understanding of community engagement presented in this report.

The leagues can help to successfully implement changes in club organisation in a number of ways. They can:

1. Assist clubs by, wherever possible, making available funds which can be used to 'pump prime' independent community organisations. This can be 'in-kind' funding which is used by clubs to buy-in the leagues' expertise or advice, or it could be 'real' funding which is used to fund specialist guidance on legal issues, the development of model constitutions, business plans or other strategic documents.

2. Distribute training and education tools to clubs to enable them to understand the principles and practicalities of independent community organisations, and also the value of spreading responsibility for community-focused initiatives across different areas of work.

3. Employ development officers (or similar) to work with clubs to explain the advantages and disadvantages of different organisational structures and ways of working. These officers can also help to draw up suggestions on the membership of steering groups, consultative forums and/or trustee boards which can feed into the development process.

4. Become disseminators of best practice. If a club has tried a new way of supporting its communities through a new purchasing policy, then the relevant leagues should be informed of this and disseminate it to other clubs. They can do this through websites and newsletters, or more innovatively through regular regional meetings where clubs can come together to discuss community-focused approaches and possible joint initiatives. This will help establish the leagues as 'champions' of innovation in community relations work and as repositories of knowledge about different approaches.

5. Establish discussions with FFE&TVS, specifically to facilitate the development of independent community organisations. FFE&VTS will be a useful potential partner here as it has seen a number of its FitC schemes develop into independent charities in recent years.

6. Establish discussions with Supporters Direct to investigate the potential role of Supporters' Trusts in developing independent community organisations and other forms of community development and engagement.

There are also potential roles for the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel in implementing the recommendations in this section. Along with its existing support for the establishment of Community Clubs the FA could adopt a similar role to the leagues in developing independent community organisations and holistic approaches to community development and engagement at club and county levels outside of the upper echelons of the game. The recommendations made here are not only relevant to Premier League and Football League clubs. They can also help to develop the community impacts of clubs throughout the national game.

The Football Foundation C&E Panel can adopt the role of supporting the leagues and the FA in developing, implementing and funding these recommendations. Where

funding is not available from other sources to help establish independent community organisations, the C&E Panel should explore ways in which it can help to bridge these gaps. It can also support clubs through providing ongoing guidance and funding as clubs continue to develop new schemes, projects and ways of working.

3.5 Summary of Recommendations

3.5.1 Central Government

- Provide specific additional resources to the Charities Commission and other relevant agencies to provide technical advice and training initiatives for developing independent community organisations.

3.5.2 Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Assist clubs by making available funds which can support the creation and development of independent community organisations.

- Become a disseminator of best practice and guidance to clubs.

3.5.3 FA Premier League, Football League and FA

- Assist their member clubs by making available funds which can 'pump prime' independent community organisations.

- Distribute training and educational tools which can aid their member clubs in adopting new community-focused ways of operating.

- Employ development workers to help their member clubs establish independent community organisations and new, community-focused ways of working.

- Become disseminators of best practice to their member clubs.

- Enter into discussions with FFE&VTS to facilitate the development of independent community organisations.

- Enter into discussions with Supporters Direct to investigate the potential role of Supporters' Trusts in implementing the recommendations made here.

3.5.4 Football Clubs

- Investigate how they can establish independent community organisations, in consultation with communities, supporters and other local stakeholders.

- A member of staff (or a team where possible) should take overall responsibility for coordinating community-focused ways of working across a football club.

- Community departments at football clubs should seek organisational and financial autonomy.

- Independent community organisations should retain the names of football clubs in order to benefit from the kudos of the professional game.

- Independent community organisations should establish strategic plans which outline their priority themes and geographical areas for delivering interventions.

- This strategic planning should allow for flexibility as organisations may need to adapt their priorities in order to appeal to funders.

- Strategic planning must be underpinned by sound business planning and high levels of professionalism.

- Independent community organisations should employ various 'experts', but must also be willing to work in partnership with other specialist agencies who can deliver interventions on the organisation's behalf.

- Independent community organisations should be built with 'community' support.

- All staff and departments within football clubs should take responsibility for building and supporting relationships with communities.

- All club staff and/or departments should find innovative ways to support clubs' communities.

4.0 Partnerships

4.1 Context

In the introduction to this report, we outlined the growing belief that English football has an important contribution to make in tackling 'social problems'. Football clubs are increasingly involved in schemes of work which are designed to produce community benefits in areas such as health, education, crime reduction, community building and social and economic regeneration. Some of these are designed and delivered solely by football clubs whose staff feel they have the requisite skills and knowledge to address specific social problems. Others are designed and/or delivered in partnership with more 'expert' agencies that specialise in developing social interventions.

The partnerships that have begun to emerge in the football industry reflect a wider growth in collaborative working across different areas of social policy in Britain. Since the 1980s, the government has advocated increased partnership working in all areas of social policy as a way of ensuring that the burden of work is shared between the public, private and voluntary sectors. It has also encouraged different agencies within the public sector to work together as a result of its claim that social problems cannot be understood in isolation from one another. The government believes that social problems often result from the same social circumstances (what is often termed 'social exclusion'), and that 'joined up' policy responses are needed to overcome complex and intertwined forms of social disadvantage.

The problem with this new emphasis on partnership working is that the term, rather like 'community', has itself become something of a 'buzz phrase' which is routinely used in different and sometimes contradictory contexts. There is now an enormous variation in the types of association to which the term is applied. In fact a 'partnership' now appears to be any kind of relationship between different agencies, regardless of how it is organised or what it is supposed to deliver. This has created confusion for those attempting to develop partnerships. Agencies can now routinely find themselves asked to engage in partnership working without really understanding what this means or why they are doing it.

4.2 Football and Partnerships

We have encountered many different types of partnership working during the course of this research, both at industry level and at individual clubs.

At industry level, we have found different forms of partnership including:

1) Those between the Football Foundation and various bodies and schemes that share a belief in the use of sport in general, and football in particular, as a means of tackling social problems. These include charities such as Nacro and the Princes Trust, and government schemes such as Positive Futures.

2) A partnership between the Football Association, UEFA and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) on

the 'Hat Trick' project. This is designed to promote football development in geographical areas suffering from high deprivation.

3) A cross industry partnership (which includes all the football authorities except the Football League) between English football and the Department of Health which resulted in the publication of the Football and Health guidelines.

These partnerships differ for a number of reasons. The Football Foundation, for instance, counts Nacro as a 'partner', yet it only really provides funding for the organisation and has little strategic influence in its work. The partnership between the FA, UEFA and the ODPM is in part based on similar funding arrangements, but it does also involve an agreement from the Football Association to deliver the scheme in priority areas as defined by the ODPM. The collaboration between English football and the Department of Health is different again as it involves no direct financial arrangements, but rather the drawing up of broad suggestions for how football clubs can work with the health sector in their local areas.

At club level we have again encountered different types of arrangements that are routinely termed 'partnerships'. Specifically we have come across collaborations between clubs and various organisations within the health, education, crime,

drugs and community regeneration sectors. Some of these have been 'institutional', high level partnerships with Primary Care Trusts, local authorities, local educational authorities and regeneration companies. Others have been with individual schools, colleges, hospitals, or community and voluntary agencies.

Both forms of club partnership have most commonly been directed at the delivery of individual projects or interventions. They have sometimes involved one agency 'buying' the skills, expertise or resources of another for a particular scheme of work, whilst at other times they have involved more detailed collaboration between different agencies to find solutions to identified social problems.

Some of the partnerships we have encountered at club level have not been focused on specific schemes of work, but have been more akin to 'networks' or 'forums' which are designed to address issues when they arise. At one of our case study clubs, a partnership between the club, local residents, councillors and various voluntary organisations was established to address concerns around the redevelopment of its stadium. This later developed into a standing forum which continues to meet to discuss relevant issues as and when they arise.

These examples of industry and club partnership indicate the various forms of collaborative working which currently operate around English football. The important point to note is that the different partnerships encountered during this research can produce very different expectations and results. This is not necessarily a problem as partnerships should not be rigid or prescriptive, but rather should be shaped and defined by what they can deliver. A potential problem arises, however, when clear understandings of the properties or aims of partnerships are not outlined at their inception. This can be made even worse when organisations enter into partnerships:

- merely for the sake of them;
- to simply satisfy funding requirements; or
- apply the label 'partnership' to forms of working which are not really defined by agreed forms of action.

In order to avoid confusion in this area, it is important that the national English football bodies and individual clubs are clear about the types of arrangements into which they might be entering, and what they are designed to achieve.

4.3   New Cultures and Styles of Working

According to the burgeoning literature on partnership working, there are countless definitions of what constitutes a 'partnership'. Rather than getting weighed down by semantics, however, it is more useful to consider what might be termed new cultures and styles of working which can aid the establishment of effective partnerships. These can be applied in different ways to partnerships at all levels - be they between macro-level organisations, or between individual football clubs and more local agencies - and can be summarised as follows:

1. Partnerships should involve two or more agencies and/or groups and, where possible, should include a variety of key stakeholders. Individuals/groups/organisations who enter into partnerships should be those who are primarily affected by a problem and/or have responsibility for developing solutions.

2. They should seek to develop (where this does not already exist) common aims and shared visions of what the problem is and how it should be overcome.

3. They should have agreed plans of action on what should be done to tackle the problem. These do not always have to be formally written down, but they should be understood by all partners.

4. They should understand, acknowledge and respect the contribution that different agencies/groups can bring to partnerships.

5. They should be open, responsive and seek to accommodate the different values and cultures of participating agencies/groups.

6. They should exchange information and communicate regularly. This communication should extend beyond formal partnership meetings, especially at club level.

7. They should share resources and skills.

8. They should be innovative, flexible and should be prepared to take risks rather than avoid them.[12]

We have deliberately identified these points as cultures and styles of working rather than rules or prerequisites as they are not designed to be bureaucratic, institutional regulations which must be adhered to in all circumstances. One of the most common problems with partnerships is that they frequently become overburdened with bureaucracy, meetings and systems of working which detract from the delivery of interventions. We suggest, therefore, that these points are accepted solely as recommendations which can inform practical approaches to forming and working within partnerships.

To illustrate the utility of these recommendations, it is useful to consider how they can be applied in different ways to three levels of partnership: high level institutional partnerships; formal club partnerships; and frontline delivery partnerships.

4.3.1   Institutional Partnerships

At a macro-institutional level, the majority of the points above are potentially important for helping the different English football authorities to establish better and more effective partnerships. However, three examples are particularly worthy of attention:

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1. We recommend above that partnerships should be formed between those who are affected by a problem or those who feel responsibility for developing solutions. This issue of taking some responsibility for overcoming social problems is fundamental for English football if it is to develop effective partnerships with key organisations in different fields. In Section 2 of this report we made recommendations which will enable the football authorities to emerge with clearer understandings of their responsibilities in community development and engagement. If they can communicate these priorities widely and demonstrate their commitments to them, then they will be able to develop credibility with partners in a number of new areas.

2. We also recommend that partnerships should seek to develop common aims and agreed plans of action of what should be done to address social problems. This does not mean simply developing bureaucratic aims and objectives which function within the confines of formal partnerships. It also means different organisations entering into dialogue in order to develop long-term, consistent and shared approaches together. By entering into new and creative partnerships, the football authorities will be able to learn about different organisations' aims and plans of action and, where appropriate, draw upon these in their own work.

3. Finally, we recommend that partnerships should be innovative and should be prepared to take risks. This is an important issue for the English football authorities as they grow in confidence in various areas of work. English football should not be confined to forming partnerships with 'the usual suspects' when it is developing interventions (e.g. government departments, large national charities). It should be constantly seeking to engage in and support innovative, cutting-edge work with partners who are making real impacts.

4.3.2   Formal Club Partnerships

The above guidance on new cultures and styles of working will also prove useful at individual club level when clubs are seeking to establish formal partnerships with agencies. It is again useful to explain this through three examples:

1. In the above discussion of macro-level institutional partnerships, we explained the need for English football to communicate and demonstrate its sense of responsibility for tackling various social problems. This is equally important at club level. If clubs are to be conceived of as key local agencies in fields such as health, education and community safety, it is vital that they have institutional aims which reflect their commitment to these areas. One way they could do this is to develop independent community organisations that are exclusively driven by commitments to the clubs' different communities (see Section 3). Even if they do this, however, clubs must also find more general ways of developing credibility in a range of different fields.

2. We recommend above that partnerships should be exemplified by regular communication and exchanges of information. This is clearly important when partnerships have already been established, but it is equally important for developing the conditions in which formal partnerships can be created in the first place. This means that football clubs should regularly be seeking to share thoughts, information and new approaches with key local organisations in order that they can establish reputations and links across different sectors. This can be done in a formal or an informal manner. The latter will ensure that people get to know different individuals within football clubs and feel comfortable working with them.

3. We also recommend that partners should be willing to share their various resources and skills. This is a fundamental issue for clubs with regard to the variety of formal partnerships into which they may wish to enter. Partnerships do not always have to be balanced equally in terms of the time and resources that each partner puts in. Rather, they should be based on sharing the appropriate skills that partners have to make interventions work. This means that football clubs might depend on the resources and skills of other organisations in certain circumstances, whilst offering more of their own expertise in others (see 4.4 below).

4.3.3   Frontline Delivery Partnerships

In addition to formal, institutional partnerships, it is also important for football clubs to develop informal, frontline

delivery 'partnerships', especially when developing programmes designed to engage 'hard to reach' groups or the socially excluded (see Section 7). The guidance on developing partnerships offered here will aid this type of work in a number of ways, including those outlined below:

1. We recommend above that partnerships should be open and responsive and should seek to accommodate the different values and cultures of participating groups. This is absolutely central to the development of estate- or neighbourhood-based grassroots partnerships which might be created, for instance, between football clubs and local young people. In these circumstances, clubs must be responsive to the cultures of young people and to their ways of doing things. This is also true for clubs who might wish to develop partnerships with small-scale, voluntary grassroots organisations in their local areas. Many of these organisations may have individual and, to the football industry at least, idiosyncratic ways of working. To avoid 'culture clashes' with such organisations, it is vital that clubs display openness to new and different ways of working.

2. In the spirit of openness, we also recommend that partnerships should be innovative, flexible and should be prepared to take risks. Frontline delivery partnerships should by their very nature embrace these values, especially if they are developed with socially excluded groups. Football clubs should not always (if ever) enter into grassroots partnerships or schemes of work because they are 'comfortable'. At its best, grassroots work should be difficult, challenging and innovative. Clubs should be willing to develop partnerships with people/ groups/organisations that other agencies routinely avoid or find 'too difficult'. It does not matter if these partnerships ultimately produce mixed results. If they succeed, funding can usually be found to make them more sustainable. If they do not produce the desired results, it is important that they have simply been tried out in the first place.

3. In order to establish effective formal partnerships, we noted above that clubs should be willing to communicate and share information with potential partners. This is again true for frontline delivery partnerships. If clubs wish to collaborate at a grassroots level, they must be engaged, as a matter of routine, in dialogue with people/ groups/organisations with which they may ultimately

develop schemes of work. This means that clubs need to be able to knit themselves into all manner of networks and relationships. This will only be possible if club staff have the freedom and interpersonal skills to build good one-on-one relationships with people in their local areas.

4.4   Implementing New Styles of Working

If the English football industry and individual clubs embrace these approaches to partnership working, they could emerge as invaluable resources in the tackling of a variety of social problems. To do this, however, staff at all levels of the game, and particularly those involved in frontline delivery at clubs, will need the requisite skills to put into practice the new cultures and styles of working outlined above. The English football authorities need to address this issue (see Section 8). It must be remembered that partnerships are not formed between organisations: they are in fact formed between real people. If people do not have the skills to get along with one another, acknowledge each other's capabilities, avoid 'power games', or work flexibly, then they will not develop productive partnerships.

If frontline delivery partnerships are to flourish at club level, it is also important for the Football Foundation C&E Panel to recognise the importance and validity of these when considering funding applications. As with many large funding bodies, the Foundation, through its Community Development Managers, currently requires funding applicants to demonstrate that they are working in partnership. This is clearly an excellent practice which should be retained. However, the C&E Panel must extend its definition of what constitutes a partnership to include informal, grassroots partnerships which are often more valued and important than bureaucratic, institutional forms of collaboration.

4.5   The Balance of Power in Partnership Working

Throughout our research, we have encountered one particular difficulty in partnership working which is worthy of additional consideration. This is the issue of different organisations 'dominating' partnerships, whether intentionally

As an organisation LOCSP has long been run on the basis that staff are largely left to their own devices. They are encouraged to get on with their own work in the manner which they see best. As long as they can be contacted they are encouraged to be out there 'doing it'. They are encouraged to take risks, to be bold and to take responsibility rather than to ask for direction as symbolised in the words, which were once placed on the notice board: "Ask for forgiveness not permission".

In this kind of environment partnerships are not necessarily planned, they evolve. Bits of work attract the interest of potential partners and funders but it is rarely the constitution of a formal 'partnership' group which enables progress to be made. 'Things happen' when people working for LOCSP establish shared interests and effective personal working relationships with other people, be they residents, youth workers, academics, coaches, criminal justice workers or anyone else.

This is almost inevitable given that whilst 'from above' such interventions are regarded as innovative, offering an effective and 'fresh' approach to tackling the criminogenic consequences of exclusion, the people they 'deal with' are seen to appreciate and welcome them because they are perceived and experienced as being non-interfering and non-threatening. Whilst LOCSP's growth means that it now takes a leading role in many local strategic development partnerships, on the ground its staff continue to rely on more personal forms of engagement which sit outside the more intrusive armoury of state-sponsored formal partnerships.

In this context LOCSP's success is something which has emerged 'on the job'. Staff have learnt to work with partners and to make contributions to wider programmes of work. Whilst strategic in its approach, the organisation has no blueprint or 'model' for others to follow. Rather what its achievements show is that football clubs can develop new ways of working and forge new partnerships which deliver an important contribution to the social inclusion agenda.

or not. This can become especially problematic when an agency wishes to present or 'brand' a partnership intervention as being primarily (if not solely) its own work. Through our research we have encountered such incidents on a number of occasions. We have seen large corporate organisations enter into partnerships with elements of the football industry primarily in their own interest, and we have spoken to public and voluntary sector organisations who have reported to us their disappointment of working with football clubs which, they claim, have ultimately sought to 'take all of the credit' for whatever collaborative intervention has been delivered.

Such problems can arise for a number of reasons. In the case of football clubs being perceived to be dominating partnerships, it might be that any accompanying media coverage of an intervention concentrates solely on the involvement of the club because such a story is deemed to be 'newsworthy'. Whether there is any fault on the part of the clubs or not, this is something which can be overcome if clubs use their privileged relationship with the media to raise awareness and exposure of their partner organisations. However, it might also be the case that partners have not been clear with each other about what they are hoping to gain as a result of their collaboration. If it is important for a football club (or any other organisation) to gain PR benefits from partnerships, then it is vital that they communicate this to other partners. It is equally vital that all partners have the power to agree the outcomes of their collaboration and do not feel 'sidelined' as a result of the requirements of larger, more powerful or better-known organisations.

The issue of managing power relationships in partnerships is central to their success. Many we have observed have been led or 'fronted' by sections of the football industry or individual clubs. Whilst it is encouraging to see clubs taking the lead in some instances, we have encountered far fewer occasions in which football has been willing to join existing partnerships or play a lesser role in new forms of collaboration. In line with the new cultures and styles of working outlined here, football clubs and the industry as a whole must become more confident and willing to enter into partnerships, primarily for the benefit of 'communities' rather than football, which reflect the balance of skills and resources that all partners can contribute to the tackling of social problems.

At a national level, this will involve the various football authorities working together and respecting the contributions they can all offer to different initiatives. This has not always happened, as the authorities at different times have been perceived as acting in their own interest when planning social intervention work. In line with the recommendations made in Section 2, the various English football authorities should take responsibility for specific areas of work in line with agreed strategic frameworks, but should also be willing to work together when appropriate.

This approach to collaboration can be reflected at club level. If clubs accept the recommendations made in this report, they will emerge with clear strategic visions which establish their priorities in community development and engagement. Where these priorities overlap between clubs (in terms of geographical area and/or theme of work) they should investigate ways in which they can coordinate their approaches and/or work together. This already happens at a local level in some areas across England - particularly through Local Football Partnerships (LSPs) - but it sometimes does not produce productive partnership initiatives and can at times be used to establish 'turfs' which exclude others.

At a local level, clubs' should also join or seek representation on a range of existing local partnerships. The volume of these will differ widely from area to area, but in most urban settings clubs will be able to locate partnerships which are designed to tackle different social problems. These will range from large-scale, institutional forums such as Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), to small-scale neighbourhood collaborations which might, for instance, be designed to tackle crime on a specific housing estate. Whatever their size, if clubs become involved in such partnerships they will become more aware of existing programmes of work, and will be better able to plan their own future interventions.

Clubs will also need to offer their skills, knowledge and resources to partnerships which are being established by others. Such offers will be accepted if clubs gain respect and are trusted as 'good partners' in local settings. The offer of help by clubs will be of benefit if that help is seen as relevant/useful, but will also help clubs themselves by enabling them to become involved in schemes of work in which they have no

One of the most successful high-level partnerships to emerge around football in recent years has been the Playing for Success scheme. This operates as a partnership between the football authorities, the Football Foundation, individual clubs, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and local educational authorities. Within this partnership, the football industry provides facilities (usually within stadia), 'in kind' funding (heating, lighting, security) and glamour which acts as a 'hook' for the children. The DfES and LEAs provide expertise, teaching materials and personnel.

From engaging in this collaboration, football clubs have been able to demonstrate their commitment to the education agenda, and a number of clubs have now emerged with reputations as 'good' education partners who can help a range of groups in different settings. Partnerships such as these appear to offer a more sustainable means of delivery as they protect schemes to some extent from the varying economic and other fortunes of football clubs.

The value of the Playing for Success approach has recently been demonstrated at Leeds United. The club established a PfS scheme in 1998 which soon established a reputation as one of the most successful in the country. Despite recent dire financial problems at the club and cutbacks in club resources to the scheme, the Learning Centre has been able to continue because it was not over-reliant on funding from the club and had established excellent relations with a range of funding partners.

particular expertise and/or previous experience. Football clubs have many different types of resources which they can offer to partnerships. They can provide expertise around football (for instance, coaching), (usually) excellent facilities in their stadia and other sites, and 'intangible' resources such as 'glamour' and 'kudos'.

If the football industry in general, and clubs in particular, are more willing to engage in partnerships in which outside groups and agencies simply use a link with football to 'add value' to their own work, then all partners will benefit. Clubs will be able

to gain PR advantages (as long as this is agreed upon as a desirable output by partner agencies) and will be able to establish reputations in new fields. More importantly, though, such arrangements will see football clubs making real contributions to the work of outside groups and agencies. Clubs do not always need to have in-house expertise to contribute to the work of others. Nor do they always need to 'lead' the partnerships of which they are members. They can help simply by offering those resources which they already have at hand.

4.6   Summary of Recommendations

4.6.1   Central Government

- Investigate ways in which it can enter into more productive partnerships with the Football Foundation, the FA, the FA Premier League, the Football League and other football bodies.

4.6.2   Football Foundation C&E Panel, FA Premier League, Football League and FA

- Investigate ways in which the new cultures and styles of working outlined above can aid the development of partnerships.

- As part of this process, they should:

  - accept and demonstrate some responsibility for overcoming social problems;

  - develop, wherever possible, common aims and plans of action with potential partners; and

  - enter into partnerships with innovative, cutting-edge providers.

- Develop partnership training for all levels of English football, and especially those involved in frontline delivery at clubs.

- Recognise the importance and validity of 'grassroots' partnerships when considering funding applications (especially the Football Foundation, but relevant also for the other football authorities).

- Be mindful of managing power-relations when working in partnership.

- Coordinate approaches and work in partnership with one another whenever appropriate.

4.6.3   Football Clubs

- Investigate ways in which the new cultures and styles of working outlined above can aid the development of partnerships.

- As part of this process, clubs should:

  - accept and demonstrate some responsibility for overcoming social problems;

  - regularly share thoughts, information and new approaches with key local organisations in formal and informal settings;

  - share resources and skills with partner organisations, whilst accepting that this may be done in an unequal manner;

  - be open, responsive and should seek to accommodate different values and cultures, especially when developing grassroots partnerships;

  - develop schemes of work that are difficult, challenging and innovative;

  - enter into and develop networks and build good one-to-one relationships with people in their local areas.

- Be mindful of managing power-relations when working in partnership.

- Coordinate approaches and work in partnership with one another whenever appropriate.

- Be willing to join or seek representation on existing local partnerships.

- Be willing to offer their skills, knowledge, 'glamour' and other resources to partnerships being developed by others.

5.0 Football Stadia & Facilities

5.1 A Changing Context

Football stadia have historically been regarded as football clubs' 'homes'; the place where clubs belong and where fans go to support their team. However, as our extensive digital mapping of fans and local areas has revealed, stadia now tend not to be sited in areas where most clubs' supporters live, and the majority of people who live near to football grounds tend not to attend matches regularly as supporters.

This is partly due to demographic changes and partly due to some sections of society being 'excluded' from attending football matches. But it also suggests that there has been a widening schism between what we might call 'residential' or 'stadium' communities, and 'supporter' communities. Encouraging residential communities to become more involved in their local clubs and bridging this divide can be achieved by using the stadium to benefit those communities and helping to create a sense of permeability and ownership around stadia and other club facilities.

Although stadia can be beneficial to local communities, through for instance the creation of 'community' facilities within them, the staging of football matches can cause significant disruption and nuisance to local residents. The extent to which clubs can actively respond to and lessen this disruption, as well as overcome it through more imaginative engagements with residential communities, will be central to whether stadia can become genuine community resources.

Although at times emblematic of a club and even a town, football stadia have historically been mono-functional spaces - i.e. venues for football matches, club administration and little else. This, too, however, is changing. Football grounds in the UK have been transformed since the Taylor Report of 1990 called for all-seater stadia to be introduced. This context generated new and/or extended requirements and opportunities which, alongside the increasingly commercial direction of the game, led many English clubs to either significantly redevelop their existing grounds or build entirely new ones. This allowed clubs to develop new and often improved facilities; additional services and income streams such as those developed around conferencing suites within refurbished or freshly built new stands; and for some allowed an escape from the often restrictive inner-city sites in which they had historically been located.

However, this also meant that stadia were developed as more than venues for occasional football matches, and some have in fact become centrepieces of retail outlets and other commercial activities. Although this suggests a multiplicity of functions for stadia and week-long use, it does not necessarily result in benefits for local or disadvantaged communities. Indeed, the increasing usage of stadia can lead to an increase in the disruption and nuisance which many residents now endure outside of match days, unless, as at some grounds, clubs work with residential communities to minimise these impacts.

Here we will consider the role that stadia and other facilities can play in relation to four areas of community intervention:

1. residential communities;
2. supporter communities;
3. business communities; and
4. communities of disadvantage.

5.2   Stadia and Residential Communities

In some places where there have been redevelopments of grounds or the building of entirely new ones, stadia have now become important elements in strategies to regenerate cities and communities. As we commented in the project's third interim report:

> It is notable that, at all three case study sites, stadium building or redevelopment has been closely intertwined with issues of urban regeneration. The centrality of this regeneration agenda to each of the sites has important implications for the ongoing roles of the football clubs and their engagement with the broader purposes and rhetoric of that agenda. This is placing new obligations and pressures on the roles that football clubs play within local and wider urban communities.[13]

This trend needs to be seen within the broader context of a changing use of sport within cities (for city marketing, attraction of major events etc.), a growth in cultural and sports policy at a local level aimed at local economic development, and a belief that stadia are facilities which can help deliver on a wide range of social agendas including health, sports participation, youth inclusion, education, and crime reduction. The changing role of sport within contemporary cities is itself highly relevant to discussions about the relationship of football to its communities, particularly where that relationship is created or renewed to deliver community benefits. However, evidence is patchy as to the actual benefits which local communities currently receive from such initiatives.

At one of our case studies, for instance, the club agreed a 'community use plan' with the owners of their stadium, the City Council, and other funders to allow local groups to use conferencing facilities. Whilst partially successful, some groups complained that the provision of free facilities was undermined by expensive catering costs (an issue which has now been resolved). At another ground, a hall built within a new stand was set aside for local residents' groups to use, although those who act as 'gatekeepers' to this facility cannot be said to be representative of the local communities they 'serve'. At many stadia, parts of the ground are set aside for the Playing for Success initiative, creating 'classrooms' within the stadia. Yet, despite the success of this model, financial constraints within core club activities can lead to a lessening of club commitments to such initiatives.

Whilst the opening up of these facilities to residential communities is a positive development, such an approach does not really go beyond the objectives of the original FitC schemes of the 1980s. Although we recognise the constraints of stadium management and issues of health and safety, we have not found evidence that these approaches have created a significant sense of 'ownership' of stadia within local communities; and nor do they tend to be the permeable, open, accessible, community resources that they could be. Indeed, although formal 'community' use of stadia has increased at many clubs in recent years, what community use there is tends to be heavily managed through 'institutional' relationships, and thereby does not necessarily create access

[13] Brown, A., Mellor, G., Blackshaw, T., Crabbe, T. & Stone, C (2004) Football and its Communities Interim Report Three: The Impacts of a Stadium Move on the Communities of a Football Club – The Example of Manchester City FC (Manchester: MIPC, Manchester Metropolitan University), p. 9.

for many 'hard to reach' and/or 'at risk' groups. This was epitomised at one ground where, despite regular and extensive use of the stadium for 'community' ends, local young people, unable or unwilling to pay for admission, are regularly asked to leave the stadium surroundings by club staff on match days.

Further, despite much rhetoric about the regenerative benefits of new stadia or new stands, there is little firm evidence that communities necessarily benefit socially or economically from them. It has been interesting and somewhat ironic to note that the building of a stadium in one area and the demolition of a stadium in another have both been used to lead regeneration projects during the life of this project.

As a pre-requisite to developing (existing and new) stadia for the benefit of communities, football clubs need to minimise the negative effects of events at the stadium on local residents. As a minimum, clubs need to have in place means of regular consultation, problem solving and decision making to overcome difficulties suffered by local residents. These could include:

- Local steering groups, incorporating club, local authority, resident representatives, fan groups, agencies (such as transport).

- Regular open/public consultation meetings.

- Stadium open days.

- A defined member of staff able to tackle issues for local residents across different departments of the club.

- Outreach work, especially on match days, to observe and to make connections with local people, especially the young.

- Schemes for the removal of litter (such as the Street Sweeper scheme in Anfield; or that run by the Blades Partnership at Sheffield United) which could involve fans and local young people (these can be used as 'entries' in ongoing forms of volunteering which can be accredited and lead to career opportunities).

Where stadia are also used for other purposes and by different fan communities (for instance, for international sports events and concerts) there seem to be greater efforts needed because of the unfamiliarity with, and lack of connection between, the 'communities' generated by these events and host areas. This could include greater levels of information being supplied, for example at the point of sale or supply of tickets, on matters such as local travel, local licensing restrictions, maps and information about local areas (which can also be used to publicise ongoing improvements in areas).

We have noted that there are negative and positive implications for local neighbourhoods and communities of both having a new stadium and of losing a stadium in their area. We have also noted that a historical legacy of a lack of consultation with local residents can mean that negative perceptions persist far beyond the lifetime of the 'problem'. Involvement, consultation and a role in decision-making over new developments can significantly overcome these issues.

We suggest that any stadium developments should entail the following:

- An active and meaningful involvement in decision making by local community representatives and other residents and businesses - as well as supporter communities - facilitated by the football club and local authorities.

- Developments designed with local communities to meet their needs, as well as those of other parties such as clubs.

- Regular and accurate information sharing about developments, plans and options.

- Independent monitoring of community involvement in the developments.

Where football facilities are developed as part of local regeneration strategies, it must be ensured that they are accessible and useful to local people. A Community Involvement Plan could help achieve this, as long as it:

- Takes full account of what local people need, involving them in the planning and negotiations for the site.

- Allows relationships to develop with formal community organisations, as well as more organic, informal and ad hoc relationships.

- Ensures that playing and business requirements are balanced with the need to maintain fluid and open access to the stadium.

- Tries to ensure that other, more commercial relationships - such as catering contracts - do not hamper relationships with communities (e.g. by fixed pricing or inflexible menus).

- Allows use of the playing surface, where possible, for 'community' events such as schools finals, recognising its iconic value to local people.

It should be noted, of course, that Community Involvement Plans do not need to be restricted to new stadia or facilities. They can also be implemented at existing grounds to improve relations between football clubs and their different communities.

The key with any community engagement strategy is not necessarily what it is designed to deliver. Rather, it is an issue of how clubs enters into dialogue with groups who are supposed to benefit from such arrangements. From our research, it is clear that resident communities are very realistic about what football clubs can do for them. They do not expect vast ranges of free services and goods. They simply want to be treated with respect, to be consulted properly, to be involved in sorting out issues and problems when they arise, and to have facilities available to help them solve these issues. In this sense, the process of developing and implementing Community Involvement Plans is often more important than the outcomes they are designed to deliver.

Allowing for this, clubs can still develop a greater sense of 'ownership' of their stadia by local communities through a wide variety of community uses and especially non-institutionalised relationships with people in the locality. Furthermore, clubs can find ways of encouraging participation in stadia by spectators, employees, volunteers, facility users and other visitors, in a variety of creative ways. These could include:

- Developing 'drop in' areas at the stadium.

- Delivering services (e.g. health) from stadium facilities.

- Developing open-access sports facilities for use by the locality.

- Allowing local residents, schools or young people to 'decorate' external walls or areas of the stadium.

However, unless significant numbers of local people regularly attend events at the ground, they are unlikely to feel any great attachment to it. More stringent efforts are therefore needed to 'bring in' local residents, and to make the stadium fully accessible to them. To do this, there needs to be a new approach to ticketing and market segmentation which could include:

- New strategies for compensating the 'nuisance' caused by match days.

- Preferential season ticket payment schemes for residential communities

- Creation and encouragement of local supporters' clubs.

- Outreach workers on estates to distribute tickets through non-formal channels to the most hard to reach (with appropriate checks on the end use of tickets).

- Cash payment, especially for under 18s, to minimise the existing obstructions.

- An approach based on inclusion and access rather than security.

If distinctions between fan and resident communities were more effectively bridged, clubs may be able to become more embedded locally. Thus, even something relatively simple like the (free, subsidised or specific) supply or marketing of tickets to local people can help to create a sense of inclusion, reduce local antagonism, and generate goodwill (as well as 'market' the club to new audiences). However, on the converse of this, the recognition of fan communities and the involvement of them in club-based 'community' activities in residential areas is also an important development which requires further consideration.

5.3   Stadia and Supporter Communities

For the most part, supporters express a 'love' or attachment to their 'home' stadium and we have observed many different communities of fans which form on match days. These can be based around routines of travel, drinking and meeting up before matches, or can be generated in different locations within grounds during games. Traditionally different areas of stadia represent different 'types' of match day communities, with sometimes conflicting values and accepted forms of behaviour.[14]

Whilst we have observed extensive and admirable attempts to preserve these match-day communities in some stadia redevelopments, modern grounds and club policies tend to individualise supporters and their relationships with clubs, especially where new stands and grounds have been built and old associations have been broken up. The introduction of more corporate governance and customer relations management, whilst aimed at improving customer service, may have the negative effect of fostering an individualised relationship between clubs and their fans rather than a more collective or 'community' one.

In this sense, stadium policy should also be about creating and maintaining a sense of 'community' among fans on match days - and as such implies that a whole range of different departments of the club need to be aware of the 'community' implications of club policy, especially ticketing, stadium management, and redevelopment (see Section 3). The advantages of opening up stadia and their facilities to benefit local communities will be undermined if the sense of community amongst supporters is lessened by stadium redevelopment or if, for instance, ticketing policies exclude some groups (especially the young).

We return to the issue of the involvement of supporters in community interventions elsewhere in this report (see Section 6), but it is vital to recognise that if supporter communities are to be encouraged and nurtured, then they need to be centrally involved in planning and organising stadia management.

5.3.1   Fans and New Facilities

On the whole, new grounds or stands are welcomed by fans but we also have to note the at times virulently negative feelings which some fans have with regard to the experience of new stadia and the formations of communality and 'atmosphere' encountered within them.[15] As with issues associated with clubs' other communities, fan communities perhaps need greater levels of involvement in decision making and more opportunities in which their creativity can flourish.

Throughout this research, supporters regularly raised with us the issue of standing in stadia and its potential contribution to improving atmospheres at games. They expressed their frustration at not being able to stand in seated areas in grounds, but more fundamentally questioned why new stadia could not incorporate 'safe standing' areas as currently used in countries such as Germany. Standing areas can promote supporter community inclusion through cheaper prices, more flexible stadia configurations, and by creating spaces for fans to watch games with friends and families. We recommend, therefore, that this issue should now be re-considered by government and other relevant authorities.

Where new facilities have been built, we have noted that increased opportunities for fans to attend games (because of increased capacities at new grounds) have not resulted in dramatic changes to the geographical or socio-economic profile of the fan base. This means that communities which were formerly 'excluded' from match attendance have tended to remain so. This evidence re-emphasises our previous findings that those who most regularly attend football matches at all three case studies clubs come from less deprived and more wealthy areas; something we consider in Section 6 as essential to address if football is to play a full part in strategies for social cohesion.

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[14] For a discussion of this in the European context see Bromberger, C. with Hayot, A. & Mariottini, J-M. (1993) "Allez 'O.M., Forza Juve': The Passion for Football in Marseille and Turin', in Redhead, S. (ed.) The Passion and the Fashion: Football Fandom in the New Europe (Aldershot: Avebury) pp. 103-152.
[15] Ibid, pp. 84-88.

In February 2001, SAFE (the Campaign for Safe Standing Areas) travelled to Germany to gather information on the use of standing areas, especially at new stadia, for domestic matches in the Bundesliga. They visited a number of stadia, including the brand new **AufSchalke Arena in Schalke**. The total capacity for the stadium is 62,000, including standing places for 15,000 home fans and 1,800 away fans.

In their discussions with FC Schalke 04, SAFE discovered that the stadium had been built after regular and meaningful consultation between club officials, stadium designers, police authorities and supporters' groups. The club's press officer told SAFE that the club regarded this consultation process as 'good practice for social policy', and said it 'knew fans would want to stand in the Arena, and it was never considered to make it an all seater'. In addition to issues surrounding atmosphere, the club also informed SAFE that the decision to include standing areas had been taken to increase capacity, and thereby keep admission costs lower. A representative from the Schalke fans' initiative told SAFE that the club were 'conscious that there is a lot of unemployment in their region and the prices reflect that'.[16]

5.4   Stadia and Business Communities

We have not noted any significant sense of 'community' amongst businesses located near to football stadia, although some businesses do make overt references to clubs in their names, livery and other associations, thereby seeking to trade off their geographical proximity to clubs. There is also little evidence to suggest that businesses benefit per se from being located near to football stadia as there has been very little detailed research into the economic impact of football clubs on local businesses.

However, in our business mapping, we have identified that some businesses particularly geared to match day - pubs, takeaways, off licences, bookmakers - do benefit from being located close to stadia; whereas others - especially those requiring people to drive to them - can suffer, especially on match days.

There is also little conclusive evidence about the impact on business communities when a club moves stadium. Former historic areas can see the emergence of new, non-match-day related businesses once more traditional football-related businesses have moved out; whilst benefits in areas near to new stadia are often restricted to those types of business outlined above.

Whilst recognising the efforts already made by clubs in linking up with small local businesses, we feel that there is the potential for other opportunities to encourage reciprocal business activities, especially in conjunction with local partners. This could include the development of preferential local business purchase schemes. Further, given the 'brand power' of football and its clubs, especially locally, we recommend that clubs should help to create or develop local business networks, forums and training schemes. This might entail bringing in specialists to help deliver advice on subjects such as business planning, marketing and staff development, or running events to facilitate local business networking (possibly with partners such as local regeneration agencies and local chambers of commerce).

With regard to the employment of local people, we think that more concerted efforts between agencies and clubs are

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[16] See SAFE (2001) Safe Standing: The German Stadia Report (Rossendale: SAFE) pp. 4-5.

needed to improve both the levels and the nature of local employment at clubs. Whilst some clubs will have very small staff numbers and their opportunities for helping local employment will be limited, all clubs could and should develop (at times funded) accredited volunteer and work placement schemes. LEAs, schools, colleges and universities could all be partners in such schemes. The FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel should, as part of their training and best practice dissemination work, provide training advice and practical 'how to' guides to help clubs develop these areas (see Section 8).

The Blades Enterprise Centre is one example of how a stadium redevelopment has successfully incorporated a facility with great potential benefits to local small businesses. It is also further evidence of Sheffield United's ingenuity at seeking out alternative funding sources to facilitate such projects.

Opened in 2001, the Enterprise Centre offers office accommodation and business support fully integrated within the John Street Stand and takes advantage of the extra opportunities which such a location can offer, including the use of executive boxes for meetings and match-day promotional opportunities. The facility is autonomously managed as a Forsyth Business Centre, one of 22 throughout the country.

The original costs for building the Enterprise Centre were met by European Social Fund Objective One funding[17] aimed at social and economic regeneration of particular areas. There are some concerns as to how far people from the immediate vicinity of the stadium have benefited, although it is certainly the most affordable facility of its type in close proximity to the city centre. A greater understanding of local needs might increase the relevance of such schemes to local people, although the current centre manager has done his best to promote the facility to certain minority ethnic and faith groups within the area with some success.

If office space is not suitable for the types of businesses in which targeted local populations are interested, the space could be utilised for skills sharing workshops and training sessions rather than seeking alternative tenants. The Centre can still be run commercially but it will also still fulfil its intended targets of grant funding. In this way a more 'symbiotic' relationship can be created between local people, businesses and the football club.

Individuals from various companies within the Centre have suggested that mutual benefits could be gained from closer links with each other and the football club. This should be further extended to include existing and potential business communities beyond the locality of the stadium itself.

5.5 Stadia, Communities of Disadvantage and the Social Inclusion Agenda

As already stated in this report, football now has to be aware of a much wider array of agendas, and this impacts on the 'role' and potential of the stadium as much as any other area of 'community' concern. As we have also indicated, clubs are often not necessarily the best type of organisation to lead such initiatives, but they need to be important partners in them, along with agencies in the appropriate fields.

There are a number of initiatives at the case study clubs and elsewhere which attempt to utilise the stadium to develop messages and initiatives relating to health, education and other social agendas. The most widespread of these is the Playing for Success initiative in which parts of grounds are converted into classrooms through a partnership between the DfES, local education authorities, the Football Foundation and clubs. This scheme provides educational opportunities to those who might otherwise not have them – due, for instance, to exclusion or under performance at school - and opportunities to adults for lifelong learning. Locating classrooms in football stadia makes them potentially more appealing, especially, although not exclusively, to the young.

The Federation of Stadium Communities is an organisation that has represented the interests of residents who live near to sports stadia since 1991. Much of its work in the past has focused on the issues of reducing nuisance, representing residents when new stadium developments are planned, and liaising between clubs and residents. Whilst this work continues, the organisation has recently undergone significant strategic changes under a new chief executive and is now developing partnership projects with a range of clubs and agencies around new social agendas.

In principle, these seek to use the facilities of stadia to benefit local communities and communities which suffer particular disadvantages (especially around health). This suggests a new approach from the FSC which focuses on the positive contribution which stadia can make to a range of agendas, and the FSC is currently developing a new guidance handbook to cover these issues.

Federation of Stadium Communities Initiatives

i) Healthy Stadia Initiative - a partnership formed in 2004 between North West Region Public Health Department, Government Office for the North West, (GONW), the FSC and the Healthy Settings Development Unit (HSDU) at the University of Central Lancashire. Its overall aims are to 'ensure that those people who visit, play at, work at, or live in the neighbourhoods of professional sports clubs have the opportunity to be supported by the Healthy Stadia Programme to live healthier lives'. Issues so far covered include smoking, healthy eating, green transport, community liaison, alcohol, advertising, mental health and physical activity.

ii) The Reaching the Community Project (part funded by the Football Foundation) - a project which targets hard to reach groups and local population groups (residential communities) who are attracted to watch sport but are less likely to attend 'traditional' venues for health advice and learning opportunities. It includes 'programmes of community consultation and engagement, exploring real and perceived barriers to realising the potential of stadia as community assets, providing integrated cultural, sporting, health and educational services'.

The Football Foundation C&E Panel, the FA and the leagues could help such organisations and initiatives of this kind in a number of ways by:

• Providing funding for specific projects.

• Disseminating examples of best practice.

• Utilising expertise within training and skill development in this area.

• Giving clubs advice and financial help in initiating schemes of this kind.

• Where appropriate, developing longer-term partnerships.

There are other examples of how stadia can be central elements in partnerships with social inclusion agencies. At some sports stadia (for example, Warrington Wolves Rugby League Football Club) agencies such as the local Primary Care Trust have taken up office space within the ground, enabling both the redevelopment of stadia or stands as well as the formation of new partnerships and working relationships. In other examples, such as at non-league AFC Telford United, grounds have been redeveloped as part of the creation of new educational facilities, benefiting both the club - who get a new stand - and local education partners with whom deepened relationships can be formed to deliver on the education agenda. It is important to note that Telford's facility development has only been possible because of Football Foundation funding and support and because of a wider partnership with the local authority and social inclusion agencies.

Where clubs develop facilities as part of wider social inclusion agendas or urban regeneration initiatives, they will have to contend with new sets of obligations and responsibilities. In order to meet these new challenges, we recommend that club staff need educating and training about how best to engage with these agendas and how to build effective partnerships (see Sections 4 & 8). The Football Foundation development workers also have an important role to play here in implementing best practice in this area as part of their existing bid development work, and this may require additional resources.

5.5.1   Other Facilities

At times, clubs also develop facilities which are separate from the stadium itself, such as academies, which can also play a key role in community engagement and development. Indeed we have seen examples where clubs have received grants (including from the Football Foundation) for such facilities which support their core business on the basis that they will also create 'community access' to sports provision. However, in such circumstances there is currently a tendency for community use to be understood in rather narrow terms which is focused on widening access (sometimes for the commercial benefit of the club) rather than broader community development activity. In such contexts there is a

need for the Foundation and other funders to be more explicit about what constitutes an appropriate community use strategy, to identify appropriate partners to support the development of new styles of working, and to ensure appropriate, ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Sports Club Orient or **SCORE**, a community owned and managed project originating from Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme and Orient Regeneration, opened its doors earlier this year.

Built right on the doorstep of Leyton Orient FC, the project brought together local, regional and national agencies to raise £8.5 million for the new facility which houses a community centre, nursery, sports hall, social club and the local PCT, in addition to an outdoor games area, football pitches and bowling green. The project cuts across traditional dividing lines between service providers by making connections between sport, health, childcare, employment and training on one site.

What made this possible was the project's independence from the club, since SCORE's mission is to develop an all embracing sports and community centre which is driven, owned and managed by its members. Community involvement lies at the heart of the exercise with an emphasis on the importance of developing community-based solutions to local problems. As such there is a strong presence of local residents on the SCORE Board and management committees which have been augmented by extensive local consultation at both the planning stage and in relation to the current management of the facility.

5.6   Summary of Recommendations

5.6.1   Central Government

• Introduce planning and/or other regulations which ensure that all clubs' communities are fully involved in the planning, delivery and use of new or redeveloped sports and football facilities.

- Create funding streams to ensure stadia or facility feasibility studies fully involve clubs' different communities at all stages.

- Ensure different communities are involved in decision making after facilities have been built.

- Consider allowing convertible safe-standing areas at all levels of the game to enable flexible use of stadia.

5.6.2   Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Continue to encourage the coherence of community and education and grass roots facility funding through the Director of Grant Programmes.

- Introduce a range of criteria about communities' involvement in the planning, delivery and use of new facilities as a condition of grant aid.

- Develop more thorough and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of facilities which get grant aid for delivering 'community benefit'.

- Introduce restrictions on funding for facilities which do not encompass community use.

5.6.3   FA Premier League, Football League and FA

- With the Football Foundation C&E Panel, support education and skills training with specialist partners such as the FSC around best practice.

- Consider supporting the use of convertible safe-standing areas at all levels of the game to enable flexible use of stadia.

- Develop strategies and best practice guidance to use stadia as part of regional/local regeneration plans.

5.6.4   Football Clubs

- Minimise the negative effects of events at stadia on local residents. As a minimum, clubs need to have in place regular means of consultation, problem solving and decision making to overcome problems suffered by local residents.

- For non-football events, greater levels of information should be supplied to visitors, for example at the point of sale, on matters such as local travel, local licensing restrictions, maps and information about the local area.

- Any large-scale stadium developments should entail full engagement of different 'local communities'.

- Develop a greater sense of 'ownership' of their stadia by residential communities through a wider variety of community uses and especially non-institutionalised relationships with people in the locality. Clubs also need to find ways of encouraging participation in the stadia by spectators, employees, volunteers, facility users and other visitors.

- Diminish the schism between residential and supporter communities to create more involvement in, and a greater sense of local ownership of, the stadium. This can be achieved in part through new approaches to ticketing and market segmentation

- Generate greater opportunities, in conjunction with other local partners, to encourage business activity between themselves and some suppliers, such as developing preferential local purchase schemes.

- Develop local business networks, forums and training schemes - bringing in appropriate agencies to help deliver advice on aspects such as business planning, marketing, and staff development.

- Develop ways of promoting healthy stadia and utilising facilities to deliver on other social exclusion agendas.

- Where football facilities are developed as part of local regeneration strategies, ensure that they are accessible and useful to local people.

6.0 Supporters

6.1 Re-conceptualising Supporters as 'Communities'

Football supporters are understood in a whole variety of ways. They are regularly identified as the 'lifeblood' of the game - loyal and passionate - as well as being regarded as fickle, naive or even dangerous and destructive. However, they are rarely seen or described by clubs as a 'community' or 'communities'. Indeed, over the course of the past decade they have more commonly come to be identified as individual 'customers'. An increasingly commercial relationship between clubs and supporters has developed, with the Football League and Premier League, as well as individual clubs, instigating Customer Charters. These charters, subject to the scrutiny of the Independent Football Commission, formalise the rights of paying 'customers' and other stakeholders whilst highlighting the wider commitments that clubs have made to these stakeholders.

In the main the terminology of 'community' has largely been applied to something beyond the established supporter base. Where supporters are acknowledged as communities it is usually only those particular groups such as current and potential supporters from black and minority ethnic 'communities', those with disabilities, and those from other 'disadvantaged' groups that are considered as such. Indeed, work with these groups regularly features in reports produced by clubs throughout the FA Premier League and the Football League. Formal 'community' work is almost always separated out from clubs' relations with their wider supporter base and is focused on those who have been labelled externally as priority 'community' targets. This approach does not allow clubs to take on the more positive notions of 'community' amongst the wider fan base, such as collective expressions of common identity, experience and belonging. Indeed, in the main, football's concept of community activity seems to lie beyond the stadium and the match-day fan experience.

For the FA Premier League the focus is on 'enabling all young people, regardless of sex, race, religion or disability to have access to a new generation of football facilities, and to using (sic) the popularity of football to improve educational and training standards for young people'.[18] This agenda is delivered through a variety of charitable and commercial partners, and is manifest in projects such as the FA Premier League's Reading Stars initiative. However, it is not clearly visible in the league's ticketing and merchandising policies which relate to paying supporters and which form a cornerstone of the Premier League's Customer Charter.

For the Football League, whilst the principal commitment of its Charter is a commercially-driven promise 'to encourage the next generation of football supporters to watch live football', its recent re-branding exercise suggests some recognition of the potential for a wider vision:

> League clubs are the very embodiment of community and in most cases are the single biggest communal activity in the towns and cities they represent. The League intends to

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[18] FA Premier League website: http://www.premierleague.com (About us – community projects).

explore further the relationship between football club and community, so as to enhance the value of clubs to the families that live locally.[19]

More specifically this claim is allied to the League's aim to:

- Strengthen links between clubs and their communities.
- Enhance relationships between clubs and supporters.
- Encourage more people to attend games at their local club.
- Increase the number of children playing football.
- Deliver new commercial revenues for League clubs.

It is clear that the intention to develop 'imaginative community initiatives' is part of a wider commercial strategy to 'give [League] clubs the means to compete in a crowded leisure market'. Whilst within the League's rhetoric there is a striking promise offering to move beyond a focus on supporters as 'customers', in practice this is not realised enough.

Our research suggests that one of the principal strengths of football clubs lies in match attenders' collective definition of themselves as fans, supporters and followers who develop long-standing attachments to their clubs through neighbourhood and family connections, rather than their status as 'customers' attracted to a superior 'product'. Indeed, in other business sectors such as grocery retail, major corporations have sought to establish precisely this kind of more personal relationship by evoking the idea of club membership amongst their own customers. 'Clubcards', onsite crèches and catering facilities, children's play areas and public charitable activities have become common features at supermarkets attempting to forge a deeper bond with their 'visitors'. Such organisations would dearly love to have the kind of collective sense of belonging that football routinely enjoys and which underpins supporters' attachments to their club. In this sense the development of a contractually-based 'customer relations' approach within football runs contrary to clubs' capacity to connect with supporters on a deeper and more emotive plane. Since it would seem that football clubs are uniquely placed to benefit from the extension of 'community' type relations with their supporters, it is surprising that so few seek to do so.

Currently, none of the clubs considered by our research has a policy orientation which relates to their supporters directly as 'communities'. They do not exploit the potential of supporters to act in community roles (for example as volunteers or 'community ambassadors'), and do not have policies that aim to protect and support the communal identifications fans have with each other and the club (especially in relation to access to matches and atmosphere).
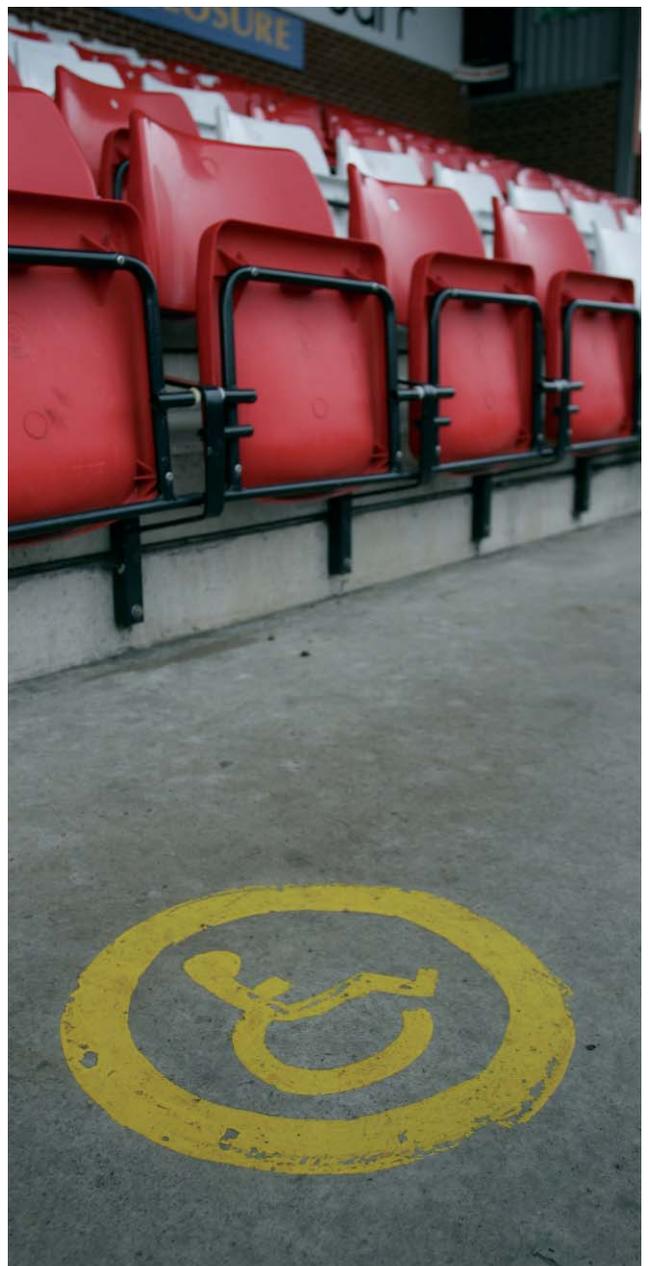
Manchester City Season Ticket Holders,
Greater Manchester 2003/04

Count of MCFC STH 2003/4
By Greater Manchester Wards

■	310 to 386 (16)
■	233 to 310 (12)
■	156 to 233 (57)
■	79 to 156 (66)
□	2 to 79 (96)
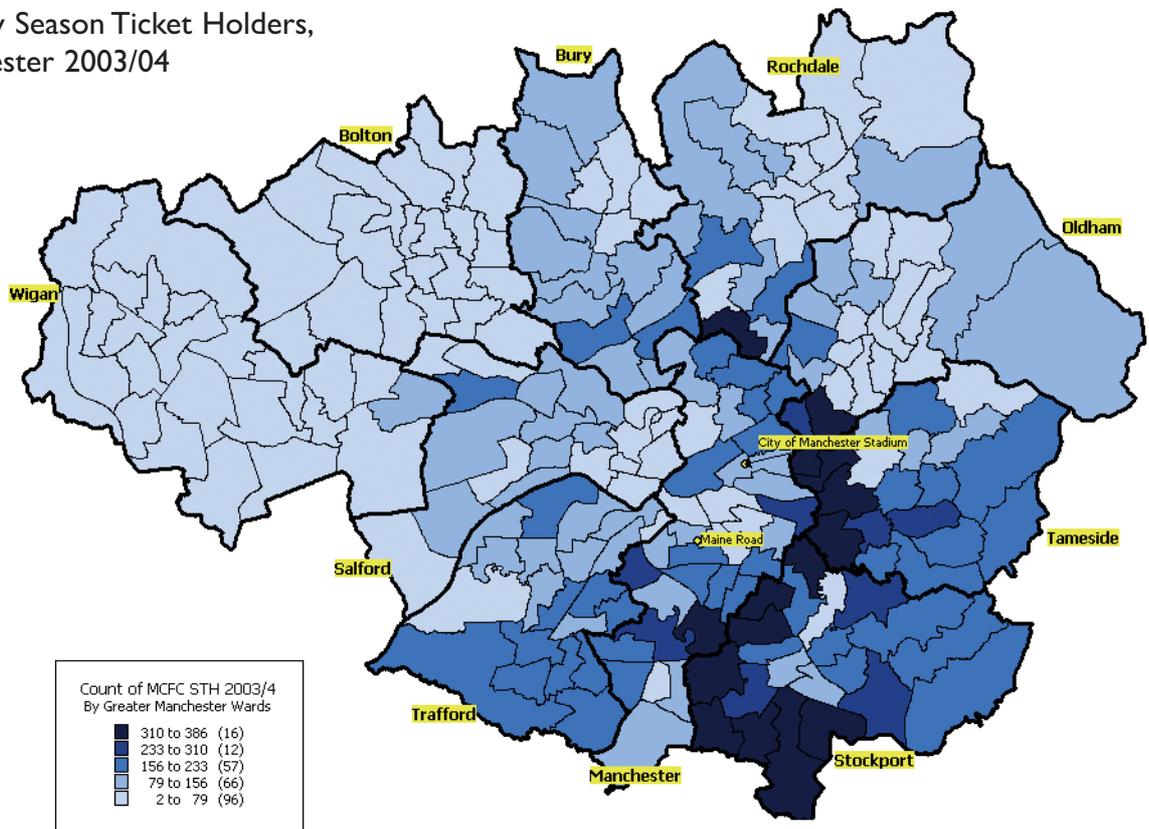
Supporters with disabilities do benefit at one of the clubs from a Disabled Supporters' Club and a Disability Liaison Officer and clubs occasionally distribute match tickets to minority ethnic groups who are under-represented amongst match attenders. However, it is notable that other groups of supporters with shared concerns, such as low incomes, neighbourhood ties or 'ex-pat' status, are not currently addressed in the same way and are not afforded the same institutional status.

This 'disadvantage/interest group' approach establishes false distinctions within the fan base and undermines one of the principal characteristics of any club's support - that it is a communal expression of a strong attachment to the club from people with diverse social backgrounds. In other words, it is the fact that they are fans of the club that unites them, not their social status in other settings. It might be more appropriate to regard all supporters as communities that can benefit from, and contribute to, clubs' developments, profiles and social responsibilities.

It is also surprising and unacceptable that where fans themselves formerly organise around specific interests (for instance, to organise travel to matches, as independent campaigning organisations, or as trusts with mutual shareholdings), some clubs still refuse to recognise or engage with them. For example, involving supporters' trusts in owning and running clubs, in the development of independent community organisations, or in creating new partnerships to enable clubs to be more outward facing, can only benefit clubs' engagements with their communities and the fans involved.

6.2 Identifying Football's Supporter Communities

In pursuing this agenda it is important that clubs establish a clear picture of 'who' their supporter communities are. In the course of our research we mapped a range of supporter databases to determine the geographical spread of fans who

Greater Manchester Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000

Wards Ranked by Index of Multiple Deprivation Data

In Top 1%
In Top 10%
All Others
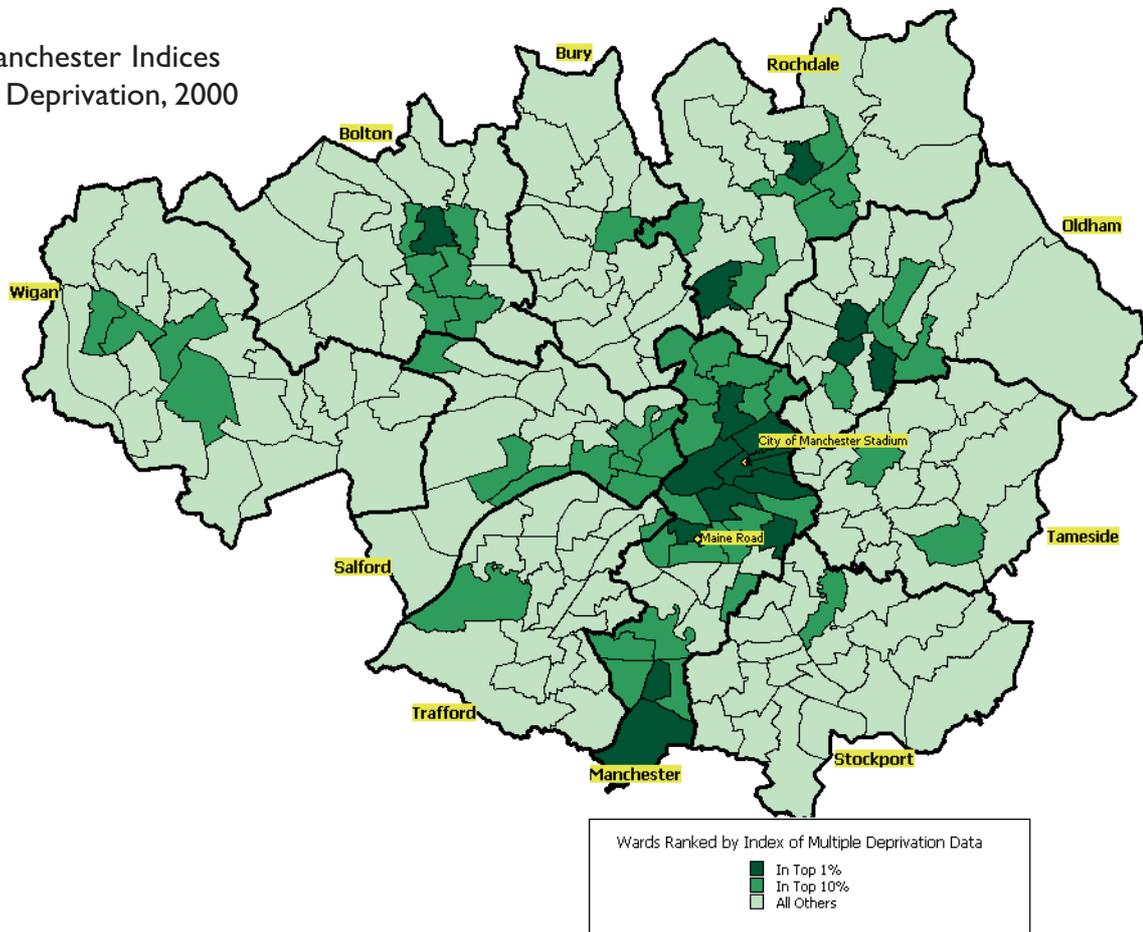
have formal relationships with the clubs we studied. We then compared these data against 2001 census results and the 2001 Indices of Multiple Deprivation[20] to present socio-economic profiles of the areas in which supporters reside. We also interviewed and observed supporter representatives, 'ordinary' fans, football club staff and a range of other individuals to determine how different groups of supporters relate to their clubs and develop their own sense of 'community'.[21]

Our results were based on the analysis of three supporter datasets from the 2003/04 season for each club including:

- season ticket holders
- club members
- junior members

We mapped each of these against political ward boundaries in order that comparisons could be made with census and multiple deprivation data. From our analysis it was concluded that:

- the case study clubs, and in all likelihood most other clubs, draw the majority of their season ticket holders, members and junior members from relatively affluent, ethnically 'white' areas that enjoy high employment rates and good levels of education and health.

- there are differences at each club but none of them can be said to be drawing significant numbers of officially recognised supporters from geographical areas:

  - with high levels of multiple deprivation;
  - with large minority ethnic/religious populations; or
  - in close proximity to their stadia.

- clear distinctions needs to be drawn between clubs' residential communities, communities of disadvantage and supporter communities. The three are not synonymous.[22]

In this context, it is vital to note that whilst the clubs we studied may not formally engage with their supporters as 'communities', our wider qualitative analysis has revealed how

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[20] Whilst more recent IMD data (2004) is now available it had not been published at the time of the mapping exercise.
[21] The full results from this analysis are presented in Blackshaw, T., Brown, A., Crabbe, T., Mellor, G. & Stone, C. (2004). Football and its Communities Interim Report Two: Mapping Case Study Clubs' Communities (Manchester: MIPC, Manchester Metropolitan University). [22] Ibid.

supporters themselves do see themselves as part of a variety of supporter communities which are not mutually exclusive. In terms of the different types of 'community' identified in sociological literature (as discussed in Section 2) these are all 'communities of interest', but the differences between them are important for understanding the multiple forms of association that supporters create around their clubs.

6.2.1   Escapist fan communities

Football supporters routinely engage in collective acts of match attendance, travel and celebration, where 'normality' and differences between people are suspended as collective identities as supporters of the club are renewed. In our research we have observed many moments in which the drama of the football match, be it watched 'live' in the stadium or in groups in a pub, club or home, produces moments of intense group bonding and feelings of associated 'community'. When goals are scored or at other moments of high excitement many 'normal' intra-group rivalries and differences within fan communities are themselves suspended as new forms of community bonding emerge.[23] In an increasingly privatised and individualised world, understanding fans in this way means we can see the positive, regenerative potential of being part of football supporter communities, something which clubs should embrace and encourage. This communal sense of belonging is also, of course, fundamental to the 'brand loyalty' of fans, underpinning their consumption of football, yet it is rarely recognised or supported in business strategies.

Implications: Football's capacity to produce moments of collective joy and communal bonding is what hooks people into the game. Whilst fuelled by excitement and passion on the field, such emotions rely upon supporters' freedom to share the 'moment'. This can be facilitated through:

- the availability of pre- and post-match as well as non match-day congregation spaces (such as supporters' bars; family/children play areas);

- a more flexible approach to stadium configuration, including safe standing areas, which allow different modes of behaviour for different communities within the stadium;

- fan involvement in 'dressing' stadia and more flexible stewarding regulations which allow fans to congregate with friends and family.

- configuring stadia in order that fans are not segregated on account of their perceived 'difference' (e.g. accommodation could be provided for wheelchair users in a variety of locations as happens at some new grounds).

6.2.2   'Crisis' fan communities

Intense bonds between football supporters also emerge in the context of threats to a club. Our research has revealed how in the face of financial crisis, rapid mobilisations of fan campaigns to bring about change can occur. Similarly, hostile takeovers, consistently poor performances, club merger proposals, 'disasters' or stadium redevelopment/relocation plans can result in supporters coming together in 'thicker', more meaningful and more organised ways than is evident in the momentary collective celebration of goals or victories. Supporters become involved in new and unfamiliar organisational activities; extend their networks of contacts; and express their attachment to their club in ways which extend far beyond support for the on-pitch performances of the team. They also demonstrate a desire to be involved in the running of their clubs, positively contributing ideas and experience on how this could be done.

Implications: The capacity of such 'crisis' communities to mobilise support, raise funds, conduct PR campaigns and influence policy reveals football supporters' latent potential as a resource for greater involvement in the running of clubs and wider social interventions. Participation in supporter organisations - whether at crisis points or not - can also help fans develop skills, confidence and experience with far wider social benefits. The work of Supporters Direct and the trusts they support illustrates the ability of football to harness this potential in constructive ways.

6.2.3   'Performed' fan communities

It could be argued that both in the face of a 'crisis' and in more regular circumstances, football supporters are only really

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[23] For a theoretical analysis of this type of 'liminal' community bonding see Turner, V. (1969) The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul).

producing what some writers have referred to as 'cloakroom' or 'ad hoc' communities.[24] This means that they come together as a collective only temporarily, with football matches as the key focus. Some fans extend this throughout the week via internet forums, radio phone-ins and supporter meetings. However, others do not and their 'membership' of a 'community' is more limited as a result. The key point is that football fans 'throw themselves' into supporter communities, but do so with varying degrees of commitment and enthusiasm.

From this perspective football matches become events around which some people temporarily unite as communities, only to go back to their individualised lives at the end of the game. People 'perform' all the aspects of community and commonality around football for the time they are together 'as one', but do not knit themselves into deep reciprocal relationships - such as supporter organisations, football-related friendship networks, virtual networks or 'community' interventions - as a result. In this sense, some supporter communities are increasingly unbound by geography, and people enter into them and leave again with great regularity. This state of flux means that supporters continually rethink who makes up 'their community', and what this means for how it is perceived by its members and others.

Implications: If football's capacity to generate more enduring forms of communal bonding amongst supporters is to be realised it must make connections beyond the stadium context, extending its reach into local neighbourhoods and workplaces. This could involve helping to establish supporters' groups where there are concentrations of fans, putting on more social events at which supporters can gather, or organising supporter volunteer programmes, based around particular geographical groups of supporters. Clubs also need to find more flexible and varied ways of liaising with their supporters due to their diverse nature as well as encouraging those supporters' roles as valued contributors to the 'football product'.

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[24] See Bauman, Z. (2001) Community: Seeking Safety in an Insecure World (Cambridge: Polity Press).

6.2.4   Extended fan communities

From our observations it is clear that, for others, being a football supporter is a regular, structuring part of their lives which enables them to experience a real sense of belonging in an otherwise uncertain world. As such, for many supporters, being part of a fan 'community' is far more substantial than merely an escapist form of momentary bonding. In our research we have observed and encountered several types of social gathering centred on support for a football team based on 'thick' ties of family, kinship, friendship and neighbourhood. These formations of 'football communities' contrast to some commentaries which suggest a 'loss' or decline of community, and as such demonstrate how football can help to sustain community formations.[25]

Some supporters create and re-enact family and friendship relationships around their support for clubs, thereby using football as a catalyst to maintain important family and friendship ties. We have found very deep friendship groups that were initially established through football and which have persisted outside the frameworks of the game. Other fans who have moved away from the neighbourhoods, towns or cities where they grew up use football to reconnect with their childhood 'home' and heritage, increasingly through an engagement with 'virtual' or 'communicative' communities established via the internet and other new media. We have also found family units in which football is central to the maintenance of inter-generational familial contact; the glue that strengthens the social structure's bonds.

Implications: These connections can be facilitated by:

* ticketing policies, flexible pricing structures and approaches to stadium regulation which enable and encourage family and friendship groups to sit/stand together;

* creating the ability for families and friends to meet and congregate on match day;

* supporting local football heritage events and interactive web-sites; and

* the provision of players and club officials for neighbourhood supporters meetings etc.

6.2.5   Symbolic fan communities

For some time writers have attempted to move away from attempts to reduce the notion of 'community' to a geographically-based category linked to a specific locale and have instead stressed the role of 'symbols' in defining community boundaries.[26] In this sense football clubs can themselves be regarded as symbols around which the rituals of community and belonging are played out by fans. Indeed, the very idea of football clubs being representative of the place from which the team and fans come is often 'symbolised' or 'displayed' and reaffirmed through the spectacle of football support in terms of banners, songs, colours, web site chat rooms etc.

At the same time, the symbolism which surrounds football clubs can itself be contested and generates different meanings to different people in different historical periods. In this sense symbolic communal identifications need to be regarded as fluid and adaptable since clubs do move, change strip and attract new generations of supporters.

Implications: What this perspective allows us to do is to regard football supporter communities in ways that are not necessarily geographically determined. Yet whilst the symbolism of football is constantly shifting, its value lies in supporters' 'ownership', which both protects valued traditions whilst enabling constant creative regeneration. These strengths run the risk of being undermined by an over-commodification of supporter culture which relies on change for the sake of commercial benefit regardless of the symbolic values that supporters attach to their clubs.

[25] For a debate on this see Wellman, B. (1979) 'The Community Question: the intimate networks of East Yorkers', American Journal of Sociology, 84, 5, pp. 1201-1231.
[26] The classic text here is Cohen, A. (1985) The Symbolic Construction of Community (London: Tavistock).

At Chesterfield FC, where the club is now owned by Chesterfield Football Supporters' Society, the launch of a new 'The Club's the Hub' community partnership soon followed. This proposed initiative involves the development of strong links with local voluntary and statutory agencies to make a contribution in areas such as crime, health, education and neighbourhood renewal which are all linked to plans for the development of a new community-use oriented stadium. Supporters as well as community organisations and local residents are at the heart of the consultation processes being developed to determine the kind of facilities and resources that will be available at the new stadium.

6.3   Mobilising Fan Communities

There is already an extensive infrastructure of supporter organisations which contributes to the sustenance of fan communities. Some of these take the form of simple friendship groups, whilst others act more formally as agencies for the distribution and organisation of match tickets and travel, or as reactions to specific issues, campaigns or crises. A large number of these organisations exist within structures established by the clubs - such as official supporters' clubs - but others have been created entirely at the behest of fans and exist independently of (and sometimes in antagonism to) the club.

It is evident from our research that many supporters' groups and individual supporters want to have 'deeper' relationships with their football clubs that extend beyond their status as 'customers' or 'consumers of services' and their desire to be 'entertained'.[27] At all of the clubs we have followed, some supporters are attempting to satisfy this desire by engaging with supporters' clubs and consultative forums. However, there is a wide perception that formal supporters' organisations can be unrepresentative, whilst others are cynical about the transformative potential of customer-oriented consultation initiatives which are often little more than 'talking shops' between clubs and those fans who are able to access meetings. This unease relates to a belief that the relationship between supporters and their clubs represents

something more than a commercial transaction and that supporters 'investment' is not reflected in real influence over the club.

As such there is an opportunity, not only to acknowledge football supporters as 'communities', but also to engage them as community resources in the name of their football clubs, which can benefit both fan 'communities' and clubs. A number of areas of activity might be considered.

6.3.1   Whose club is it anyway?

Football club-supporter relations in England increasingly appear to be facing up to a watershed moment. On the one hand many supporters regard themselves as having become disenfranchised from their clubs - in two cases sections of support going so far as to break away and form 'new' clubs - whilst at the same time there are now four league clubs

The Charlton Valley Express service emerged as part of Charlton's Target 40,000 initiative which was developed by a committee of supporters' clubs and the club, and is seeking to expand the stadium to 40,000 seats. Whilst the development plans have yet to come to fruition, 1,600 supporters now pay £5 to use the coach service, 50% of whom were previously lapsed supporters. The wider Target 40,000 initiative has also led the club to develop a scheme with local house builders to provide house buyers with an invite to a Charlton match as a welcome to the area. Although this initiative has caused some concern, smaller clubs could investigate raising funds for community transport by doing sponsorship deals with transport companies, or liaising with fans to raise money to subsidise transport.

which are fully owned by their supporters and 40 British football clubs which have supporters' representatives on their boards.

In this light the trend towards greater supporter involvement in the running of clubs looks set to continue, with the Football League's stated commitment to 'enhance relationships between clubs and supporters', and Supporters Direct's efforts to:

[27] Blackshaw, T., Brown, A., Crabbe, T., Mellor, G. & Stone, C. (2004). Football and its Communities Interim Report Two: Mapping Case Study Clubs' Communities (Manchester: MIPC, Manchester Metropolitan University).

- Form Supporters' Trusts to ensure democratic, representative bodies for supporters at clubs.

- Ensure the democratic representation of Supporters' Trusts on football club boards.

- Encourage the ownership of shares in clubs by Supporters' Trusts and the pooling of individually-held shares under the influence of Trust.[28]

As such, and in line with government support elsewhere, the Football Foundation C&E Panel could do more to encourage the inclusion of fan communities in the running of clubs by:

- Working in partnership with Supporters Direct to promote fan ownership and representation at board level.

- Prioritising funding for clubs who demonstrate that they are building relationships which enhance the shared community of clubs and fans.

However, it also has to be recognised that supporters' trusts, like many football clubs, employ somewhat simplistic notions of 'community', and as such are in need of education and skills training just as much as football administrators and club officials. In light of this, we are encouraged by attempts to develop training for supporters' trusts by Supporters Direct, the Co-operative and Birkbeck Colleges and the Federation of Stadium Communities. This could be a starting point for Football Foundation C&E Panel intervention in this area, in conjunction with the FA and the leagues.[29]

The C&E Panel should also play a significant role in helping supporters themselves to become better organised. Beyond the issue of ownership and board representation taken up by Supporters Direct, supporters would benefit from the C&E Panel's assistance in the establishment of representative associations. Those groups showing a commitment towards good governance and an engagement with wider community concerns should be provided with assistance for start-up costs, publicity material, media relations, campaigning activity and delivering 'community' initiatives.

6.3.2 'We support our local team'

Despite evidence that those attending matches tend not to come from the immediate vicinity of clubs' stadia, the importance of supporting a 'local' team is well established in the lexicon of football fans. This appeal to locality is also readily recognised by many clubs, the FA Premier League's 'Attendance Working Party' and the Football League's wider aim to 'encourage more people to attend games at their local club'. In this regard there is clearly an opportunity to make better use of the kind of socio-economic and geographical data on season ticket holders, members and junior members that we have utilised in our research (see Section 8). Beyond the obvious marketing benefits of this kind of information, supporter location data could also be used to help with the planning of traffic policies, parking schemes and catering provision. It should also be employed to help develop local supporters' clubs, 'hubs' for club volunteers, and locations for 'community' interventions. Beyond the needs of local fans this information could also help to identify where 'club coach services' might be organised from to transport supporters to the ground, along the lines of Charlton's Valley Express service.

6.3.3 Getting to know the neighbours and fan volunteering

In terms of developing a fan-oriented community policy it is important to identify ways in which supporters, who often have a ready made empathy for the locales in which stadia are based, might themselves be engaged as resources to connect with local residents or needs. In this sense, rather than just being identified as 'customers', supporters might be mobilised as a volunteer force. Volunteering can take many forms and our research has revealed that supporters already take on a number of voluntary roles in support of their clubs, independently of official structures. Supporters are involved in writing, publishing and distributing fanzines and websites; they act as advocates for clubs, defending reputations and recruiting future supporters; they organise travel; and some engage in the more formal activity of establishing and running official and independent supporters' groups. As such the wealth of talent and goodwill that supporters have at their disposal might be better utilised, with supporters encouraged to take any number of roles in support of clubs' local neighbourhoods:

- Community advocates who speak up for what are often deprived and misrepresented inner-city areas.

[28] http://www.supporters-direct.org/.
[29] Coop College and Birkbeck College (2004) Building Sustainable Supporters Trusts: A training manual (London: Birkbeck College).

One such group of supporters, the Internet Blades, were moved to organise a football tournament in 2003 to raise funds for an appropriate charity after discovering a first team player had pulled out of the Sheffield United squad due to his wife being diagnosed with cancer. However, whilst it was anticipated that the club would give their full support to the project, initial approaches regarding use of the club's Academy as a venue were not met favourably and it took a great deal of effort to gain use of the pitches at a reduced rate. The initial lack of cooperation by the club was disappointing to the supporters involved who saw this as a great opportunity to commemorate both the player concerned and a former cult hero, similarly affected by cancer, in whose name the event was to be held.

Nevertheless the event went ahead on the back of the enthusiasm of key individuals who produced posters and programmes, radio publicity and sponsorship without much support from the club. Indeed, the recruitment of a team of former Sheffield United players, which played a key part in the success of the tournament, was itself achieved through personal contacts and the friendship networks of the ex-professionals themselves.

The tournament is now in its third year but its organisation continues to be reliant on the time, money and perseverance of a small number of volunteers whose devotion to Sheffield United inspires their dedication.

- Local ambassadors championing the work of clubs and liaising with residents where stadium development and relocation plans are being considered.

- Volunteer sports coaches and other deliverers, the development of which could include club-sponsored training schemes.

- Local historians tracing clubs' places in local civic history.
- Producing local 'fan' guidance on pubs, places of interest, where to park etc. for visiting fans.

- Volunteers engaged in neighbourhood renewal projects, litter picking and graffiti removal.

- Representatives on local boards of school governors.

- Fund-raisers.

- Mentors working with socially marginalised young people.

- Stadium tour hosts.

- Distributors of club information on 'community' activities as well as match information.

There are good examples of fans undertaking this kind of work at all levels of the game, ranging from volunteers leafleting local estates to provide match and contact information, to litter collection and the repairing of neighbours' fences. However, this kind of engagement is not evident enough.

Where clubs are centrally involved in the leadership of a project, the more conventional recruitment of volunteers might be aided by the creation of clear guidance on recruitment and management and the provision of incentives such as formal accreditation through programmes such as Millennium Volunteers,[30] the Open College Network[31] or the provision of match tickets. Whilst primarily targeted at the grassroots game, the Football Association's Volunteer Development programme and 'Football Workforce Handbook'[32] provide a basis for the development of guidance for professional football which might target the wealth of goodwill that supporters often have for their clubs.

Indeed, many supporters' groups already organise their own charitable projects in the name of both the club and its supporters, activities which might be better supported, facilitated and coordinated by clubs.

Where supporters are involved in such local charitable activity, clubs could provide advice and support in areas such as event management, interpersonal dynamics and community liaison. They might help supporters to seek better ways of spreading the organisational duties amongst themselves as well as setting realistic goals for what they can and want to achieve. It is also important though that supporters involved in such initiatives do not lose ownership as it is this which offers greater rewards. The example provided above also indicates the benefits that can result from a closer relationship between players and fans.

[30] http://www.millenniumvolunteers.gov.uk/.
[31] http://www.nocn.org.uk/.
[32] http://www.thefa.com/Grassroots/ClubDevelopment/Volunteers/.

6.3.4 In the crowd

At times players and fans appear to be in a kind of close communion - whether the goalscorer, high on adrenalin, rushing towards adoring fans in the stands who embrace their hero with equal abandon (now punishable by a yellow card); or the supporters' songs and adoption of player 'heroes'. It is somewhat perverse, therefore, that outside of the match-day situation connections between supporters and players are so limited, highly managed and de-personalised. Most contact comes through television appearances, magazine interviews and tabloid revelations.

From our observations and interviews it is clear that supporters place a far greater value on the opportunity to meet and converse with players, managers and club personnel in more informal environments. Although we recognise the work many players' do undertake, we feel that clubs should be encouraged to make players and staff more available and less remote from fans. The FA Premier League and the Football League could work with the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA) and the League Managers' Association (LMA) to consider the best distribution of players' contracted community hours so that more appearances at supporters' events could be guaranteed. Clubs should also explore ways in which players (particularly those not playing), coaching staff and fans can mix in more informal settings around match day. Directors could organise and attend informal discussion forums with supporters away from club venues and in 'on-line' environments. They could also, when possible, experience matches with their fans. For the benefit of younger supporters and those who live further a field, web-based question and answer sessions could be organised with different players, former heroes and club officials.

6.3.5 The People's Game

Football's power and its contribution to the country's social cohesiveness ultimately relate to the extent of its appeal across social and cultural boundaries. In terms of match attendance, our research suggests that supporters are currently being drawn primarily from more affluent areas. This includes young supporters attending games with parents who may themselves have become interested in the game when it

was more financially accessible. As such there is now a question mark over the game's capacity to continue engaging supporters from across the social spectrum: the very thing which currently sustains football's pre-eminent status amongst spectator sports.

Since match attendance, particularly at a young age, appears to be such a key element to generating supporters' lifelong attachments to the game[33], it may be necessary to engage in new forms of supporter community intervention in order to retain football's broad social and cultural appeal. Whilst much attention is currently restricted to the issue of ticket pricing and a perception of unexciting football, we would suggest that the issues need to be understood in a broader fashion and related more directly to the concept of 'community' and access as set out below.

> 'The Royal Opera House is to launch a £10 student standby ticket scheme with immediate effect. Supported by Travelex, which sponsors £10 tickets on Monday nights, the scheme will allow students to register on the web or via mobile phone and be contacted 24 hours in advance if there are tickets available. There will be at least 5,000 student standby tickets each season. They may include the best seats in the house, which will increase to £180 for non-students from the autumn.'[34]

6.3.5.1 Pricing

Whilst all of the clubs we have considered are currently addressing the social exclusion agenda to some degree, there is less evidence of policies to overcome exclusion, particularly on match day, for many economically disadvantaged communities.

The FA Premier League and the Football League need to provide a lead in this by working to ensure that supporter communities of all types are not excluded from the game on financial grounds. This should include the implementation of new guidance to encourage more inclusive ticketing policies. This might embrace:

- A commitment to stretching the range of seat prices and hospitality packages at both ends of the spectrum to

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[33] See Robson's work on 'Millwallism' and the 'Junior Lions' which demonstrates supporters' concerns for the future and an anxiety to preserve the routes, pathways or subcultural 'ladder' on which they themselves travelled. Robson, G. (2000) No One Likes Us, We Don't Care': The Myth and Reality of Millwall Fandom (Oxford: Berg), pp. 54-55.

[34] The Guardian, Thursday April 21, 2005.

ensure that all sections of society are able to access matches.

- The implementation of a ceiling on the lowest priced tickets.

- Provision of subsidised season tickets for local residents; half-season or flexible, limited match ticket books; discounted away season ticket books.

- Junior and young people's concessions should be made available throughout stadia.

- Support for a review of ground legislation in recognition that safe standing areas can allow for cheaper admission.

- A standard reduced rate of admission for students, the unwaged and senior citizens throughout stadia.

- Generalised admission price discounts and 'kids come free' promotions for less 'popular' games and cup matches not covered by season tickets.

- Encouraging ticket discount initiatives related to core sponsors' investment.

- The provision of a central standard football wide 0% or low interest rate season ticket repayment scheme.

Inventive, flexible and subsidised ticket structures can make even the most elite occasions available at cheap prices, as the example below illustrates. This initiative is targeted at providing discounts for students, but it could be applied to local residents, under 18s, or other groups and volunteers with which clubs work.

6.3.5.2 Excitement

Much has been said since the start of the 2005/06 football season about the perception of un-entertaining football and a lack of competitiveness in the FA Premier League. From the typologies of fan communities presented above it is clear that moments of high excitement generated by goals are a vital part of football's attractiveness and its capacity to generate feelings of 'community'. However, our research suggests that football supporters are not merely passive consumers of a product. Rather, part of the excitement that they experience and seek through football, both at the match and before and afterwards, is self generated and relates to the capacity for

The FCUM 'Buzz'

'I couldn't see how anything could possibly replace the buzz I used to get from supporting [Manchester] United.

One of my friends, however, has been mithering me to see for myself what FC United is all about…. After travelling en-masse on the tram to Radcliffe, where the game against Castleton Gabriels was being played, we headed off to the ground and the club house. No segregation, just lots of good natured chanting, banter and drinking and, in the middle of it all, taking good natured flack from the fans and joining in the singing, were 3 of the injured players who weren't in the team that day! What was this about? Football players mixing with the fans? And genuinely enjoying themselves?...

[We] headed off to the area behind the goal… and along with us came the players who had been in the bar. They spent the game on the terracing, with the fans, singing and chanting along with the rest of us…. [Afterwards] the buzz in the pub was excellent but then it went up several notches when all the players, the coaches, the kitman and the manager turned up!... And the players don't just sing along with the fans - they lead the singing, they chant about each other, they request their own songs over and over again. And that goes a little way towards describing a buzz which is still with me today. I made a hundred new mates yesterday and came home hoarse and exhausted but with the biggest smile on my face I've had for ages... And it leaves me more positive about football than I have been for a long, long time…. it wasn't just the session in the pub, the whole experience was a refreshing change from the modern Premiership experience. The crowd was a wonderful mix of men, women and children of all ages, all getting behind the team. There was no aggro and no heavy policing or stewarding. There were lots of colours but no jester hats!... And all this at 3pm on a Saturday, for the princely sum of £6!'.[35]

communal bonding, humour and collective expression, or 'atmosphere'.

[35] Linda Harvey aka 'Salford Lass' (2005), Red11 website
http://www.red11.org/mufc/devilsadvocate/articles/FCUnited.htm.

Creating a closer relationship between fans, players and club officials can help this process, as can better access to live football. However, supporters' capacities to engage in such behaviour, which is part of what has helped to generate their lifelong attachments to the game, have been undermined by stadium moves, all seater stadia (see Section 5), ground regulations, reconfigurations of seating and shifting kick-off times. As such the FA, the leagues and the Football Foundation C&E Panel need to work with clubs and supporters' groups to ensure that attempts to form collective bonds and generate 'atmosphere' are facilitated. Measures might include:

- Asking the government to reconsider the ban on standing areas in stadia at the highest levels of the game (in light of extensive best practice at brand new stadia elsewhere in Europe) to create more flexible spaces within stadia.

- Making more extensive use of unreserved seating in some areas of all seater stadia to encourage family and friendship communities.

- Reducing, where fans request it, the use of PA-based stadium 'theme tunes', 'jingles' and 'crowd noise'.

- Encouragement for supporters to generate backing for their team through appeals from players, managers and directors.

- Provision of support for materials and stadium access to enable fans to dress stadia with flags and banners; and involving fans in planning matches.

- A limit on the number of 'early' kick-offs and a minimum number of Saturday afternoon matches at each club.

The benefits for all clubs in ensuring there is a 'buzz' for fans to create and enjoy are clear as it plays a fundamental part in attracting new audiences, more transient (or 'tourist') fans and young people to the game, whatever the standard of football.

6.3.5.3 Match day access

In the context of the familiarly with full stadia in the Premiership for much of the last decade our research suggests a perception amongst 'non attenders' that match attendance must be planned well in advance. This militates against young people's preference for spontaneity in their leisure choices and the potential to attract 'walk up' fans on match days. Conversely, the shifting of kick off times to suit television companies makes it hard for regular attenders to make firm plans and to take advantage of 'apex' discounted travel prices.

As such the FA Premier League and the Football League need to work with clubs to ensure that match attendance is made more accessible. Measures might include:

- Cash, on-the-day admission at all grounds - whether at the gate or via remotely-situated ticket outlets.

- Particular match-day and cash-based payment schemes specifically aimed at regularly attracting groups of young people.

- Where appropriate, subsidised or free travel to away fixtures (as supported by a number of FA Premier League clubs during the 2004/05 season)

- Publication of televised football matches until 31st December to coincide with publication of the fixture lists, and no matches to be rearranged with less than 6 weeks notice after that date (exceptions to be allowed when teams move from the Champions League to the UEFA Cup).

6.3.5.4 Local access

Economic disadvantage, negativity towards the presence of stadia and match-day nuisances can limit access of local people to stadia. This means that they do not become familiar with the cultural 'rites of passage' or rituals of match-day attendance, and do not become participants at clubs.

As such the FA Premier League and the Football League need to work with clubs to ensure that stadia access is made more accessible. Measures might include:

- Linking local volunteering activity to the provision of free or discounted tickets.

- Providing ticket discounts to fan ambassadors/mentors willing to 'host' new fans from under-represented groups.

- Linking complimentary ticket provision and stadium visits

to achievements which relate to clubs' social inclusion activities.

- Discounts and preferential season ticket payment schemes for residential communities.

- Outreach workers on estates to distribute tickets through non-formal channels to the most hard to reach groups.

6.4 Summary of Recommendations

6.4.1 Central Government

- Continue and extend its support for fan ownership and representation on football club boards through Supporters Direct and encourage the inclusion of fan communities in the running of clubs.

- Insist on proper representation of supporters within governing structures at all levels of the game.

- Reconsider the ban on standing areas, including consideration of state of the art 'safe standing' schemes (see Section 5).

6.4.2 Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Ensure the representation of supporter interests on the C&E Panel.

- Work with Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters' Federation to encourage wider fan ownership and representation on football club boards.

- Provide financial, organisational and training support for representative supporters' groups.

- Provide guidance and financial support for digital fan and 'community' mapping exercises by clubs (see Section 8).

6.4.3 FA Premier League and Football League

- With the FA, establish a volunteer development programme for the professional game.

- With the FA, support and develop fan-led volunteering and community development programmes.

- Work with the PFA and LMA to ensure greater communication and access between players, managers and supporters.

- Work with clubs to develop more inclusive ticketing, atmosphere and match-day access policies.

- Support a review of ground legislation in order to allow safe standing areas.

- Provide guidance and financial support for digital fan and 'community' mapping exercises by clubs (see Section 8).

6.4.4 Football Clubs

- Work with Supporters Direct to encourage supporter investment, ownership and representation.

- Understand, consult on and acknowledge the role of supporters beyond their status as 'customers'.

- Conduct digital and qualitative 'supporter community' mapping exercises to understand better their supporter communities and develop new ways of working with them around community issues.

- Include fans in preparations for match days, allowing them the freedom to create the 'spectacle'.

- Ensure greater communication and access between directors and supporters in informal and open-access environments.

- Increase player commitments to attend supporters' meetings, social functions and other informal spaces on match days and non-match days.

- Provide organisational and material support for fan-led volunteering and community development programmes.

- Support fan ambassador/mentor programmes.

- Develop more inclusive ticketing, atmosphere and match-day access policies.

7.1 New Agendas

As we have seen, the community work of English professional football clubs has focused historically on those groups and individuals who have existing relationships with clubs through their proximity to stadia or personal affiliations to the teams that play in them. Increasingly, football clubs, like so many other institutions, have been called upon to make a contribution beyond their immediate domain and to engage with wider social policy agendas which might previously have been regarded as outside of their remit. This section is, therefore, about football engaging and helping to develop sections of society which are now often defined as being 'socially excluded'.

The government's Social Exclusion Unit defines social exclusion as:

> what happens when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdowns.[36]

The breadth of this definition means that it is often difficult to be precise about who is socially excluded and who is not. In the context of this report, it is useful to interpret social exclusion in terms of those sections of society which are usually referred to as being the most difficult to reach. These include certain black and minority ethnic communities; truants; looked after children; young adults with offending histories; Class A drug users; travelling communities; refugees; prisoners; people with physical and learning disabilities; and people with mental health problems.

Presented with this challenge football is inevitably faced with a steep learning curve which will entail organisational changes, new partnerships and a willingness to embrace the sometimes obscure vocabulary of the 'social inclusion' agenda. Whilst some have argued that it is not football's job to address social problems that are not of its making, the Football Foundation is testament to the game's recognition of the wider demands for public-private partnerships in the field of sport-based social policy. Ultimately the government's continued investment in this partnership will be secured not simply by the improvement and extension of access to football facilities, but by football's capacity to offer something beyond the reach of more conventional government agencies.

Our research has shown that the community arms of football clubs have increasingly shown a degree of commitment to engaging with a range of social groups which is unparalleled in sport more generally. Many football clubs, and especially their FitC schemes, have undertaken a great deal of widening access work over the past 15-20 years with groups including girls and women, people with disabilities, and black and minority ethnic populations.

At each of our case study clubs we have observed a wide range of activities targeted at different groups.[37] We have also seen real commitment from the staff involved in these

[36] Social Exclusion Unit website: http://www.socialexclusionunit.gov.uk.
[37] Mellor, G., Brown, A., Blackshaw, T., Crabbe, T. & Stone, C. (2003) Football and its Communities Interim Report One: Baseline Analysis of Case Study Football and Community Initiatives (Manchester: MIPC, Manchester Metropolitan University).

activities to those who they have sought to engage. However, the style of intervention has, in the main, been limited to:

- conventionally structured coaching courses;
- children's and schools programmes; and
- formulaic anti-racism, health, and anti-drugs educational work often tied to existing wider national programmes.

As such there continue to be a range of social groups who typically remain outside of these intervention frameworks. This is most evident in relation to those more 'difficult' to engage groups outlined above who are often the target of government social policies. Football needs to work with these 'harder-to-reach' groups if it is to demonstrate to government and others the contribution that the game can make to the nation's wider well-being and social cohesion.

Where football clubs have made attempts to 'consult' or engage with groups beyond the more obvious football club constituencies the approach has been rather institutionalised and not necessarily reflective of social diversity. Consultation through organised structures and formal meetings tends to magnify the voice of, often unrepresentative, community spokespeople who claim to talk 'on behalf' of a heterogeneous wider constituency, rather than actually providing avenues into those people's lives. Whilst such representatives provide commitment, support and a ready means of consultation, community and residents' organisations often have very low participation levels and those least likely to be involved are often those who are the most socially excluded – those we are concerned with here.

The principal challenge for clubs is to move beyond a focus on contact with the 'socially included' and occasional partnerships with local authority education departments, individual schools, the police and other traditional sources of authority. Although these certainly have an important place in 'community' activities, evidence of best practice in the sports-based social inclusion sector[38] suggests that interventions associated with such agencies can sometimes prove alienating to those people who are defined as being difficult to engage.

The attraction of football and sport to those concerned with making contact with people who have drifted to the margins of society is that it stands out from more conventional sources of contact (such as the police and schools) on the basis of its own intrinsic appeal. In the course of conducting sport-based community development work, a coach who is linked to a professional football club has the kind of credibility of which most local authority sports development workers can only dream. In the face of the potential for suspicion, 'coolness' and hostility from individuals, the professional football club badge provides a sense of 'glamour' and promise which can 'buy' an introduction: an opportunity to engage from which all manner of possibilities can emerge.

In particular the kind of non-institutional, street- or estate-based engagement - often focusing on building relationships with individuals rather than attracting large numbers of people to a particular project - can be helped through an outreach worker's connection with a professional football club. This kind of work is essential if football is to engage harder to reach groups and if it is to be able to evidence its 'power' to deliver on new social inclusion agendas.

[38] Crabbe, T. et al (2005) Getting to Know You: Engagement and Relationship Building. First Interim Positive Futures Case Study Research Report: http://www.positivefuturesresearch.org.uk/index.php/Section15.html.

7.2   A New Approach for Football

With particular reference to the increasing emphasis on the need to work with 'hard to reach' and 'at risk' young people in estate and street-based settings, we have identified a need for a more strategically informed, pro-active and flexible approach. Rather than focusing on the provision of programmes of activity for their own sake, as is common with many FitC schemes, such an approach should be concerned to provide opportunities for young people to learn something they think is worthwhile by:

• Making direct contact in young people's own neighbourhoods using local facilities and credible and competent staff.

• Building trust and mutual respect between staff and young people through the use of flexible, non-judgemental delivery styles while maintaining a sense of responsibility among participants.

• Maintaining long-term, non time-bounded programmes of delivery, rather than the more usual fixed-term courses or schemes.

• Introducing a range of allied activities, training and employment opportunities as relationships develop.

• Enabling culturally appropriate local opportunities for personal development to emerge on the basis of what engages effectively.[39]

To date, where clubs have successfully engaged marginalised groups through such approaches this work has often been led by partner agencies with a particular expertise, who act 'under license' from the football club. This kind of partnership approach or relationship is common to other areas of football club practice such as stadium design and the production and marketing of merchandise, where outside experts are often brought in. However, unlike these contexts, where the club tends to be centrally involved, in relation to the more challenging aspects of community work, enthusiastic partner agencies are sometimes seen as a means of off-loading responsibility.

Our research and our wider body of work suggests that a better alternative might be for clubs to establish semi-autonomous charitable arms or independent community organisations, as discussed in Section 3, to lead their social programmes. Such bodies:

• can determine their own aims, objectives and strategies;

• are in a much stronger position to attract additional funding; and

• can establish credible partnerships with a range of agencies that are not familiar with the everyday approaches and protocols of professional football clubs.

We have recommended that, with support and strategic direction from the leagues, the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel, a new network of specialist organisations based at and tied to professional football clubs could be created with the capacity to deliver innovative programmes of work, whilst also being able to draw down funding from other partners. The FA Premier League and the Football League could aid and encourage the development of such organisations at their member clubs in many ways, including by targeting funding at schemes of work which are directed at the most marginalised groups in society (see Section 3).

Within this structure, football programmes would ideally form just one element of a broader approach which has the capacity to identify and engage young people, whilst also providing 'exit routes' for them in order that their engagement does not come to an abrupt halt: something which can be damaging for the young people involved. It is important to stress here that it is the quality and ongoing nature of engagement with individuals, rather than the amount of young people who go through a scheme, which should be the measure of its success. Within this approach what is important is the development of a more routine involvement in local neighbourhoods which provides pathways that enable young people to fulfil their potential or explore other avenues for personal development. This is reliant on long-term engagement which avoids the damage that can be caused by well-publicised short-term programmes which raise levels of excitement and expectation, only to ultimately disappoint those engaged with them.

Equally, it is important to recognise that programmes which are planned in too much detail or are based upon external models which are not appropriate to local conditions may come unstuck. Successful interventions with hard-to-reach disadvantaged groups are then likely to:

- be long-term and open ended;
- be professional but flexible; and
- recognise that achievements will be incremental and uneven.

In order to deliver this type of work, clubs must be much more prepared to take risks, or employ partner agencies who can do so, and be willing to accept failure as part of a learning experience.

7.3 Sport-Based Community Interventions

Alongside our research into the relationships between professional football and its various communities, we have also been engaged in other extensive research into wider programmes of sport-based social intervention targeted at disadvantaged young people. One of the initiatives we have analysed is the Positive Futures programme. The learning from this study will be of particular interest to the Football Foundation because of its own involvement as a programme partner. Positive Futures also heavily uses football as an engagement tool and counts several professional football clubs as partners in the delivery of local projects.

Our research suggests[40] that whilst sport- and activity-based social interventions often attempt to 'divert' young people away from involvement in crime or 'anti-social behaviour', Positive Futures operates upon a modus operandi which is in stark contrast to this approach. Positive Futures has drawn on models of best practice from different fields - including youth work, sports development and coaching, social work and drugs education – and has combined these creatively in order to approach young people in a way that takes on their lives holistically. In terms of the delivery of effective sport-based social interventions the research has demonstrated:

- The need for credible and flexible delivery agencies.

- The importance of pragmatic 'outreach' approaches towards engagement rather than a focus on receiving agency referrals.

- A preference for the use of local facilities in order to facilitate the transformation of places where there is 'nothing to do' into spaces with 'something to do'.

- The importance of utilising the 'glamour' and 'kudos' associated with football.

- The need for more imaginative approaches which defy conventional classifications of sport to engage female participants.

- The need to identify realisable goals for young people which capture the imagination.

- The strong identification amongst participants with members of staff and former participants who share the young people's socio-cultural backgrounds, alongside the need for a range of skills needed to deliver the work

- The importance of building relationships with young people who have not responded well to more authoritarian approaches on the basis of the mutual trust and understanding which derives from problem sharing; the acceptance of criticism; co-operation and sharing of advice; consistent friendly acknowledgment outside of the project; and accessibility.

- The importance of long-term engagement and the avoidance of short-term activity programmes with no clear progression routes.[41]

Such an approach can be both risky and exciting as one of the pioneers of football's forays into the worlds of the 'socially excluded', Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme, found when they took on a Positive Futures project in the East End of London in March 2000.

On the back of such boldness, projects will become better at finding effective ways of working in partnership. This in itself can create greater sustainability, as the work becomes embedded in interactive networks of delivery, enabling clubs and independent community organisations to meet the needs of other agencies and attract further funding.

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[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

Whilst LOCSP's work on 'the Gazza', a notorious sprawling housing estate in Barking in East London, goes under the banner of Positive Futures to its funders and those working within the arenas of urban regeneration and social exclusion, to those who live on the estate it is just an amateur football team, the **Gascoigne Estate Crew**.

When the coaches first ventured on to the estate five years ago they found a familiar picture of neglect, suspicion and decay. They freely admit that they turned up without much of a plan as to how to tackle the area's problems, but they did have the advantage of being able to arrive wearing a professional football club tracksuit and carrying a bag of balls. In the early stages that was enough to spark the curiosity of the youngsters huddling outside the estate's parade of shops. As time went on, though, the coaches' abilities to become part of the fabric of the area through the consistency of their presence made the difference. As one of the coaches recalls:

'I'd just been going down there for a few nights and wandered round, I saw there was a hard play area that had seen better days, but you could use it. The kids started askin' who I was and I just asked them if they were interested in football and dished out a few leaflets. I told them I'd be there on Monday night, and they were like, 'Yeah, yeah, all right' and I knew they were thinking I'd be gone before anything got going, but there were a dozen or so there the next Monday and we started to suss each other out and then we just kept going, rain or shine, Mondays, Wednesdays, weekends.'

Since then, in the face of the staff's relentless commitment and organisational thoroughness, over 200 youngsters have become involved in the project, several of whom are now employed by LOCSP as sessional coaches and project workers themselves. Many others have gone on to play in organised teams at various levels of the football pyramid, up to and including Football League standard.

7.4   Summary of Recommendations

7.4.1   Central Government

- Introduce much greater coordination and 'joined up' policy approaches to the delivery of sport-based social inclusion schemes.

- On the basis of this coordination, continue financial support for football and sport-based interventions which contribute to the social inclusion agenda.

7.4.2   Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Support greater education and skills training on the nature of social exclusion and appropriate means of using football to tackle it (see Section 8).

- Support the creation of independent community organisations at clubs (see Section 3).

- Target funding at new, innovative agencies and/or programmes that deal with both the causes and consequences of social exclusion.

- Target funding at agencies who are working successfully with the most 'hard-to-reach' sections of society including certain black and minority ethnic communities; truants; looked after children; young adults with offending histories; Class A drug users; travelling communities; refugees; prisoners; people with physical and learning disabilities; and people with mental health problems.

7.4.3   FA Premier League, Football League and FA

- Support greater education and skills training on the nature of social exclusion and appropriate means of using football to tackle it (see Section 8).

- Support the creation of independent community organisations at clubs (see Section 3).

7.4.4   Football Clubs

- Actively consider the benefits of establishing independent community organisations which work at arm's length from clubs to deliver on wider social policy agendas.

- Establish schemes of work in a range of housing estate and neighbourhood settings in order to develop credibility and entry-level access to residents.

- Develop long-term, flexible and open-ended programmes, linked to other services, which have identified exit routes.

- Provide a variety of individually tailored pathways that enable participants to fulfil their potential or explore other avenues for personal development.

8.0 Skills and Knowledge

8.1 Context

Football at all levels has some very highly skilled personnel working on community development initiatives. However, in keeping with other sectors, if English football is to successfully embrace the new approaches outlined in this report and make a step change in relation to new social agendas, it will need to identify and help meet a wide array of training and education needs across its workforce. Governing bodies, leagues, and individual club hierarchies will not be able to affect significant macro-level organisational changes in football without at least an informal retraining which changes attitudes about what the game can deliver in terms of social justice. Similarly, practical issues such as how to build partnerships; how to use stadia and facilities for community benefit; how to understand and embrace supporters as 'communities'; and how to deliver programmes of engagement with socially excluded groups cannot be addressed without significant new forms of education and training.

In addition to addressing potential 'skills gaps', English football also needs to develop a distinctive sense of how the game can engage its various communities and why it should do so. If this culture change is not created, any discussion about the development of new frontline skills becomes almost irrelevant. A twin strategy is needed, therefore, which will:

1. produce and disseminate new forms of knowledge about football's potential relationships with its communities;

2. enable these forms of knowledge to be acted upon through accessing a range of new skills and competency training.

In Section 2 of this report we recommended that a key future task for the English football authorities is to develop new levels of knowledge and understanding with regard to the game's engagement with communities and new social agendas. This is an important mission in its own regard, but is especially vital as a precursor to the development of new forms of skills training for English football. Simply put, high levels of knowledge and understanding must underpin skills in any sector before they can be effective. If skills are not based on such solid foundations, then it is likely that they will be applied to inconsistent or poorly conceived schemes of work, or will be wasted altogether. A comparison with the education sector is instructive here. A teacher may have excellent skills in terms of managing a classroom, gaining control and dealing with potential troublemakers. However, they may still be a poor teacher if they do not have the requisite knowledge and understanding of their given academic field. They must have a clear understanding of the subject at hand before they can use their delivery skills to inspire and educate others.

In light of this, we recommend that the English football authorities should identify various methods that can educate and inspire football club officials and wider industry personnel. This will include a focus on senior management and should seek to create a shared philosophy across football

about how the game should behave towards the people with which it comes into contact and those it currently excludes. This is a long-term task which will require a variety of on-going and constantly developing approaches.

8.2   The Need for Delivery 'Skills'

The research team has encountered both highly-skilled and well-trained staff throughout English football who are professional in their approach to 'community' engagement. For example, we have observed large numbers of themed educational sessions targeted at young people and delivered by coaching staff which have been genuinely engaging. Some staff have an almost intuitive understanding of the issues they are asked to address, and others have excellent inter-personal skills which enable them to connect with young people regardless of the type of session being delivered. We have also encountered a genuine desire to learn more about new social agendas and how football might engage with them.

However, this desire also hints at a sense of unease amongst both delivery staff and managers about a new need to understand different ways of working and different agendas. This is not surprising. The vast majority of frontline community staff we encountered during the research have professional backgrounds as football players or coaches. Few, if any, have any professional training or experience in youth, health, education, or social work despite being regularly required to deliver educational sessions to young people which aim to address a wide range of important social problems.

Some 'community' staff cope better with a lack of training than others. However, if football clubs are to be taken seriously as direct providers of programmes of work which are designed to address social exclusion agendas they will need assistance in accessing staff development programmes. This needs to include training to enable staff who are not in 'community departments' to understand the impacts their work might have on clubs' different communities, as discussed in Section 3.

8.3   Provision of Training

The majority of training needs faced by English football can be met potentially by the new National Occupational Standards and 'skills' programmes which are being developed as part of the government's current commitment to a 'skills revolution' across British industry. In 2003, the government launched the white paper 21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential, in which it charged new Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) with responsibility for influencing skills development across a range of sectors. One of these SSCs is SkillsActive which has responsibility for the sport and leisure sector. Others include Skills for Health, Skills for Justice, and Skills for Care and Development.

To understand where skills gaps in English football can be met through existing provision, we recommend that the FA Premier League, the Football League, the FA and their member clubs work in partnership with the various SSCs and appropriate training providers. Through this process, they will be able to identify relevant skills programmes based upon new National Occupational Standards. The leagues, the FA and clubs should in the first instance focus on the work of SkillsActive, but should also liaise with other SSCs, such as those listed above, which can provide guidance on a range of issues which are being faced by sport-based programmes, but as yet are not central to the remit of SkillsActive.

In terms of the work of SkillsActive and the other SSCs, we suggest that football clubs will benefit enormously from new workforce quality initiatives and training programmes which have been developed in response to the relevant National Occupations Standards. For example, the government's Positive Futures programme has recently analysed and informed the competencies provided by a number of SSCs, and selected those elements which are relevant to the work of frontline community sport workers and managers. The Positive Futures Workforce Quality Initiative has succeeded in getting various SSCs to work collaboratively (Skills for Health, Skills for Justice, SkillsActive, etc.) in order to create workers who are competent in the generic skills needed to support marginalised young people. The following units/topics are all covered in the Positive Futures Workforce Quality Initiative:

• How to apply for external funding for sport and physical activity programmes.

• How to lead and motivate volunteers.

• How to promote equality and diversity in sport and physical activity.

• How to contribute to the management and prevention of abusive and aggressive behaviour.

• How to recognise indications of substance misuse and refer individuals to specialists.

• How to facilitate community-based sport and physical activity.

Positive Futures, in association with SkillsActive, has also been involved in the development of two new specific qualifications at NVQ Level 3 – Certificate in Community Sports Work and Managing Community Sport – which are covered by the unit 'Facilitate Community Based Sport'. We recommend that a range of football club staff – and particularly those engaged in community intervention work – could benefit from taking these courses.

Whilst the New National Occupational Standards and associated training courses will meet many of the training needs of English football, it is inevitable that some gaps will remain. It may be that National Occupational Standards will have been identified by SSCs for which there are not appropriate training courses for English football, or in other cases it is possible that relevant National Occupational Standards will not have been identified at all. To deal with such instances, we recommend that the leagues, the FA and clubs should work with the Football Foundation C&E Panel in order that it can take responsibility for developing a coherent response. We recommend that when gaps are identified the C&E Panel should:

• liaise with and support skills/training providers who can develop new training courses; and

• enter into dialogue with relevant SSCs in order to influence the creation of new National Occupational Standards.

The C&E Panel can also facilitate the development of skills across English football by insisting that funding applicants have certain competencies and skills at the appropriate levels. Whilst it may be unreasonable to expect all funding applicants to meet specified skills levels when they first make applications, the Panel could help to develop applicants' skills by:

• Investigating skills gaps with applicants in the early stages of the funding process and insisting that these are met during the life of the project/programme of work.

• Working with applicants on job descriptions to ensure that they include relevant skills/competencies.

• Monitoring and evaluating skills training and other forms of staff development during and after projects.

In addition to these skills strategies, the leagues, the FA and the Football Foundation C&E Panel can also help to develop clubs' approaches to community engagement and development by creating a range of tools/methods which promote successful/alternative ways of working. The FA Premier League and the Football League already do this to some degree through their Corporate and Community Affairs and Customer Strategy/Services departments. These departments and others can further develop this approach through the regular provision of:

• Best practice guides
• Web-based resources
• Regular national conferences
• Regional/local seminars
• Specific development workshops which can address important issues when they arise.

In all of this work, the football authorities should seek to identify relevant partner agencies who can support and fund skills development. Outside of football, a potential key partner is the Learning and Skills Council, whilst inside the game the key partner is FFE&VTS. This is a training organisation which

City of Leeds Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2000
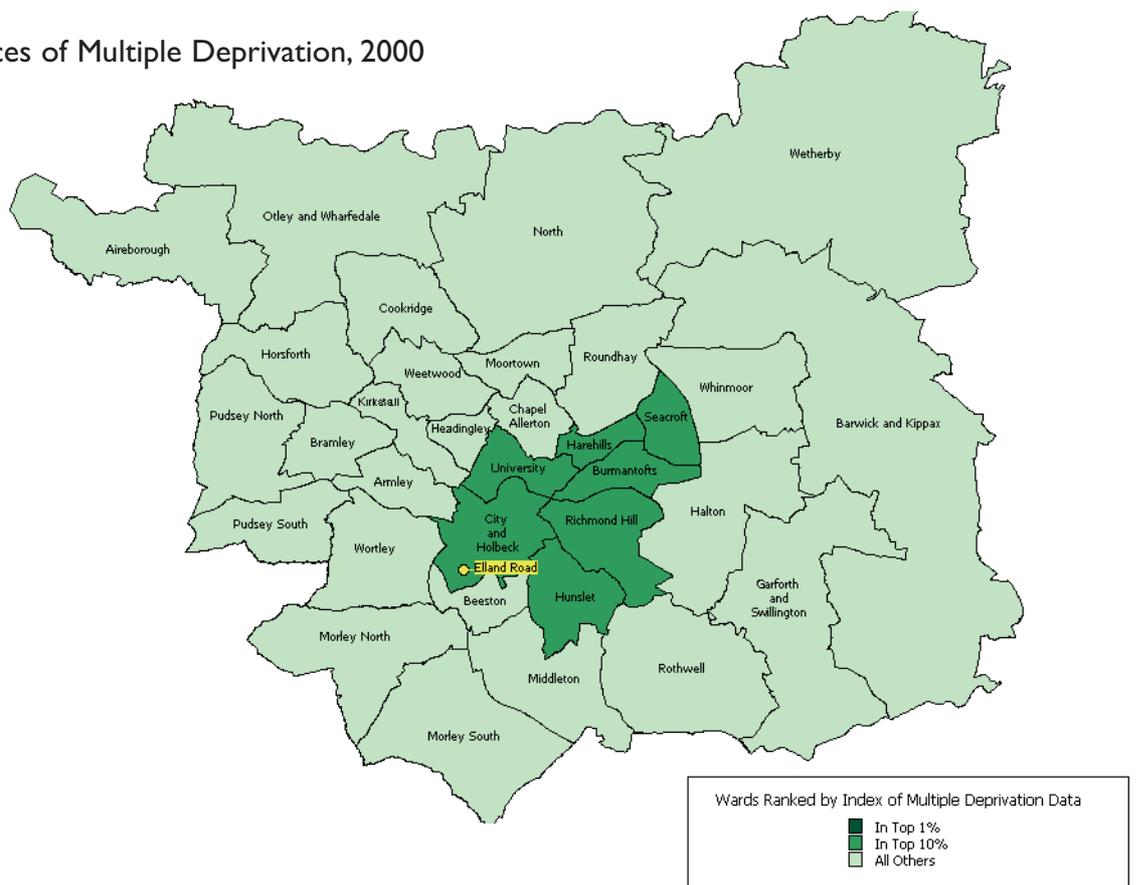
currently distributes over £500,000 per year to football clubs across England for community development purposes. We recommend that FFE&VTS works with its trustees to develop more strategic ways in which this money could be used to address skills gaps, especially amongst existing FitC staff. The long-term value of this for clubs (in terms of their ability to bid for grants and develop new areas of work) will be far in excess of the estimated £6,000 per year that they currently receive to support their FitC activities.

## 8.4 Developing Knowledge About Clubs' 'Communities'

In addition to identifying and addressing skills gaps across English football, the FA Premier League, the Football League and the Football Foundation C&E Panel also have another important role in developing knowledge and understanding of the game's multiple communities. If clubs are not familiar with the groups with which they are supposed to be engaging it is unlikely that they will succeed in building strong relationships with them. This is especially true if clubs are attempting to make social interventions. Before clubs can do this, they need to know the specific, local social problems and challenges that 'their' communities may be facing. It is not enough to assume that a community may need one type of intervention or another. Clubs need knowledge and understanding of their communities and empathy with them if they are to produce useful programmes of work. Information on how to gather this information can be provided by the leagues and the Football Foundation C&E Panel, both in terms of education and training and the provision of financial support.

City of Leeds Concentrations of Black and Minority Ethnic Groups, Census 2001
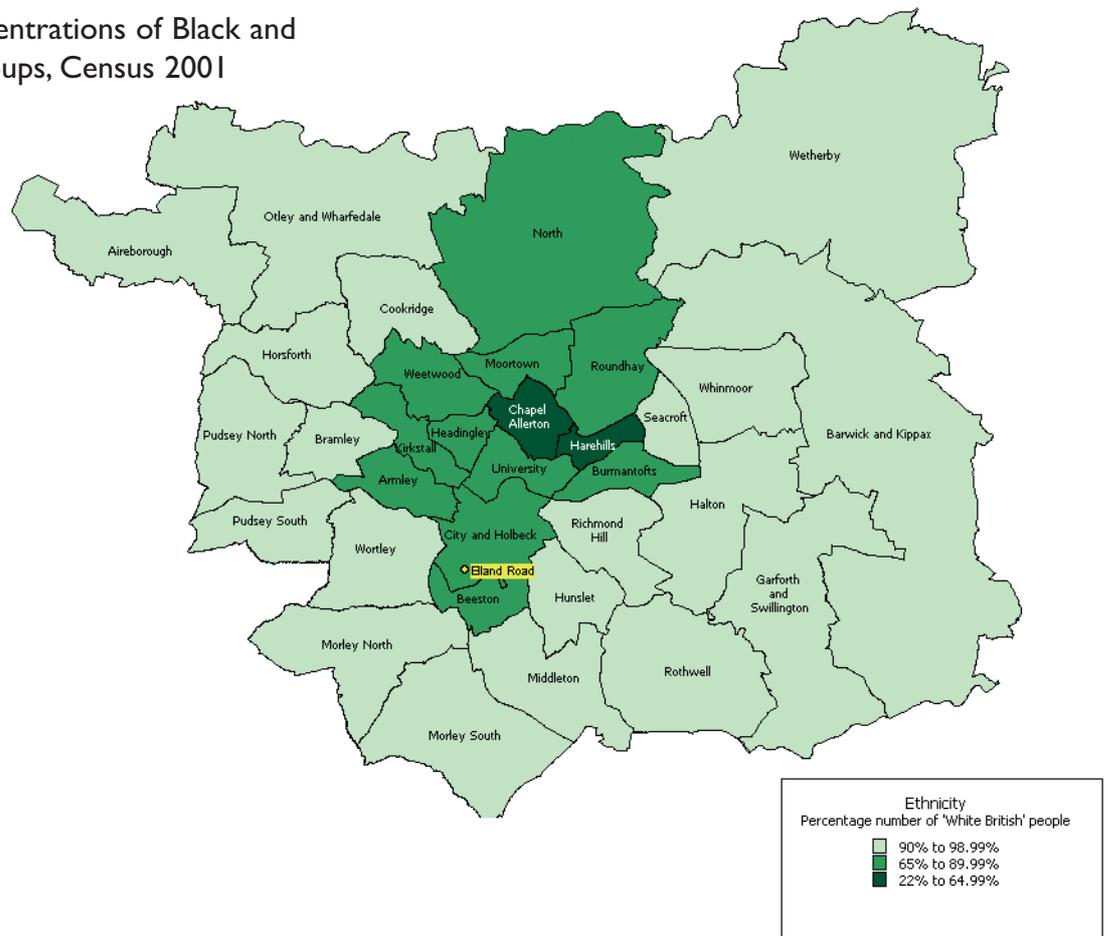
Leeds United Members,
City of Leeds, 2003/04

Count of LUFC Members 2003-04
By Leeds Wards

- 35 to 43 (5)
- 26 to 35 (7)
- 18 to 26 (8)
- 9 to 18 (10)
- 1 to 9 (3)
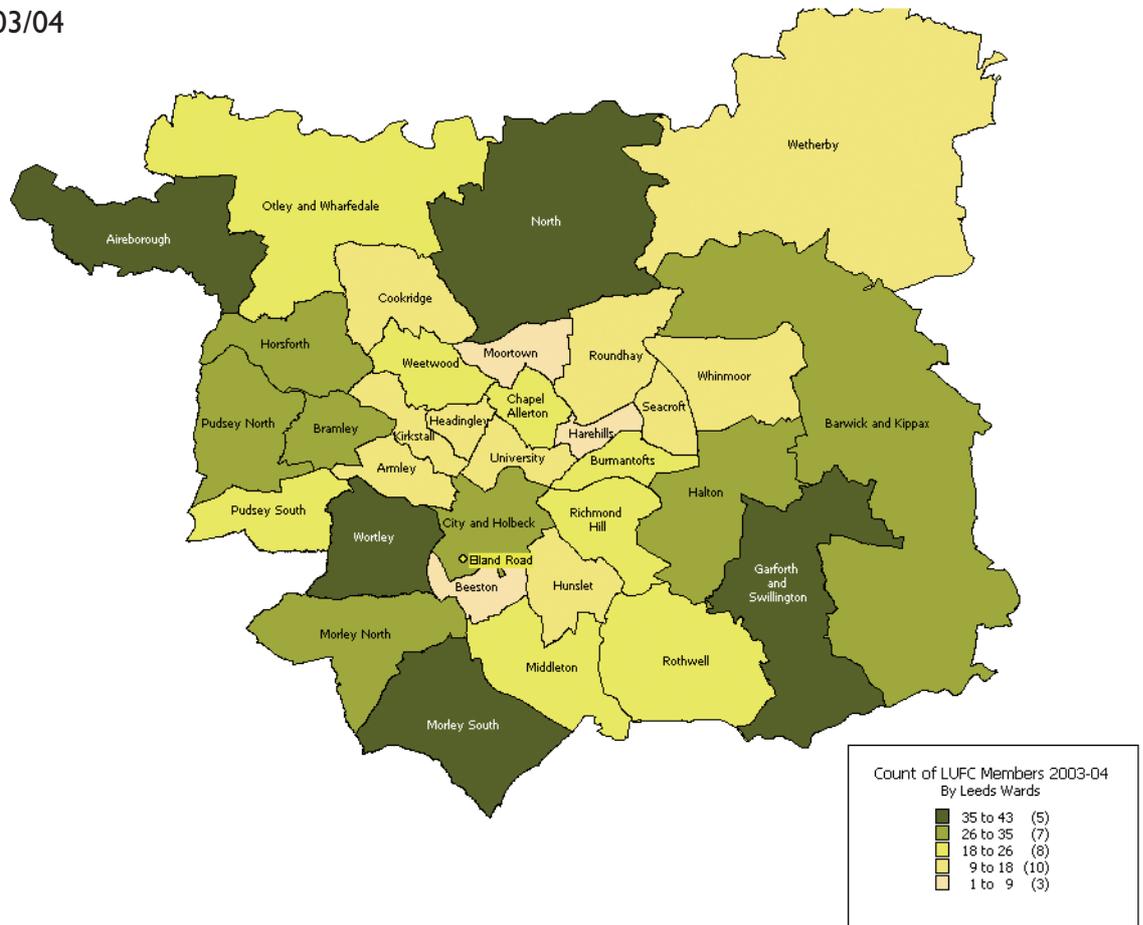
At the outset of this project, the research team sought to identify the case study clubs' various 'communities' (as defined by the team) and gather detailed information on them. As stated earlier, the four main types of 'community' identified at the three clubs were:

- residential communities
- business communities
- 'communities of disadvantage'
- supporter communities.

To gather information on these groups we used a range of tools. Details on residential communities and communities of disadvantage were gathered via official government statistics including the National Census and the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). Details on business communities were collated via 'business maps' of the areas in which the clubs'

stadia are located, and other exercises including the gathering of information on club sponsors and pitch-side advertisers. Information on supporter communities was gathered from club databases on season ticket holders, members and junior members which was mapped digitally by political ward. We compared these maps to others which contained national census and deprivation statistics in order that we could develop a basic geographic and socio-economic profile of the case study clubs' supporters.

In addition to these exercises we also simply went out and spoke to members of the clubs' various communities. We attended residents' meetings, knocked on people's doors, went into places of work, attended 'community events', attended supporters' meetings and spoke to fans on match days to gather important information on the individuals who

make up clubs' communities. These exercises were vital as they provided 'on the ground' accounts of people's lives and how they are or could be affected by their relationships with clubs.

We recommend that all football clubs should engage in exercises such as these to understand their communities better. The detailed mapping exercises outlined above will provide clubs with invaluable information about all of their multiple communities, and will help them to plan interventions and other programmes of work. Similarly, informal 'on the ground' exercises will enable communities to tell football clubs what they want from them, and also provide excellent opportunities for clubs to engage with people in a face-to-face rather than institutional manner.

Many of these exercises are not difficult to conduct. Going out and meeting people does take time and energy, but both would be well spent. Basic socio-economic information can be collected in a relatively straightforward manner from the government's National Statistics website. More in depth, qualitative analysis may require clubs using professional researchers, or involve partnerships with colleges and universities, and if clubs do need guidance and information on other issues, the leagues in conjunction with the Football Foundation C&E Panel could easily provide it. A simple information leaflet distributed to clubs which explains the range of information which can be collected and how this information is useful could be developed at relatively little expense, although further funding may be required to engage professionals.

In the area of digital mapping clubs may require significant additional assistance. The software required to map large amounts of data (such as supporter databases) can be expensive and relatively complicated to use. It would be useful, therefore, if the Football Foundation C&E Panel and the leagues supported a partner organisation to provide custom-built maps and analysis of data for football clubs at their request, or created specific funds to which clubs could bid to undertake this work. The potential value of this information to individual clubs in terms of understanding and responding to communities' needs would make it an important and worthwhile investment. Furthermore, if such

exercises form part of ongoing developmental work, they can help clubs to access further funding and to develop more relevant/useful schemes of work.

8.5 Summary of Recommendations

8.5.1 Central Government

- Sector Skills Councils should work closely with the relevant football authorities to identify how National Occupational Standards and associated training courses can meet skills needs across English football.

8.5.2 Football Foundation C&E Panel

- Help to develop new levels of knowledge and understanding across all levels of English football with regard to the game's obligations and commitments to its communities.

- Design various methods to educate and inspire staff at all levels of the game about the possibilities of engagement with communities and new social agendas.

- Where there are gaps:

  - Liaise with and support skills/training providers who can develop new training courses; and/or

  - enter into dialogue with relevant SSCs in order to influence the creation of new National Occupational Standards

- Help develop skills with funding applicants by:

  - Investigating skills gaps with applicants in the early stages of the funding process and insisting that these are overcome during the life of the project/programme of work.

  - Working with applicants on job descriptions in order that they include relevant skills/ competencies at the correct levels.

  - Monitoring and evaluating skills training and other forms of staff development during and after projects.

- Develop a range of tools/methods which can promote community-focused ways of working at clubs.
- Produce user-friendly information on how clubs can gather key information on their 'communities'.
- Support a partner agency or develop funding streams which can provide custom-built 'community' maps and data analysis for football clubs.

8.5.3 FA Premier League, Football League and FA

- Help to develop new levels of knowledge and understanding across all levels of English football with regard to the game's obligations and commitments to its communities.

- Design various methods to educate and inspire staff at all levels of the game about the possibilities of engagement with communities and new social agendas.

- Work in partnership with various Sector Skills Councils and training organisations to provide guidance on the skills and competencies that football clubs require to respond to new social agendas.

- Where gaps in provision are evident, work with the Football Foundation in order that it can take responsibility for developing a coherent response.

- Develop a range of tools/methods which can promote community-focused ways of working at clubs.

- Work in partnership with organisations such as the Learning and Skills Council and FFE&VTS in order to identify ways in which they can support and fund skills development.

- Produce user-friendly information on how clubs can gather key information on their 'communities'.

- Support a partner agency which can provide custom-built 'community' maps and data analysis for football clubs.

8.5.4 Football Clubs

- Acknowledge and identify skills gaps amongst their staff.

- Make available staff time and/or funding wherever possible for additional staff development.

- Develop detailed knowledge and understandings of their communities through digital mapping and other exercises.

9.0 Next Steps

The Football Foundation C&E Panel has taken an important step in commissioning this research, the primary aim of which is to provide it with a new understanding and vision of how to engage with football's different 'communities'. We recognise the important steps English football has made in attempting to engage various communities over the last two decades and the amount of work undertaken.

However, our research, and even the commissioning of it, recognises the need for English football to develop new ways of working which will help it to:

- Re-conceive who football's communities are and undertake steps to understand them better.

- Engage more successfully with new social agendas and in particular community engagement work aimed at reducing social exclusion.

- Provide a new framework in which this important work can be carried out.

What follows are the immediate next steps that we feel the C&E Panel, the government, the football authorities and clubs need to consider in order to develop football's engagement with its communities. These are not substitutes for the recommendations made earlier, but are first moves which could start the process of facilitating change. We encourage all parties to thoroughly consider the implementation of this report's recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

9.1   Strategic Frameworks

Central government:

- Ensure better coordination of sport-based social inclusion interventions across government departments.

Football Foundation:

- Ensure the implementation of new monitoring and evaluation procedures for projects funded by the C&E Panel.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Review its aims and objectives and establish new funding priorities.

- Hold a meeting to consider this report and the restructuring it recommends.

- Publish the report as a public document.

- Launch the report at a national conference.

- Meet with key partners to discuss the implications of the report and its future implementation.

- Organise the wider dissemination of the research and its recommendations through the media, websites, regional seminars and workshops for clubs.

9.2   Club Organisation

Central government:

- Provide additional resources to the Charities Commission and other agencies to provide technical advice and training initiatives for developing independent community organisations at football clubs.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Make funds available to support the creation and development of independent community organisations.

FA Premier League, Football League and FA:

- Explore partnerships with the Charities Commission and other agencies in order to provide guidance and advice on the establishment of independent community organisations at clubs.

- Develop different models for club organisation.

- Hold meetings with Football in the Community, the Professional Footballers' Association, Supporters Direct and the Football Supporters' Federation to explore the development of new structures for delivering club-based community activities.

Football clubs:

- Investigate how they can develop independent community organisations and more 'holistic' approaches to community development and engagement, in consultation with their communities, supporters and other local stakeholders.

9.3   Partnerships

Central government:

- Investigate ways in which it can enter into more productive partnerships with the Football Foundation and the various football authorities.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Review existing partnerships in light of the proposed establishment of new funding priorities.

- Review funding criteria to encourage the formation of partnerships at club and national levels in accordance with the guiding principles we have outlined in this report.

FA Premier League, Football League and FA:

- Review existing partnerships and begin to investigate how new partnerships can be formed in line with the recommendations made in this report.

Football clubs:

- Review existing partnerships and begin to develop new formal and informal forms of partnership working in line with the recommendations made in this report.

9.4   Stadia and Facilities

Central government:

- Begin to draw up planning and/or other regulations which ensure that all clubs' communities are fully involved in the planning, delivery and use of new or redeveloped sports and football facilities.

- Consider reviewing the all-seater requirement for the top two divisions to allow convertible safe-standing areas in stadia at all levels of the game.

Football Foundation:

- Introduce a range of criteria about communities' involvement in the planning, delivery and use of new facilities as a condition of grant aid.

FA Premier League, Football League and FA:

- Meet with the Federation of Stadium Communities and the Football Foundation C&E Panel to begin discussions around the development of best practice guidance for stadium/facility development and use.

Football clubs:

- Begin to investigate, through a range of consultations, ways in which stadia and other facilities can be made more permeable and useful for clubs' multiple communities, such as through the creation of Community Involvement Plans.

9.5 Supporters

Central government:

- Continue and extend its support for fan ownership and representation on football club boards through Supporters Direct.

- Consider allowing convertible safe-standing areas in stadia at all levels of the game.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Develop supporter representation on the C&E Panel.

- Meet with Supporters Direct and the FSF to investigate ways of developing greater supporter involvement in community initiatives.

- Provide financial, organisational and training support for representative supporters' groups, especially those with a desire to engage in community engagement initiatives.

FA Premier League and Football League:

- Meet with the FA to investigate developing a supporter volunteer programme for football.

- Meet with clubs to establish more inclusive ticketing, atmosphere and match-day access policies.

- Provide support for digital fan and community mapping exercises.

Football clubs:

- Conduct digital fan and community mapping exercises at the earliest opportunity.

- Establish initiatives to understand, consult on and acknowledge the role of supporters beyond their status as 'customers'.

9.6 Social Inclusion

Central government:

- Develop greater coordination and joined-up policy approaches to the delivery of sport-based social inclusion schemes.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Establish social inclusion projects as a funding priority.

- Target funding at innovative agencies and/or programmes that deal with the causes and consequences of social exclusion.

FA Premier League, Football League and FA:

- Meet with the Football Foundation to investigate ways to develop greater education and skills training on the nature of social exclusion and the appropriate means of using football to tackle it.

Football clubs:

- Consider, in consultation with their communities, establishing independent community organisations which can work at arm's length from clubs to deliver on social inclusion agendas.

9.7 Skills and Knowledge

Central government:

- Encourage Sector Skills Councils to work with the football authorities to identify how National Occupational Standards and associated training courses can meet skills needs across English football.

Football Foundation C&E Panel:

- Liaise with the FA Premier League, the Football League and the FA to identify skills gaps which cannot be met through existing National Occupational Standards and associated training courses.

- Develop new processes which will identify skills gaps with funding applicants in the early stages of the funding process.

- Create funding streams and other forms of support which enable clubs to better understand their communities, through, for example, funds for digital mapping exercises.

Football clubs:

- Acknowledge and identify skills gaps amongst their staff.

- Conduct community mapping and other knowledge-gathering exercises about their different communities at the earliest opportunities.

In this report we have made numerous recommendations in a range of areas for the Football Foundation C&E Panel, national government, the two leagues, the FA and football clubs. We would encourage all organisations to take these recommendations forward because, together, they provide a means by which the step change in community engagement and development can be made.