



Federation of Stadium Communities

# 'Reaching the Community'

Interim Report

April to September 2005



## **1. Background**

### ***Federation of Stadium Communities***

The FSC is a national charity core funded by the Home Office Civil Renewal Unit. The FSC was established in 1991 to represent the interests of communities that live in vicinity of major sports stadia and to help to improve relationships between sports clubs and the neighbourhoods in which they reside.

The FSC exists to seek ways of improving the quality of life in stadium neighbourhoods, both by the resolution of stadium related issues and problems and by exploring ways in which sports clubs and community groups can work together to bring mutual benefits to the local area.

The FSC provides information and advice to those in stadium neighbourhoods, highlights and shares examples of good practice and helps to develop projects, partnerships and innovative ways of achieving mutual benefits.

## **2. Context**

- 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, or even targets for specific social groups
- 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.

### ***Reaching the Community***

The project aims to raise the capacity of professional sports clubs in the West Midlands, a region exhibiting all the above characteristics, to engage with their communities, including non geographical supporter communities, in particular Supporters Trusts.

The project will identify the barriers to sports clubs engaging with their communities and recommend, facilitate and develop initiatives and projects designed to allow clubs to address and overcome those barriers.

The project will, where necessary, seek to improve the existing relationships between sports clubs and their local communities. It will achieve this by facilitating the establishment of effective dialogues between clubs and communities and through this dialogue seek to resolve issues relating to negative impact caused by the activities of a 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.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **i. Baseline Assessment**

The project began by identifying what community activity was current taking place at each of the target sports club and what barriers, if any, exist in preventing the development of further or more meaningful relationships and activities with neighbouring stadium communities. This work was done using a baseline assessment survey to highlight how the club fitted into the surrounding social, strategic and economic infrastructure in terms of the community work it was currently engaged in. The survey focused on:

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

#### **ii. Identification of barriers and opportunities**

Once the support needs of the clubs was established, potential initiatives and projects were then identified for each target area. Work then began in facilitating and brokering meetings to bring together the relevant organisations in order to begin work in establishing relationships, partnerships and projects.

The Action Plan (fig. 1) summarises what have been identified as the capacity needs of the target clubs and supporters trusts. It also summarises potential opportunities for developing new or existing activities.

#### **iii. Identification and mechanism for change**

The next stage has been to agree with each club the types of projects that can be used to meet their needs. Fig. 1 summaries these mechanisms, their outputs and outcomes and any funding implications these activities may have. A timescale is given for completion within the context of the project.

Reaching the Community - Action Plan April – Sept 2005						
Work Area	Identified Needs/ Opportunities	Mechanism	Outputs	Outcomes	Funding Implications	Time Scale
<b>AFC Telford United</b>	- 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 - FSC to undertake community consultation in Telford and Sandwell	- 'Reaching the Community' Project launch held at Stadium - 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 to undertake community consultation - Match funding identified from NIF	- 'Widening the Fan base' consultation to take place in Jan 06
<b>Aston Villa FC</b>	- 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				- Ongoing
<b>Bromsgrove Rovers FC</b>	- Poor relationship between Club and Supporters Trust	- Arrange meetings with both the Club, the Supporters Trust and Supporters Direct to improve relationship	- Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminars	- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and		- ongoing

				projects		
<b>Birmingham City FC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FitC desire to work with wider Community</li> <li>- Desire to develop satellite community programme at Halesowen Town</li> <li>- Dudley Local Authority have requested FSC support in developing Birmingham sports network</li> <li>- Request for FSC input into the new Birmingham Sport Village</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of joint project between FitC and Community Service Volunteers (CSV)</li> <li>- Development of Community Project at Halesowen Town FC, FSC to undertake Community consultation</li> <li>- Development of Birmingham Sports Network project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community officers attendance at regional seminar</li> <li>- Development of joint community project with CSV underway</li> <li>- Development of joint project with Halesowen Town, Birmingham City FC and Dudley Regeneration Zone, Community groups and key partners identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FitC awaiting funding confirmation for CSV project</li> <li>- Funding required to undertake community consultation in Halesowen</li> <li>- Funding required to develop Birmingham Sports Network Project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Programme of events to be planned with CSV for 2006</li> <li>- Consultation for Halesowen project to begin Jan 2006</li> </ul>
<b>Coventry City FC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dedicated Community Space available</li> <li>- LA requested assistance in developing green travel Plan</li> <li>- Need to establish residents association in Holbrooks area neighbouring the Arena, in order to input and feedback community views and ideas regarding the new facility</li> <li>- Need for multi-agency working Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extensive community support already undertaken by FSC</li> <li>- Development of Multi-agency working Group</li> <li>- Development of residents association</li> <li>- Community Space Feasibility Study</li> <li>- Input into Green Travel Plan</li> <li>- Development of Monitoring Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of Green travel Plan</li> <li>- Feasibility study undertaken including facilitation of best practice visits</li> <li>- Residents Association created</li> <li>- Mechanism created to allow residents to feedback information from the Arena via Arena Community Working Group</li> <li>- Residents association assisted in securing funding for community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Green Travel plan has greatly minimised the potential impact to local residents by the activities of the Ricoh Arena</li> <li>- Residents capacity, confidence and ability to engage with agencies improved, -Residents more organised</li> <li>- Residents regularly informed regarding activities at the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding Secured to undertake Community Space Feasibility Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Green Travel Plan began operation in August 2005</li> <li>- Community space to be completed by March 2006</li> </ul>

			newsletter - Training identified for residents association	Arena including Green Travel Plan - Residents Association able to communicate through newsletter - Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects		
<b>Halesowen Town FC</b>	- Desire to develop community projects - desire to improve relationship with neighbouring community	- Development of Birmingham City FC, Community Project at Halesowen Town FC	- Community groups and key partners identified		- Funding required to undertake community consultation in Halesowen	Consultation for Halesowen project to begin Jan 2006
<b>Hereford United FC</b>	- LA desire to develop intergenerational work with new activity focus. Sports club identified as potential partner	- Development of FSC intergeneration partnership project with LA and Port Vale FC	- Working group established		- European Funding identified from Gruntvig. Need for initial match funding	ongoing
<b>Kidderminster Harriers FC</b>	- Supporters Trust desire to work with neighbouring community and develop community projects	- Identify needs of supporters Trust and local community	- Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminar		Funding required for community consultation event	ongoing

<b>Port Vale FC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Club desire to improve and develop relationships with neighbouring communities, statutory agencies and other sports clubs</li> <li>- Community consultation undertaken, project ideas identified</li> <li>- Supporters Trust desire to build capacity of members</li> <li>- Constituted anti-racism initiative in place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Building on previous FSC work to develop 'Vale Park Community Initiative'</li> <li>- Development of multi-agency working groups</li> <li>- Development of Vale Park Community Initiative project</li> <li>- Support given to 'Valiants Against Racism' (VAR) in identifying funding opportunities</li> <li>- Development of FSC partnership project with Creative Partnerships, 2 local schools and Stoke City FC</li> <li>- Development of intergenerational partnership project with Hereford City Council</li> <li>- Training opportunities identified for supporters Trust</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional Seminar held at club, Club Community officer and Supporters Trust attendance at regional seminar</li> <li>- Vale Park Community Initiative project supported</li> <li>- FSC Community Development Worker based at club</li> <li>- Working group established to develop intergeneration project, taster reminiscence project run</li> <li>- Creative partnership project underway, schools identified, tours of stadia arranged</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Young people form target schools engaged in guiding the Creative Partnership project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding available through Creative Partnerships to pay costs of creative practitioners. However, funding required to cover costs of FSC as a 'strategic' creative partner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vale Park Community Initiative worker to begin October 2005</li> <li>- Creative partnerships project to begin December 2005</li> </ul>
<b>Shrewsbury Town FC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stadium Relocation requires community facilities consultation and development of multi-agency working group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FSC to undertake community facilities consultation and develop working group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Regional seminar attended by Club Chief executive, community officer and Supporters Trust</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding required to undertake community consultation</li> </ul>	ongoing
<b>Stafford Rangers FC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supporters Trust have desire to work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitate meeting with Director of South</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Health Walk established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- PCT aware of opportunities</li> </ul>		ongoing

	with PCT	West Staffordshire PCT	- Health topics Pub Quiz being developed	sports club can offer in meeting health targets - Supporters trust members more aware of health issues		
<b>Stoke City FC</b>	- Desire to work with wider community	- Development of FSC partnership project with Creative Partnerships, 2 local schools and Port Vale FC	- Club Community officer attendance at regional seminar - Creative partnership project underway, schools identified, tours of stadia arranged	- Young people from target schools engaged in guiding the Creative Partnership project		ongoing
<b>Walsall FC</b>	- 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
<b>West Bromwich Albion FC</b>	- 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 required to allow FSC to undertake community consultation - Match funding identified from NIF	ongoing
<b>Wolverhampton Wanderers FC</b>	- Club desire to develop relationship with PCT	- Broker meetings between Club and PCT	- Community officers attendance at regional seminar			ongoing
<b>Worcester City FC</b>	- Clubs desire to develop community	- Broker meetings between Football,	- Club Directors attendance at	- Seminar attendees		ongoing

	<p>projects and expand currently limited facilities and community department</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Club desire to work with Worcester Rugby and Cricket Clubs</li> <li>- Club desire to work with PCT</li> </ul>	<p>Rugby and Cricket clubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broker meeting with Club and PCT</li> </ul>	<p>regional seminar</p>	<p>better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects</p>		
<b>Warwickshire County Cricket Club</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meetings held with English Cricket Board</li> </ul>			ongoing
<b>Worcester County Cricket Club</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cricket, Rugby and Football clubs all share a desire to work together on community projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Broker meetings between Football, Rugby and Cricket clubs</li> <li>- Identify potential joint community project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meetings held with 3 major sports clubs in the area and – Meetings held with English Cricket Board</li> </ul>			ongoing
<b>Worcester RUFC</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community officer attendance at regional seminar</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice examples of community engagement tools and projects</li> </ul>		ongoing
<b>Dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Opportunity to disseminate good practice through regional seminars</li> <li>- Regular feedback on project requested</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2 regional seminars to be held each year</li> <li>- Project Progress and progress of supporters trust community work disseminated at</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Launch seminar held at Telford United FC in May 2005</li> <li>- Attendance by 35 delegates from</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seminar attendees better informed regarding the project and good practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Funding required to hold future seminars</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Second seminar planned for October 2005 at Port Vale FC</li> </ul>

	by Supporters Direct	Regional Supporters Trust meetings	sports clubs, sports bodies, statutory bodies, supporters trusts and community representatives - Project Progress given at regional Supporters trust meetings	examples of community engagement tools and projects - Supporters trusts aware of the project and its progress - FSC regularly informed of supporters trust community activities		
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Key:

LA – Local Authority

FitC – Football in the Community

LRC – Learning Resource Centre

MAWG – Multi-Agency Working Group

MAP – Multi-Agency Partnership

LSP – Local Strategic Partnership

PCT – Primary Care Trust

## **Progress**

The seminar launch of the project was very well received and all the feedback so far from across the region has been very positive in support of the project. All the clubs which have responded have been very much in favour of developing stronger links with their local communities. Not surprisingly the greater requests for help and support have come from the Football League and lower league football clubs and the supporter's trusts with the poorer relationships with their clubs.

The first six months of development work has been very successful and has already met all of the objectives for year one, with a number of innovative and potentially high profile projects already underway. Much of the initial work with clubs and communities has been in identifying stakeholders and developing relationships, understanding the social climate and infrastructure in which the club exists and identifying the barriers which are preventing communication and effectively preventing the development of joint working.

### ***Dissemination:***

#### **Regional Seminars**

The sharing of good practice is an important objective of the project. One of the ways in which the project will serve to disseminate both existing good practice and the good practice generated through the projects it helps develop, will be through the use of regional seminars. Two seminars will be held each year and will focus on the sharing innovative ideas, projects and initiatives and highlighting the achievements of those clubs which have been successful in maximising the mutual benefits for both sports clubs and their neighbouring communities.

The seminars are a unique forum, which brings together sports club representatives, community groups including supporter groups as well as local, regional and national organisations and statutory agencies.

The structure of each individual seminar has been led by the needs of each host area. Invitees have ranged from regional representatives, representatives from clubs and supporter's trusts as well as local statutory agencies and community and voluntary groups from each area the seminar is staged. The idea is to use the seminars as a way of bring the 'right' people together from each area and show them what others have achieved. Each of the seminars will be held at a different stadium venue, giving the host club an equal opportunity to promote their work to a wider audience and create a greater sense of ownership from the target clubs, as well as allowing greater opportunity for participants who may experience barriers do to time or travel constraints.

The most important element of the seminars is that through the resources of the project attendees will be given the support to implement what they learn from the good practice presentations.

The first seminar was hosted by AFC Telford United in May 2005 and was used to officially launch the project. The seminar attracted 32 delegates from sports clubs, community groups and agencies from throughout the West Midlands.

The seminar consisted of a good practice presentation followed by interactive workshop sessions run by invited facilitators around

- **Partnerships**
- **Health**
- **Learning**
- **Community Engagement**

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 launch seminar please refer to Seminar Report One.

## Interim Findings

- 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. *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.

#### iv. **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 and supporter 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.

- **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

v. ***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.

*vi. What happens Next?*

The Action Plan (fig. 1) identifies each of the target clubs needs and opportunities. Significant progress has already been made in capacity building and developing projects and initiatives designed to address those needs.

The next step for the project is to continue to develop the agreed activities at each of the target clubs, while at the same time charting their progress through recognised monitoring and evaluation tools. This research, when contrasted against the baseline already undertaken will server as the bases for future good practice.