



Federation of Stadium Communities

'Reaching the Community'

Interim Report 2

October 2005 to March 2006



Football Foundation
football's biggest supporter

1. Background

Federation of Stadium Communities

The FSC is a unique national charity which represents the interests of communities living in vicinity of major sports stadia. Established in 1991, the FSC exists to help to improve and build mutually beneficial relationships between sports clubs and their neighbouring communities.

The FSC works to improve the quality of life for stadium communities, by exploring ways in which sports clubs and community groups can work together to develop innovative projects, initiatives and partnerships which help to address local inequalities in health, learning and employment opportunities, to promote economic and environmental regeneration and minimise any negative impact due to the activities of the stadium.

The FSC provides information, advice and support and highlights and shares examples of good practice.

2. Context

The FSC has identified that the following characteristics common to most sports clubs within the UK.

- Almost 60% of professional football and rugby league clubs are located within deprived neighbourhoods. These areas are characterised by low skills and training, poor access to services, poor health, plus high disability, crime and a poor environment.
- 68% of FA Premier League and 61% of Football League clubs are based in significant or high minority ethnic populations
- Liaison. They often fail to consult appropriately in the case of stadia developments. They can exclude the local community from its wider community activities. They can be insensitive to neighbourhood anxieties. The skills and experience and sometimes the will to bridge the gap are not there.
- Sports strategies usually do not have area- based targets for participation
- There is often a lack of information about the nature of local needs and how well providers are (or are not) doing in meeting them.

3. The Project

Reaching the Community is a unique West Midlands based pilot project which seeks to improve the quality of life in stadium neighbourhoods by helping and supporting sports clubs to better engage with their neighbouring communities, organisations, authorities and agencies.

The project will support sports clubs to better understand the needs of their neighbouring communities and to work in partnership to develop mutually beneficial projects and initiatives which will help to overcome local inequalities in education, health and employment, will help to combat social exclusion and improve the financial sustainability of both the sports club and its local economy.

The project will identify the barriers preventing sports clubs from maximising their potential for engaging with their local communities and recommend, facilitate and develop initiatives and projects designed to allow clubs to address and overcome those barriers. Where necessary, the project will seek to improve the existing relationships between sports clubs and their neighbours, by facilitating the establishment of effective dialogues between clubs, communities, authorities and other agencies and through this dialogue seek to resolve issues relating to the negative impact caused by the activities of the sports club and by developing mutually beneficial projects and initiatives which use the resources, facilities and the power of sport and the club 'badge' to address health, learning, employment and the environmental inequalities in the stadium's surrounding neighbourhood.

The project has initially been funded by Football Foundation, for 5 years. If successful the FSC will look to extend the project beyond the West Midlands to other regions.

The project will encourage and facilitate partnership working that will:

- Develop stadia as centres which provide integrated cultural, sporting, health and educational services and Use the power of sport to increase participation in such services by 'hard to reach' groups
- Create an understanding and responsive environment that can attract sustainable and mutually beneficial income streams
- Develop a process for the on-going involvement of all local communities in decision making in relation to community opportunities presented by stadia

An initial short list of target sports clubs was drawn up, but further clubs may be added as the project develops. The target clubs are:

- AFC Telford United
- Aston Villa
- Bromsgrove Rovers
- Birmingham City
- Coventry City
- Kidderminster Harriers
- Hereford United
- Port Vale
- Shrewsbury Town
- Stafford Rangers
- Stoke City
- Walsall
- West Bromwich Albion
- Wolverhampton Wanderers
- Worcester City
- Warwickshire CCC
- Worcester CCC
- Worcester RUFC

4. Methodology

The community engagement activities of sports clubs within the West Midlands vary dramatically from club to club and from sport to sport. There are many factors which affect the nature and extent to which sports clubs have become involved in community activities. The location, history and resources of each sports club are very different and each brings its own unique set of barriers and opportunities.

In order to determine how best to support each target sports club. A three stage process was developed.

Stage One

Baseline Assessment

In order to identify areas of opportunity for sports clubs to maximise their community activities it was important to first understand the extent of the community activities currently taking place. A baseline assessment was undertaken to highlight the ways in which sports clubs engaged with their local communities as well as how their work was integrated into local strategic initiatives.

The baseline survey focused on the following key themes:

- *Education & Learning*
- *Health*
- *Community Facilities*
- *Community Liaison*
- *Equal Opportunities*
- *Green Transport*

Stage Two

Identification of barriers and opportunities

The baseline assessment identified the extent to which sports clubs were engaged in community activities and to what extent they were working with local organisations and strategic agencies to address local needs.

From the baseline it was possible to begin to identify potential opportunities for sports clubs to develop or maximise the ways in which they engage with their local communities and what barriers, if any, exist in preventing the development of further or more meaningful relationships and activities with neighbouring communities to address their needs.

Stage Three

Mechanisms for change

Once potential opportunities and barriers for developing community activities had been identified an Action Plan was developed. The Action Plan (fig. 1) summarises the needs, opportunities and areas of interest for each of the target sports clubs. It also summarises potential opportunities for developing new or existing activities which address identified local needs.

The Action Plan summarises the mechanisms needed to develop community activities, their outputs and outcomes and any funding implications. A timescale is given for the development or completion of the project.

5. Action Plan

The objectives of the Reaching the Community project for year are outlined in the 5-year Development Plan. The Action Plan (fig. 1) below summarises the identified needs or opportunities in each of the target sports clubs or work areas in accordance with the Development Plan objectives.

The Action Plan outlines the mechanisms or activities identified to meet the needs or take advantage of the opportunities highlighted in each area. The action Plan summaries the outputs and outcomes of the activities and identifies any potential barriers to developing those activities. A timescale is given for completion within the context of the project.

Fig. 1

Reaching the Community - Action Plan October 2005 – March 2006						
Work Area	Identified Needs/ Opportunities	Mechanism	Outputs	Outcomes	Barriers	Time Scale
AFC Telford United	- Supporters Trust owned Club already in partnership with local authority, but Wishing to better understand and widen supporter base	- Development of joint 'Widening the Fan-base Project' with Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation (NIF), AFC Telford and West Bromwich Albion FC - NIF and FSC to undertake community consultation in Telford and Sandwell	- Development of 'Widening the Fan-base Project' project underway - Key partners and participating community groups identified - Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminars	- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects	- Funding required to allow FSC and NIF to develop participation tool	- Date for 'Widening the Fan base' consultation still to be determined
Aston Villa FC	- Difficulty in developing dialogue with either Club or Supporters Trust	- Continued efforts to approach both organisations with the support of Football in the Community and Supporters Direct			No response from correspondences	- Ongoing

Bromsgrove Rovers FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor relationship between Club and Supporters Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Arrange meetings with both the Club, the Supporters Trust and Supporters Direct to improve relationship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminars 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficulty in arranging meetings with Supporters Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ongoing
Birmingham City FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FitC desire to work with wider Community - Desire to develop satellite community programme at Halesowen Town - Dudley Local Authority have requested FSC support in developing Birmingham sports network - Request for FSC input into the new Birmingham Sport Village - Parking problems affecting Local residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of joint project between FitC and Community Service Volunteers (CSV) - Development of Community Project at Halesowen Town FC, FSC to undertake Community consultation - Development of Birmingham Sports Network project - Development of liaison group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community officers attendance at regional seminar - Development of joint community project with CSV - Development of joint project with Halesowen Town, Birmingham City FC and Dudley Regeneration Zone, Community groups and key partners identified - Meetings held with Holmes Estate Residents Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects - Support and advice given to residents group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FitC awaiting funding confirmation for CSV project - Funding required to undertake community consultation in Halesowen - Funding required to develop Birmingham Sports Network Project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme of events to be planned with CSV for 2006 - Time scale for Halesowen project to be determined
Coventry City FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA owned Multi-use Arena - Dedicated Community Space managed by local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Community space management group - Programme of workshops and training for community group - Community Space launch event as part 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feasibility study completed - Best practice visits organised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Feasibility Study has increased residents understanding, confidence and ability to engage with relevant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding required to undertake development programme and seminar launch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community space completion delayed now expected June 2006 - Third seminar

		of RtC Seminar 3		partners and agencies -		planned for July 2006 at Ricoh Arena Coventry
Halesowen Town FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire to develop community projects - Desire to redevelop ground including community facilities - desire to improve relationship with neighbouring community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of Birmingham City FC, Community Project at Halesowen Town FC - Creation of Community Liaison Group - Community Consultation regarding Community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community groups and key partners identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community Liaison Group Established, first meeting held 		ongoing
Hereford United FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - LA desire to develop intergenerational work with new activity focus. Sports club identified as potential partner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of FSC intergeneration partnership project with LA and Port Vale FC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gruntvig working group established at Port Vale FC 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - European Funding identified from Gruntvig. Need for initial match funding 	ongoing
Kidderminster Harriers FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters Trust desire to work with neighbouring community and develop community projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify needs of supporters Trust and local community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminar 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficulty in arranging meetings with Supporters Trust 	ongoing
Port Vale FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Club desire to improve and develop relationships with neighbouring communities, statutory agencies and other sports clubs - Community consultation undertaken, project ideas identified - Supporters Trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Funding Secured for Reaching the Community project from Coalfields Regeneration Trust - Launch of Vale Park Community Initiative project - Support given to 'Valiants Against Racism' (VAR) in identifying funding opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional Seminar held at club, Club Secretary, Community Officer, Valiants Against Racism and Supporters Trust gave presentations - FSC chair of VPCI steering group as well as managing the project - Support given to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 groups of Young people from 2 schools to create short films to be shown on BBC Local Network 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vale Park Community Initiative worker funded until April 2008 - Stadium City project to run December 2005 to Sept 2006

	<p>desire to build capacity of members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constituted anti-racism initiative in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of FSC partnership project with Creative Partnerships, 2 local schools and Stoke City FC - Development of intergenerational partnership project with Hereford City Council 	<p>Supporters Trust via VPCI</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working group established to develop Oral History project - 'Stadium City' project underway in partnership with Creative Partnerships and Radio Stoke - FSC to project manage 'Stadium City' on behalf of Creative Partnerships and BBC Stoke 			
Shrewsbury Town FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stadium in the process of relocation, club required to develop liaison group, green travel plan - New stadium to include community facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establishment of Liaison group – Development of Green Travel Plan - Community facilities consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regional seminar attended by Club Chief executive, community officer and Supporters Trust 		<p>Funding required to undertake community consultation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New Stadium build underway, liaison group to be established June/July 2006
Stafford Rangers FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters Trust have desire to work with PCT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate meeting with Director of South West Staffordshire PCT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health Walk established - Health topics Pub Quiz being developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PCT aware of opportunities sports club can offer in meeting health targets - Supporters trust members more aware of health issues 		<p>ongoing</p>
Stoke City FC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Desire to work with wider community - Club developing satellite community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of FSC partnership project with Creative Partnerships, 2 local 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Club Community officer attendance at regional seminar - FSC to project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young people from target schools engaged in 		<p>Ongoing</p>

	sports facilities	schools and Port Vale FC - Community consultation regarding community facilities	manage 'Stadium City' on behalf of Creative Partnerships and BBC Stoke - Meeting arranged to discuss community consultation	guiding the Creative Partnership project - FSC to project manage 'Stadium City' on behalf of Creative Partnerships and BBC Stoke		
Walsall FC	- Club desire to develop relationship with PCT - Poor relationship with Supporters Trust	- Work with both the Club, the Supporters Trust and Supporters Direct to improve relationships - Broker meetings between Club and PCT				ongoing
West Bromwich Albion FC	- Desire to work with wider community - Desire to develop Arts based projects within community facilities	- Development of 'Widening the Fan-base Project' with Telford United FC - Community consultation, identification of arts good practice and funding opportunities	- Community officers attendance at regional seminar - Development of project underway - Key partners and participating community groups identified		- Funding identified from NIF for initial consultations - Funding required to develop participation tools	ongoing
Wolverhampton Wanderers FC	- Club desire to develop relationship with PCT	- Broker meetings between Club and PCT	- Community officers attendance at regional seminar			ongoing
Worcester City FC	- Clubs desire to develop community projects and expand currently limited facilities and community department - Club desire to work	- Broker meetings between Football, Rugby and Cricket clubs - Broker meeting with Club and PCT	- Club Directors attendance at regional seminar	- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community		ongoing

	with Worcester Rugby and Cricket Clubs - Club desire to work with PCT			engagement tools and projects		
Warwickshire County Cricket Club						ongoing
Worcester County Cricket Club	- Cricket, Rugby and Football clubs all share a desire to work together on community projects	- Broker meetings between Football, Rugby and Cricket clubs - Identify potential joint community project	- Meetings held with 3 major sports clubs in the area and – Meetings held with English Cricket Board			ongoing
Worcester RUFC			- Community officer attendance at regional seminar	- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects		ongoing
County Football Associations	- Opportunity for County FAs to support and contribute to local projects - Opportunity to disseminate good practice through West Midlands County FA Development Officers	- Identify opportunities for County FAs to support and contribute to local projects	- Attendance at FA Regional Development Meeting - Staffordshire FA invited to attend Vale Park Community Initiative Steering Group Meeting	- All County FAs in West Midlands informed of local projects		- ongoing
Dissemination	- Project updates and reports and good	- 2 regional seminars to be held each year	- Seminar held at Port Vale FC in	- Seminar attendees	- Funding required to hold	- Third seminar

	<p>practice disseminated through regional seminars</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Regular feedback on project requested by Supporters Direct - Regular progress updates featured in FSC quarterly newsletter - Regular progress updates featured on FSC website - Project Interim Reports available electronically via FSC website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project Progress and progress of supporters trust community work disseminated at Regional Supporters Trust meetings 	<p>October 2005</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Attendance by 35 delegates from sports clubs, sports bodies, statutory bodies, supporters trusts and community representatives - Project up-date given at regional Supporters trust meetings - Project Progress given at County FA Regional Development Meeting 	<p>better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporters trusts aware of the project and its progress - FSC regularly informed of supporters trust community activities - Project updates and reports disseminated through FSC newsletter and website 	<p>future seminars</p>	<p>planned for July 2006 at Ricoh Arena Coventry</p>
--	--	---	---	--	------------------------	--

Key:

- FSC – Federation of Stadium Communities
- VPCI – Vale Park Community Initiative
- LA – Local Authority
- FiTC – Football in the Community
- PCT – Primary Care Trust
- LRC – Learning Resource Centre
- MAWG – Multi-Agency Working Group
- MAP – Multi-Agency Partnership
- LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

6. Progress

The second half of the first year of the project has been very successful, with much of the time being spent developing the individual projects and initiatives identified within the first half of year one. The wealth of interest in the project continues to grow, with many community and voluntary groups, statutory agencies and local authorities keen to explore the potential for working in partnership with their local sports club.

Match Funding for the project has been secured for years two and three from the Lankelly Chase Foundation.

Significant progress has been made in the capacity building of key organisations and individuals at sports clubs and within neighbouring communities. In Coventry the support given by the Reaching the Community project has helped develop the skills and confidence of one individual community representative who has progressed from involvement in one working group to developing a number of sub-groups, establishing their on residents association, joining the committees of voluntary organisations including the FSC and the Coventry Community Empowerment Network (CEN) as well as representation on several local authority partnerships.

The two most prominent projects involve work being undertaken at Port Vale FC in Stoke-on-Trent and at the new Ricoh Arena in Coventry.

Vale Park Community Initiative

The Vale Park Community Initiative is a unique project developed by the Federation of Stadium Communities in partnership with Port Vale FC as well as a wide variety of other stakeholders from the Stoke-on-Trent area.

The two-and-a-half-year project is funded by the Coalfields Regeneration Trust and employs a Development Worker managed by the FSC. The work plan for the project has been developed by and is overseen by a steering group of stakeholders from the neighbourhood surrounding Port Vale FC and the wider Stoke-on-Trent area.

The steering group is chaired by the FSC and consists of representatives from:

- Federation of Stadium Communities
- Port Vale FC
- Port Vale Football in the Community
- Valiants Against Racism
- Port Vale Supporters Trust
- Stoke-on-Trent City Council
- North Stoke Primary Care Trust
- Haywood Engineering College
- North Staffordshire Race Equality Council
- Staffordshire University
- Local Community and Voluntary Groups
- Local Councillors and MP
- Local Housing Associations

The PVCI will allow the FSC to pilot a number of innovative projects at Port Vale FC which, if successful, can then be rolled out to other clubs within the West Midlands.

Ricoh Arena Coventry

The work being undertaken in Coventry through Reaching the Community builds upon and supports work already undertaken by the FSC.

In January 2004 the FSC facilitated the establishment of the Arena Community Working Group (ACWG) in Coventry. The group was established in order give local people in the communities surrounding the new Ricoh Arena, an influential voice in the development of the new facility, thus overcoming any potential changes in their quality of life as a result of the development, and to maximise the potential for community benefits. The group met on a monthly basis to discuss all aspects of the construction of the Arena and its surrounding infrastructure, as well as the development of positive community initiatives, such as the Green Travel Plan, *'local jobs for local people'* and the community space within the stadium complex.

The new multi-purpose Arena, which includes a 32,000-seater stadium, new home to Coventry City FC, conferencing facilities, events and exhibition space, casino, a district centre (including a Tesco superstore) and dedicated community space, is built on a 70-acre former gas works site in the Foleshill area of Coventry. The Arena's community space consists of over 850 square metres spread over two floors. The upper floor will be home to Coventry City FC's Education Business Partnership Centre, which runs a Playing for Success Scheme and a 'Community Partnerships' project. The remaining lower floor of the community space was ear-marked for use by the local communities surrounding the Arena to address local needs.

In June 2004 a community space sub-group was established to assist community representatives in developing ideas and proposals on behalf of the local communities surrounding the Arena. Consultation work undertaken with local community groups and schools in the areas neighbouring the new Arena site, highlighted a clear need for a multi purpose community facility with a focus on community arts and drama.

In August 2004 a Green Travel Plan sub-group was established in order to give local residents the opportunity to have input into developing an event day green travel plan for the Arena. The sub-group allowed Arena Coventry Ltd, the management company for the Arena, to develop an extensive green travel plan which drew upon the valuable knowledge of local residents to ensure a plan which guaranteed the minimum disruption to the local community on event/match-days.

Upon completion and opening of the Arena in August 2005, the Ricoh Arena Monitoring Group was established. In order to preserve the valuable knowledge and expertise that had been built up by the ACWG since January 2004, it was decided, in July 2005, to constitute the Arena Community Working Group as a community reference group for the new monitoring group.

During meetings of the community space sub-group it was decided that the ACWG would, upon completion of the facility, be responsible for the development and running of the level one community space within the Arena. The ACWG then commissioned the

FSC to undertake a feasibility study relating to the development of a multi-purpose community facility, following the successful acquisition of a community chest grant from the Heart of England organisation.

The feasibility study identified the need for arts and drama facilities in the North of Coventry and also detailed the relevant resources, management structure, partners and funding, required to establish and run a successful multi-purpose community facility within the dedicated space within the Arena.

The ACWG has requested that the FSC support its members in developing the group into an effective management committee for the community space. This will involve establishing the group as a limited company and applying for charitable status. The information gathered in the feasibility study will serve as the basis for the development of a business plan.

It has been agreed with the group that the opening and launch of the community space will feature as part of the third Reaching the Community seminar, hopefully to held in July 2006.

Stadium City

The Stadium City project has been developed in partnership between Creative Partnerships Stoke-on-Trent, the Federation of stadium Communities, BBC stoke, Port Vale FC, Stoke City FC, St Thomas More Catholic High School and Haywood High School. The project is funded by creative Partnerships with substantial in-kind contributions from the other partners.

The aim of the project is to, use Ports Vale FC and Stoke City FC as creative settings to engage the imagination of young people and explore issues of cultural and civic identity.

The project will allow 30 year 9 students at two schools close to the stadia the opportunity to express ideas inspired by the stadia on film. The students will work in groups of six with professional film-makers, to produce a total of ten 2 minute short films to be broadcast on local BBC TV. The films will be launched at the stadia and promoted across the city.

Dissemination:

Regional Seminars

Seminar 2 – Port Vale FC

The Second Reaching the Community Seminar was held at Port Vale FC on 19th October 2005. The seminar also served to launch the Vale Park Community Initiative.

The seminar attracted 35 delegates from sports clubs, community groups and agencies from throughout the West Midlands.

The seminar began with an update on the project followed by a series of presentations focusing on the community work being undertaken by the various groups at Port Vale FC. Presentations were made by representatives from, Port Vale FC, Football in the Community, Valiants Against Racism and Port Vale Supporters Trust. This was followed by an introduction to the VPCI from the projects new Development Officer.

Following the practice presentation were a series of three interactive workshop sessions focusing on Health, Learning and community engagement, these were run by invited facilitators, including one which highlighted Stoke City FC's social inclusion work in partnership with Connexions.

Strategic organisations attending the seminars included representatives from local authorities, voluntary organisations, Primary Care Trusts, County FAs and funding bodies. For further details on the second RtC seminar please refer to *Seminar Report Two*.

7. Findings – Year One

i. Research into good practice identifies that a key factor in the development of successful projects has been a genuine partnership philosophy.

From all the research done in terms of examples of good practice, the key factor in the development of successful projects has been a genuine partnership philosophy, which has incorporated all key stakeholders in the surrounding area.

Key partners identified through the research have been identified as communities, clubs and statutory agencies. The critical element in these partnerships, which has allowed the development of community projects and initiatives, has been a strong and equal relationship where all partners understood their role and played to their strengths.

Where effective community projects have been developed at stadia, the following key factors have been in place:

- Resources – Key worker with voluntary/public sector skills and knowledge
- Partnerships/networks
- Will to act

ii. The most common barrier met by the target clubs in the project has been the lack of effective communication.

From conducting the baseline assessment and meeting with various representatives in each target area, from the sports clubs, supporters trusts, resident communities and statutory agencies, it was clear that many groups had similar barriers in terms of developing communication with, and so creating links with, other organisations.

In many of the cases, identified clubs, communities, local authorities, Primary Care Trusts and voluntary sector organisations were all aware of each other. However, the key reason most organisations were not working together was because they '*had never thought to*', or made the assumption that the other organisations would simply '*not be interested*', or were afraid to approach an organisation because they '*never understood what the other group did exactly*'.

iii. *Overcoming History*

Neighbouring Residential Communities

One of the key problems in developing community engagement at sports clubs has been the need to overcome pre-existing negative views and opinions on both sides of the fence. In situations where a poor or negative relationship exists between clubs and their neighbouring communities, there is often a long standing dispute which has destroyed all communication.

Disputes in most cases are a result of a disagreement over the impact from the stadium's activities, the most frequent and contentious issue being that of inadequate parking facilities at the club which cause regular disruptions in the surrounding neighbourhood and can be a major source of frustration and anger for many residents. Other issues such as litter, noise and glare from flood lights can also be a cause of, or can compound an already a, negative relationship.

Animosity between a club and its neighbouring communities can also stem from disagreements over proposed stadium redevelopment or relocation planning applications.

Supporter's Trusts

Supporter's Trusts can often have a poor or difficult relationship with their chosen clubs, which often stems from disagreements over the governance of the club. The exception within the West Midlands of course is Telford United, where the Supporters Trust owns the club itself. This however, is the exception to the rule and many Supporter's Trusts experience a strained relationship at best.

The very nature of the Supporters Trust movement brings problems in terms of the individual trusts relationship with their clubs. The movement's aim to, '*Promote and support the concept of democratic supporter ownership*' is often a source of animosity among club directors, who see the trusts as a threat to their ownership, in particular in situations where there is a single or limited majority shareholding.

Statutory Agencies and Local Authorities

Difficult relationships between sports clubs and their local authority have arisen primarily from a lack or breakdown of communication over either issues relating

to stadium impact (as detailed above) or through disagreements over planning applications. Many sports clubs have been resistant to working with their local authority because at some point in the past they have had a planning application for stadium redevelopment or relocation rejected.

Voluntary Sector and Community Sector

There are a number of instances where voluntary and community sector organisations have had negative opinions of sports clubs and have been initially resistant to begin working in partnership. These instances have developed from a previous '*bad experience*' working with a sports club, these have often stemmed from a lack of understanding of each others needs, skills and motivations and a lack of communication.

iv. *The key role for the Project Officer has been the brokering of meetings. This has involved a strong mediation, facilitation and diplomatic role.*

The project clearly identifies a need for capacity building on all sides of the equation. It is not simply a case of bringing everyone to the table. It is very much a case of bringing everyone to the table prepared with the knowledge, skills and confidence to engage with the other groups on an equal footing.

In order to help clubs to engage with communities and statutory bodies, a great deal of work has been undertaken in terms of brokering meetings and in many cases mediation, facilitation and diplomacy to prepare attendees to take part effectively and make sure they are asking the right questions, particularly in instances where negative relationships exist.

v. Motivators of Key partners

In order to be able to develop effective partnerships between sports clubs, their local communities and statutory agencies it is important to understand the needs and motivators of the individual partners.

Motivators for these partners have been identified as:

- **Communities**

Community groups, including both resident groups are driven by two principle factors when becoming involved in stadium related projects:

1. The overcoming of negative impact from the activities of the sports stadium.
2. Projects which improve the health, learning or employment opportunities for local people or improve the local environment.

- ***Supporters Trusts***

The supporters trust movement are primarily interested in the better governance of their respective sports club, however all of those contacted have clearly understood the need to, and have been very keen to help to, develop and expand their clubs community based activities as well as undertake projects of their own.

1. Supporter's Trusts aim to '*Promote football clubs as civic and community institutions*'

- **Sports Clubs**

By and large sports clubs have a desire to work with their local communities and are primarily driven by the following factors. It is also important to point out that the motivating factors for sports clubs and their often separate Football in the Community Departments are often quite different.

Clubs

1. Non-sport related income streams
2. Access to new player talent
3. Increasing match attendance and fan-base
4. Corporate responsibility

Football in the Community Departments

1. Development of new types of projects
2. Sustainability for the Community Scheme and its projects

- **Statutory Agencies**

There is a huge potential in terms of lucrative multi-agency partnerships, However, many agencies are unaware of the potential sports clubs can offer in developing projects to meet their own aims and targets. The areas of potential are:

1. Access to target audiences
2. Access to facilities
3. Opportunity to outsource services efficiently and cost effectively
4. Maximisation of service outputs, through removal of duplication of services

- vi. ***It has become clear through discussions with target sports clubs that the support needed depends greatly on the size and nature of the club.***

One of the main findings of the project so far is that not unsurprisingly Premier League, Football League and lower league football clubs, Rugby Clubs and Cricket Boards all have different barriers, different strengths and so require different levels and types of support.

From various meetings and discussions with club representatives including Football in the Community Officers and Board Members it has become clear that the project needs to be different things to different people.

Skills

At Football League and non-league clubs there is a wealth of opportunity to develop community based projects which utilise the under-used facilities of the clubs. There is a desire by the clubs to undertake these projects as there is a

growing demand for lower league clubs to generate non-football related income streams.

Most Football League and lower league clubs were found to be very open to developing projects which both help the local community and so potentially bring in new supporters and utilise their under-used facilities in terms of conference or other space. The League and lower league clubs are very open to new ideas and projects however in all cases the barrier to developing projects is a case of resources.

Financial resources, is a major barrier in its self, but in most cases the real barrier in terms of resources is literally not having anyone with the time and often the skills and knowledge to develop projects, under take consultation, identify funding, complete funding applications etc. It is not to say that those working in sports clubs are unskilled, it is the case that Football League and lower-league clubs are often under staffed and heavily reliant on volunteers all of whom are skilled in their own fields, however unless someone happens to have a voluntary sector background they are unlikely to have the skills to engage with and develop projects for their neighbouring communities.

Funding

The barrier most often quoted to developing community projects at sports clubs is funding, we '*can't afford*'. However, clubs such as Telford United and the work done by the FSC at Port Vale FC have proved that there is funding available if genuine partnerships are formed and all the right groups are brought to the table.

Community projects rely on external funding however the voluntary and public sector over recent years has become increasingly competitive and requires specific skills and knowledge of the community and voluntary sector in order to be successful. This is also true for rugby and to a greater extent cricket. All the will and funding in the world can not make projects happen without the resources in terms of man power to develop them.

However, this is different at Premier League Clubs. While there is a desire, primarily from the Football in the Community Schemes, to work with local communities, the clubs themselves do not have the same drives in terms of needing alternate income streams, as the appeal for Conference and banqueting at Premier League Clubs means that all their available is at a premium. The focus for working with Premier League clubs very much focuses on out reach work utilising the power of sport and the badge to overcome local inequalities.

8. The Way Forward

The Action Plan (fig. 1) identifies each of the target clubs capacity needs and opportunities and outlines the mechanisms, projects and initiatives which are or will be used to address those needs through the remainder of the project.

The aim over the next year is to continue to develop the agreed activities at each of the clubs already on board and to develop relationships with those target clubs which have so far been resistant to involvement. The progress of the project will continue to be monitored using recognised monitoring and evaluation tools. This research, when contrasted against the baseline already undertaken will serve as the bases for future good practice.

Healthy Stadia

Work being undertaken as part of the FSC's Healthy Stadia project in the North West, will be utilised in order to help engage the sports clubs and communities who have so far being resistant to the support offered by the project,

It has become evident through Health Stadia that establishing partnership groups around health topics is a non-confrontational focus, which can bring together a variety of organisations and agencies to work with sports clubs, many of whom may have a poor or no relationship in the past. By developing partnership working in this positive way, a variety of community projects and initiatives can spring board.

The underlying principles of Healthy Stadia promote a whole systems approach in developing the stadia as a healthy setting for visitors, patrons and employees alike. A partnership working tool has been developed which will support the community engagement process and provide a way forward helping achieve the aims and objectives of the Reaching the Community project. This approach will be adopted during the second year to complement the project.