# It's Not Just a Game: Community work in the UK Football Industry and Approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility

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# Contents

## Executive Summary

This report presents selected findings from a wider research study into the social and environmental responsibility of UK Premier League Football Clubs. The purpose of the study was to investigate to what extent these responsibilities are addressed, how they are addressed and the challenges faced. This report specifically discusses the community work of football clubs within the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). The report covers the following topics in detail:

Types of community initiatives that football clubs undertake, and how they are carried out.

Football clubs deliver a very wide range of community programmes to a variety of people; mostly through the 'community trust model' (see section 4). These projects are funded by external bodies and club community trusts work in partnership with a wide range of external partners to deliver initiatives.

Internal and external factors that influence the development of community initiatives.

While there are external factors that drive the community work of clubs, such as the high profile of the football industry and customer pressure, an internal drive to 'do the right thing' is the strongest influence.

Benefits to the club from community engagement.

While competitive advantage to the football club may be a result of community initiatives, this report suggests that football clubs aren't focusing on the business benefits of their CSR.

Challenges that Community Trusts face and how they try to overcome them.

Although keen to play down any challenges in their work, access to funding and financial pressures are the main challenges to undertaking community initiatives. Another key barrier is a lack of awareness of the work of the community trusts.

Strategic approaches to Corporate Social Responsibility.

The development of the community trust model of delivering community programmes has certainly allowed a more strategic approach to emerge. However, football clubs still have a lot of work to do to develop fully integrated strategic approaches to CSR.

Levels of support for community initiatives.

Community trusts receive support for their initiatives from a range of sources. Club support is mainly 'in kind' rather than direct financial support and the Premier League provides guidance, direction and funding. Government could provide more support for the development of specific policies that relate to the work of the community trusts.

Working with and engaging key stakeholders.

Partnerships with external agencies, e.g. Local Authorities are a key success factor for community work. There is much potential for greater engagement with other stakeholders, such as sponsors and supporters.

Monitoring and evaluation.

While many community trusts undertake a certain amount of measurement the overall impression is that more needs to be done to get a true picture of the impact of community work and to better capture the benefits both to club and community.

Communicating and reporting on community initiatives.

Successful communications are a big challenge of community work and are described as a 'best kept secret'. Levels of internal and external reporting are very low and are a key area for improvement.

# Section 1: Introduction to the Report

Globally, sport is a unique and powerful cultural phenomenon which both unites and divides communities. As well as having significant economic impacts, sport has many social and environmental sustainability impacts. Sport is often seen as a panacea, a force for good that has numerous social benefits- including reinforcing collective identities, improving self esteem, inspiring children, promoting wellbeing and healthy living and contributing to social inclusion (Smith, 2009). As sport becomes an increasingly prominent economic and social institution across the globe, the question of what social responsibilities athletes, coaches, team owners, league officials, and global sport organisation' personnel have should constantly be asked (Godfrey, 2009). It is clear that a considerable number of athletes, leagues, teams, and sport organisations have embraced the principles and practices of more socially and environmentally responsible behaviour or 'corporate social responsibility' (CSR). Yet our understanding of how professional sports teams approach CSR is still limited.

This report investigates the 'social responsibility' of sports teams by looking specifically at the case of the English Football Premier League. In the UK, football is the highest profile and most popular sport; individual clubs are passionately followed by supporters, both nationally and internationally. The Premier League at the top of the four fully professionalised divisions is the most-watched football league in the world[1]. Professional football clubs certainly recognise that they are an important part of the community and alongside this comes certain relationships with and responsibilities to the community- be it the local population, local authorities, other businesses or the environment in general. However, how clubs discharge these relationships and responsibilities and how they manage the inevitable conflicts with the club's commercial objectives is not well understood. The research that underpins this report sought to understand the nature of these relationships,

exploring how football clubs respond to CSR, their decision making processes and their motivations.

## 1.1 Corporate Social Responsibility and Sport

The growth of CSR within the corporate sector has been paralleled by an increase in CSR behaviour within the sport industry. It can be argued that CSR is an important area of business management that is highly relevant for different types of sport organisation. This is in part due to the potential benefits that involvement in sport is said to bring about, including improved physical health and psychological health, a reduction in crime, and improvements in community cohesion, social capital, and education.

Extra funding in modern football allows clubs to expand their not-for-profit community activities and to address issues relating to CSR. Healy *et al.* (2007) argue for the principle of stewardship- football clubs must act for the betterment of their host environments and community and in this way carry out their social duties to the common good. Clubs operate in their local community, within their league structure and increasingly in Premiership football, internationally. Breitbarth and Harris (2008) maintain that an increased awareness and integration of CSR into football business fosters the competitiveness of the game and creates additional value for stakeholders. Walker & Parent (2010) argue that teams themselves are local businesses and CSR provides a strategic way for them to increase visibility, attract new stakeholders and build their reputations, thereby achieving competitive advantage.

Several strands to the CSR of football clubs emerged during the research, with different sections within the club responsible for each. Table 1. illustrates the different 'types' of football CSR. This report will focus on type 1. External CSR- delivering community outreach programmes. The following section will describe how the data for this report was collected and how it is presented.

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[1] http://www.watch-football.net/articles/premier_league.html. Retrieved 18 August 2011.

| CSR 'type' | 'Section' responsible |
|---|---|
| 1. **External CSR- community focussed engagement programmes** | Externally funded charitable trusts linked to the football club and using the club's name and branding- called 'community trusts' or 'community foundations'. With the exception of two clubs where this CSR function is kept 'in-house' in a community department, although programmes are externally funded. |
| 2. **Charitable giving- philanthropic CSR** | A function of the club itself, although sometimes administered through the community trust. The club will have a charity policy, which outlines its commitments and procedures with regards to charitable donations. The clubs main charity will be the community trust, with most clubs choosing to support several other (mainly local) charities every year. |
| 3. **Employee related CSR- relating to issues such as work-life balance, diversity, equal opportunities, profit share, health and safety, and also the involvement of club employees in CSR related activities.** | A function of the club itself, who should have policies to cover these areas. Most clubs do not have a policy on the involvement of club employees in CSR related activities. |
| 4. **Environmental management- managing the environmental impacts of football in and around the stadium, particularly waste, energy, water and transport.** | A function of the club itself and the responsibility of the stadium or facilities manager. Some clubs have an environmental policy. |
| 5. **Disability access and safeguarding children.** | A function of the club itself with publically available policies available on the clubs' websites. |

**Table 1. The different 'types' of football CSR**

## Section 2: Methodology and Report Structure

23 Clubs were included in this study sample, the 20 Premier League[2] clubs for the 2011/2012 season including the 3 newly promoted clubs, and the 3 clubs relegated at the end of the 2010/11 season. Promoted and relegated clubs were included to investigate how much difference the gain/loss of Premiership revenue affected a Clubs ability to implement CSR programmes. The research project investigated how football clubs approach CSR through the words of Community Programme Managers. An interview was also carried out with a senior representative at the Premier League. Semi-structured telephone interviews with 15 clubs were conducted (13 Premier League clubs, 2 Football League clubs), recorded and transcribed *verbatim*. The interviews were triangulated with secondary sources including annual reports, community policies, CSR policies, customer charters, reports related to community work and website data from all 23 clubs in the sample, in addition to reports from other organisations involved in professional football in the UK.

The data presented in this report is combined from primary and secondary sources. Interview transcriptions were read in full in order to provide a general understanding of the responses. They were then coded according to themes in the interview guide and others that emerged during the interview and analysis process. In most cases the data presented in this report has been consolidated and anonymised. Where appropriate, case studies have been used to illustrate key points and examples of best practice. Direct quotes are used throughout the report to demonstrate key points. The report also includes recommendations for improvement or guidance and advice. The report is broken down into sections that reflect the themes that emerged during the analysis of data. The report seeks to provide an overall picture of the community outreach work that football clubs undertake, to describe how it is done, why clubs do it, the challenges they face and the impact of community programmes on club and community. The report discusses aspects of CSR such as communication and consultation, strategy and stakeholder relationships.

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[2] The **Premier League** is an English professional league for association football clubs. At the top of the English football league system, it is the country's primary football competition. Contested by 20 clubs, it operates on a system of promotion and relegation with The Football League. The Premier League is a corporation in which the 20 member clubs act as shareholders. From http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Premier_League, accessed August 17, 2011.

# Section 3: Community Engagement in Football-*"it's in our DNA"*

For many clubs the community is an important part of the club, it's why they formed in the first place and why they still exist today; working with the community is part of the integral fabric of the club. Likewise football is an integral part of many UK communities. The Premier League believes that football should be available for people to engage with day in day out, not just on match day.

Football is a **powerful tool for engagement**. Football clubs have the power to engage people in the way that few other organisations can; it is part of everyday life that people can **relate** to. Partners choose to work with clubs because they can see that they can use them as a tool for engagement and football clubs have good access to a variety of groups of people. Football Clubs are in a **unique position** in being able to engage with and impact on young people, so they often do so. They can and do seek to influence the lifestyles of people in a positive way.

Engaging with the community and undertaking community work is both a way for the club to 'give something back' to its community and to engage the 'fans of the future' in the game and club.

Premier League football and its clubs have a very strong brand that gives them an opportunity to engage in community activities that is different to that of other businesses. Their reach is global.
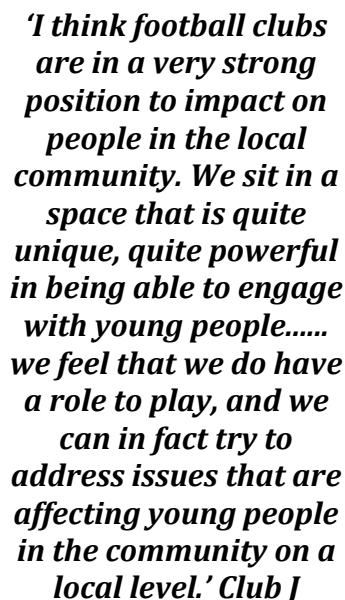
Nevertheless social responsibility in football is still very much an emerging concept. A recent benchmarking exercise by Responsiball[3], which compares website data from nearly 270 clubs in the top divisions of those nations competing in the UEFA EURO 2012, showed that all leagues had a social responsibility score below 50%. The environmental

*'I think football clubs are in a very strong position to impact on people in the local community. We sit in a space that is quite unique, quite powerful in being able to engage with young people…… we feel that we do have a role to play, and we can in fact try to address issues that are affecting young people in the community on a local level.' Club J*

component of the scoring pulled the average scores down. There was more encouraging news for UK clubs, with the Premier League ranked highest, and with the highest scores for community and governance. All scores had improved since the previous year's benchmarking exercise, showing that CSR in football is an evolving process. However, as this research project demonstrates, it is difficult to gain a true picture of how football clubs approach CSR from an analysis of website data alone, as many clubs do not publish much information about all aspects of CSR (see section 14).

A recent report 'Corporate Social Responsibility in European Football' (Walters & Tacon, 2011) provides a detailed analysis of survey research looking at corporate social responsibility (CSR) in European football. It shows that the majority of national football federations are involved in a number of initiatives with various stakeholders such as local communities, young people and schools. However, the majority of federations do not have a formal CSR strategy, which is backed up by evidence from this report (see section 10). Walters & Tacon (2001) demonstrated that resource constraints and securing funding were two of the most significant challenges faced by football clubs, which is also a key finding of this report (see section 9). Walters & Tacon (2011) also found that only a small minority of football clubs measure and quantify the benefits of community work. In the Premier League there is a significant recognition that measuring and quantifying benefits is of key importance to community programmes, and while progress has been made in this area, it still provides a major challenge (see section 13).

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[3] See http://community.responsiball.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=402&Itemid=7. Accessed 14/8/2012.

# Section 4: The Charitable Trust Model

In the sample of 23 clubs, 3 clubs have kept their community department within the club; the other 20 have followed the community trust or foundation model of community involvement[4]. A community trust[5] should be constituted as a not-for-profit charitable organisation with structural and strategic independence from a football club, headed by its own board of trustees who are responsible for setting strategic direction. The trustees should also appoint a chief executive to implement strategy. A community trust should also be financially independent from a football club, meaning that it is the responsibility of the chief executive and the trustees to generate funding and determine spending. Although financially, structurally and strategically separate from a football club, it is important for a community trust to maintain the name of a football club. This direct association between a community trust and a football club will ensure that any CSR initiatives in key areas such as health, education, and social inclusion will have a high degree of significance among community stakeholders. In order for a trust to carry the name of a football club, a license agreement is needed between the football club and the trust.

While the Trusts undertake the community work of the club they are a separate entity to the club, have their own staff and offices, and in many cases their own separate website, they are also independently funded, though do receive some in-kind support from the club.

Three of the clubs in this sample have kept the community function within the club itself, and it functions as a department of the club. The major difference in these instances is that the club itself provides some funding, although they do still seek external funding for projects in the same way as community trusts.

Community trusts bid for funds to run their projects so there is a competitive element to the need to secure funding. Funding is secured from a wide variety of bodies, such as the Premier League[6], the FA, the PFA, Comic Relief, National Lottery, education departments, Primary Healthcare Trusts, the police, the government, Local Authorities. Some funding comes in from corporate sponsors and local businesses, and some clubs get funds from supporters either through direct contributions, legacy donations or supporter lotteries. Only in a few cases does the club itself provide a small amount of direct funding.

Table 2. Illustrates the pros and cons of the community trust model with respect to how CSR is acted upon at football clubs. Clearly there is a balancing act to be undertaken to ensure that the difficulties associated with this method of delivering CSR do not outweigh the clear benefits of such a model. As section 10 will outline in greater detail, it is very important that football clubs develop strong CSR strategies and policies to ensure that CSR is integrated across all areas of a football club.

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[4] A key recommendation of the report *Football and its Communities* to improve levels of engagement between football clubs and communities was that Football in the Community departments should convert to "outward facing" independent community organisations (Brown et al., 2006, p. 23).

[5] Community trusts are also sometimes called community foundations. From this point onwards when referring to 'community trust' the report is referring to all types of community department including internal community departments as they all function in a similar way.

[6] The Premier League provides a major source of funding for community initiatives through the Premier League Professional Footballers' Association Community Fund, which has invested £12.9m into 53 innovative projects run by club community departments and foundations which has led to the creation of 249 new jobs. The work has involved nearly 160,000 participants.

| Pros and Cons of the community trust model | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Pros** | **Autonomy and transparency** | • Funders can clearly see that money is going to community work rather than into player wages.<br>• Less conflict with the demands of a football club at an operational level (removal of commercial and community tensions). | *'I think your local stakeholders, your local partners, are much more comfortable in terms of working in partnership. They can see that any funding is completely ring-fenced in the way that it should be in terms of community delivery'.* (Club J) |
| | **Security of funding** | • Protects community projects from the fluctuating finances of football clubs.<br>• Provides sustainability for projects. | *'That demonstrates some clear distance between ourselves and the football club in terms of our protection against potential financial fluctuations that football clubs all experience and demonstrates to our sponsors, supporters, partners, that there's total financial transparency'.* (Club O) |
| | **Partnerships** | • Ability to work coherently with partnership organisations.<br>• Clear match between aims and values of community trust with partnership organisations. | *'…the aims of the charitable trust in terms of the charitable work it wants to carry out are in line with some of the partners that we work with on a local level…'* (Club J) |
| | **Clear agenda** | • Allows community trusts to distinguish themselves as more than simply 'football delivery' organisations- clear identity and direction.<br>• More outward focussed. | *'But more recently we explored charitable status to enable us to attract significant funding in terms of grant applications and bids and to extend provision so to move it in to more of a social scheme than just a response to football in the community'.* (Club E) |
| | **More professional** | • Projects can be more focussed and 'driven' by a dedicated community manager.<br>• Easier to undertake impact measurement of projects. | *'I think a lot of clubs …didn't feel that they had responsibility in some respects... by setting up a distinct department, a community department, it gives it some focus, there's obviously people driving it'.* (Club M) |
| **Cons** | **Separation of CSR function** | • To what extent are Premier league football clubs involved in CSR if the community element is delivered by an independent charity linked to the club by brand name?<br>• Is the community trust model a legitimate way for a business to undertake CSR?[7] | |
| | **Lack of employee involvement** | • An important aspect of success in the delivery of a CSR programme is the involvement of company employees, also by involving employees in CSR companies can benefit for a number of reasons. In football clubs employees are generally not involved in community activities, therefore removing a key CSR success/benefit from the club[8]. | *'I think that although the community trust are positioned more centrally to the Club's activities, I think that us at a community level are still educating some of our corporate guys and gals on the value of the community trust and how to use it effectively when talking to external corporates'.* (Club F) |

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[7] While a detailed discussion of these questions is outside the scope of this report, it is important that they are noted.
[8] There are examples of community trusts who do involve club employees in their community projects to great success (see Everton case study, page 36).

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|---|---|---|---|
| | **Benefits of CSR** | • Community trusts don't measure the benefits of their programmes to the club; clubs aren't fully capturing the benefits and opportunities that arise from community engagement. | *''I actually think that more and more the club needs to work closely with us because …I think if the club can hit on both a commercial and a CSR front then they will benefit'.* (Club M) |
| | **Strategy** | • Community trusts are frequently seen as the club's CSR delivery vehicles so football clubs do not have well developed CSR strategies or policies. | *I think the club very much see us as the vehicle for that [CSR] and they sort of manage their approach to it through the support of us'.* (Club F) |
| | **Balance** | • Retaining the balance between 'needing' the club's brand to maintain interest in the trusts activities and keep its profile high, and also 'needing' people, especially funders, to understand that the trust is an independent charity and not part of the club so does need the external funding is difficult. | *'...in terms of trying to access money to deliver projects, a common misconception is, 'oh you're a football club and you're a Premier League club and we hear about all the money that you receive so therefore you should pay for it yourself'.* (Club O) |
| | **Communication** | • Many stakeholders, including football supporters and potential partner organisations, are unaware that clubs deliver community projects through charitable trusts and how community trusts operate. | *'...we have a real diverse range of initiatives that we run, at any one time we've got 35-40 different projects being delivered and the difficulty we always experience is that we're probably the football clubs best kept secret, because not enough people know about us..'* (Club O) |

**Table 2. The Pros and Cons of the Community Trust Mode**

# Section 5: Community Outreach Programmes

Community trusts undertake outreach work in the community immediately surrounding the club and in many cases in other adjoining areas too. They target a wide variety of age groups, religions, sex and ability. However, the breadth of geographical and social scope does vary from club to club. Some of the football clubs have also engaged in community activities abroad in continents such as Africa, Asia and South America, however with current funding restrictions most clubs are unlikely to pursue this area much at the moment.

Community trusts emphasise that they are now more than sports development organisations; they have evolved to tackle a far wider range of projects, involving wider groups of people and moving away from a simpler sports delivery agenda. Football clubs, through their community trusts, recognise that they are operating in real communities with real problems.

> **The role of the community trust is to use the medium of football to inspire and improve the lifestyles of people in the community and use a variety of sports to get children and young people 'hooked on healthier lifestyles'.**

The Premier League, through the creation of the Creating Chances programme, has played a major role in shaping football's CSR, moving it away from 'football training for schools' to a wider focus on using its power to tackle issues of social need. The Creating Chances scheme has seen the Premier League invest significantly in community engagement (see box 1). Taking its cue from Government priorities for social inclusion, health, education and equality it created a programme based around these four key themes. While its approach is not prescriptive, all football clubs follow a similar model of engagement with the community around these key themes. There are several Premier League schemes that most Premier League clubs have signed up to such as the Premier League's Reading Stars literacy programme and the Kickz social inclusion programme. This approach, and the need to seek external funding, has led to the need for community trusts to work in close partnership with a number of different agencies, such as the police, Primary Healthcare Trusts (PCTs), Local Authorities (LA's), and schools, to deliver their community programmes. The following pages (table3) give a flavour of just some of the key community projects within a variety of priority areas. Following this is an illustration of the mission statements, visions and key aims of community trusts.

**Box 1. Premier League Projects**

> ## Premier League Projects
>
> **Premier League 4Sport**, multi-sport programme including badminton, volleyball, judo and table tennis.
> **Football Development & Education** is a full-time course for school leavers aged between 16 – 19 years old, supported by the Premier League.
> **Premier League Enterprise Academy-** Community Trusts deliver lessons in enterprise to schoolchildren.
> **Greater Manchester Ability Counts League is supported by the Premier League.**
> **The Kickz Project.**
> **Double Club.**
> **Reading Stars.**
> **Premier League Health-** funded by the New Football Pools this programme aims to improve men's health particularly in deprived areas.
> **Premier League into Work** is a training programme which aims to use football to help local people who have been out of work for some time.
> **Imagine Your Goals** is a 2 year programme that funded by Premier League and Sport Relief aims to improve social inclusion and wellbeing for people with mental health problems.
> **Premier Skills** is the leading overseas coaching development project in association with the British Council. Since 2008, *Premier Skills* has sent coaches from Premier League football clubs to countries such as India and Egypt to work alongside coaches.
> **The Active Families project** received funding from PFA and Premier League to run a new 3 year project to help increase education, sports provisions and activities in the area.

| KEY PRIORITY AREAS | KEY PROJECTS WITHIN THE PRIORITY AREAS |
|---|---|
| **CHARITY** | **Donations to charities, hospitals, and groups.**<br>**Annual contributions to named charities.**<br>**Charity Partnerships and Charitable Trusts set-up.**<br>**Fundraising for a variety of causes.**<br>**Monthly charity draws.**<br>**Organise donations of merchandise from the club to charities.** |
| **COMMUNITY COHESION, SOCIAL INCLUSION & EQUALITY**<br><br><br>**The main aim behind projects within this area is to promote and develop social and community inclusivity.** | **Breakfast Clubs** providing children with a healthy start to the day.<br>**School Homework programmes** to assist children.<br>**School Assemblies.**<br>**Kickz & Mini-Kickz.**<br>**Street Soccer Schemes and Youth Projects.**<br>**Imagine Your Goals** aims to improve social inclusion for people with mental health problems.<br>**Children in Care** programmes promote physical activity and education engagement.<br>**Positive Future Programme** works with young people in deprived communities and tackles offending and substance misuse and looks at routes back into training, education and employment.<br>**Premier League into Work** is a training programme which aims to use football to help local people who have been out of work for some time.<br>**Prince's Trust.**<br>**Pupil Referral Programmes** for those at risk of exclusion from mainstream school.<br>**Youth Club Programme.**<br>**Community Volunteering.**<br>**Employee Supported Volunteering.**<br>**Racial Awareness programmes** such as **Kick It Out** Anti-Racism Campaign and **Show Racism the Red Card**.<br>**Free Use of Sports Facilities.**<br>**Family Football schemes.**<br>**Goalz Youth Engagement Programme.**<br>**Schools Coaching and School Holiday Schemes.** |
| **CSR** | **Sustainability Reports (available from two community trusts).**<br>**Charity Partnerships.** |
| **DISABILITY PROGRAMME** | **Partnerships with many Disability Organisations.**<br>**Disability Centre of Excellences.**<br>**Adult Learning Disability Football.**<br>**Disability Sport programmes** offer football and sports sessions are run for young people with disabilities.<br>**Imagine Your Goals** programme aims to improve social inclusion and wellbeing for people with mental health problems.<br>**Disability Soccer Camps and Holiday Courses.**<br>**Schools Partnerships,** and weekly football sessions at schools.<br>**Training for teachers and coaches.**<br>**Football League's Every Player Counts programme** (National PAN-Disability Programme).<br>**Coaching at Adult Day Centres & Residential Care Homes.** |
| **EDUCATION, TRAINING & ENTERPRISE** | **Pupil Referral Units** for children experiencing problems with mainstream education.<br>**Double Club.**<br>**Learning Centre** for young people and school visits.<br>**Premier League Reading Stars.**<br>**Study Centres** that offer skills courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT.<br>**Foundation Degrees, Diplomas, National Certificates** are formal qualifications offered to young people to study.<br>**Apprenticeships. Education & Activity Days.**<br>**Tailored programmes for School and College visits.**<br>**Schools Coaching** in structured sports sessions and diet and nutrition workshops; either part of the curriculum or extra- curricular.<br>**Enterprise Centres and Academies** offer courses to educate pupils in the operational and business sides of a Football Club. |

| | |
|---|---|
| | Coaching Courses.<br>**Study Support Programmes** for school children designed to raise standards in numeracy, literacy and ICT.<br>**Adult Learning Courses.**<br>**Higher Education programmes** in partnership with universities.<br>**Alternative Education Scheme** for young people at risk of exclusion from school.<br>**Players go back to school to engage children.**<br>**Entry to Employment Schemes.** |
| **ENVIRONMENT & REGENERATION** | **Environmental policy and pledges;** for instance encouraging fans to participate in lift share schemes, and aiming to reduce emissions.<br>**Community Consultation** before moving a club to a new stadium.<br>**Securing funding** for regeneration projects to improve facilities and housing in an around the new stadium. |
| **FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT & SPORT** | **Soccer Schools.**<br>**Indoor Leagues.**<br>**School Holiday Camps.**<br>**Football Academies.**<br>**After School Courses.**<br>**Holiday Football Courses.**<br>**Saturday Morning Coaching.**<br>**Ladies Football.**<br>**Girls Programmes.**<br>**Grass Roots Football**<br>**Coaching for local teams.**<br>**Premier League 4 Sport.**<br>**Soccer Schools for girls and boys of all abilities.**<br>**Goal-keeping Courses.**<br>**Multi-sports Courses.**<br>**Advanced Training Centres.**<br>**Evening & Weekend Courses.**<br>**Coaching for Schools.**<br>**Cricket Courses.**<br>**Dance Classes.** |
| **GLOBAL WORK** | **Coaching links** across a wide range of countries, and assist in grassroots coaching programmes. |
| **HEALTH & WELLBEING** | **Health Walks for local groups.**<br>**Smoke Free Campaigns.**<br>**Free of charge Gym Facilities.**<br>**Healthy Food & Lifestyle lessons for children.**<br>**Football leagues for people recovering from substance misuse.**<br>**Extra Time/ Active 8** – Funded by Football Foundation and Sport Relief and supported by Age UK.<br>**Walk to School Campaign.**<br>**Active families project.**<br>**Men's Health Sessions.**<br>**Free football sessions for over 17s.**<br>**Free Health checks for adults.**<br>**Healthy Schools Projects.**<br>**Imagine Your Goals Programme.**<br>**MEND Programme** - family based programme for overweight and obese children aged between 7-13 years old and their families.<br>**Match Fit Programme** for men who want to get healthier & fitter. |

**Table 3. A snapshot of key community activities across a range of priorities undertaken by community trusts**

**Word Cloud: A visual representation of the mission statements, values and aims of football community trusts**

## Section 6: Who is the Community? Communities of need

Defining their community has become more complex for football clubs. For many clubs their supporters come from all over the UK and they have a large following across the world. The groups that are targeted for community programmes have changed over time from mainly school children to working with a wide range of people of all ages and abilities. The cultural mix of people around football stadiums has also changed over time, meaning that clubs have to engage with different cultures and religions and overcome the barriers of language and cultural understanding that naturally arise. The areas around some stadiums have become less residential and more commercial meaning that relationships have to be forged with local businesses. Community trusts need to delineate the boundaries of community so as to not overlap with other club's community engagement programmes, particularly as they are all fighting for the same pots of money.

Community boundaries may be more about the work that the clubs can do, rather than strict geographical boundaries, and with the increasing joint delivery of work these boundaries are becoming more blurred. 'Communities of need' is one way of describing how community trusts target their programmes, i.e. those in the community who are vulnerable, fragile, part of a minority group and are in need of support (see also diagram 1, page 32). Community trusts are therefore developing programmes around these themes, for example targeting young men with mental health issues.

*'So as clubs have developed in different ways the boundaries have become more like what the clubs can do rather than we have to work with that club because that's our local one'.*
**(Club F)**

The focus of community work is evolving, from a primary focus on young, school-age (see box 2.) people (who were the traditional focus of clubs when they were football in the community schemes) to a wider focus on people of all ages. So, programmes are offered to young adults around education, skills and training, to young men around health and mental health, to young women around sports participation and also to the elderly and nursery age children.

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A major focus of community work is on school age children- there are several reasons for this:

- Football awareness and influence is high among this age group so football clubs know that they can engage this group.

- Successive UK Governments have encouraged football clubs to engage young people in sports, partly due to the Olympics, partly due to the social exclusion agenda.

- Many young people in the communities surrounding football clubs are from disadvantaged backgrounds and the government, councils and clubs themselves believe they can play a role in addressing the problem of social exclusion in young people.

**Box 2. Reasons for focus on school-age children**

# Section 7: Decision Making- External and Internal drivers

There will be a number of both internal and external reasons why a business is driven to address CSR. These reasons will differ depending on the nature of the organisation. Football has a long history and has undergone much change; its motivations as a business cannot be entirely separated from its cultural importance. While football may be motivated to adopt CSR for business reasons, this research suggests that they are not the key driving factor. Indeed, traditional external CSR pressure such as legislation, government, NGOs, and customers, appears to be weak or nonexistent. Far more important is the internal desire to address issues of social need within communities. This desire comes from an awareness that an organisation as visible and prominent as a football club must be seen to engage with its communities.

## 7.1 External drivers

As a very high profile business football is almost constantly in the public eye and its portrayal is frequently negative. Football in general does come under pressure to counteract this negativity by engaging in positive behaviour through CSR. The exact focus of this pressure is unspecific- more along the lines of - 'you're a rich football club, you should donate money and time to charity'- rather than a demand for specific CSR strategies from identifiable stakeholders. Unlike most businesses no interview respondents explicitly mentioned direct pressure (with the exception of one club who cited the Premier League as a source of external pressure). When questioned directly about pressure some sources emerge, but they are still weak forces, and not directly causing clubs to undertake community engagement.

*'...so there might be pressure because of the size and reach and scope of our organisation but I don't think there's pressure saying you should be doing this, they are saying we would like you to do this...'* **(Club G)**

### 7.1.a Governing bodies- the Premier League

While none of the clubs seem to feel under any direct pressure from the Premier League many of the clubs (particularly the smaller clubs) follow the directives sent by the Premier League and develop their community schemes around the priorities set by them.

There are no codes of conduct or specific guidance that regulate the CSR performance of football clubs; there are no legal requirements upon them to report on their CSR activities (Substance, 2010). However, the Premier League, through the creation of the Creating Chances programme has played a major role in shaping football's CSR, moving it away from 'football training for schools' to a wider focus on using its power to tackle issues of social need. The large financial revenues of the Premier League allow it to provide clubs in the Premier League and lower divisions with access to funding. Being associated with the brand of the Premier League is very beneficial in terms of brand promotion and access to communities.

*'I don't think we'd call it pressure, I think that there's an acknowledgement that we should be visible in this area'.* **(Premier League)**

The Premier League's partnership approach, working with central Government and other stakeholder organisations to assess areas of social need has translated to a similar approach being taken by clubs.

### 7.1.b Supporters- the customer

Very few clubs cite pressure from fans to engage in community work, so there is very little direct customer pressure to undertake CSR. This differs from traditional CSR theory whereby key business stakeholders, such as the customer exert pressure on the company to demonstrate CSR. It's not a major priority for fans, what

*'I don't necessarily think it's right, a lot of the diehard fans think it's nice but ultimately all they are worried about is what happens on the pitch...'* **(Club M)**

they really want to see is the club winning- it's all about what happens on the pitch on match day.

### 7.1.c Peer pressure

Football is obviously a highly competitive game and we might expect that this competitive nature would translate to community work. In fact there is more evidence of community trusts working together in partnership to secure funding for community programmes, especially in areas where there is a high density of Premier League clubs. In other areas community trusts are more careful not to 'tread on each other's toes', but still there is more of a spirit of collaboration than competition.  As all community trusts have followed the Premier League's lead with community engagement there is a trend for all clubs to follow each other. One club noted that **"the framework given has almost dictated how you're going to do it and possibly we would have done it a different way.  We might have looked at achieving the same aims but not necessarily in using the same methodology."** (Club H)

## 7.2 Internal drivers

The main driving force behind why CSR activities are undertaken at football clubs is internal motivation. Most of the CSR work is driven by internal values and beliefs, in some cases the Chief Executive of the club, but most frequently the head of community. Clubs refer to community engagement as part of the 'ethos' of the organisation.

### 7.2.a Individual

At most of the clubs it is the head of community that has been instrumental in driving forward the community work, and where they exist, in developing CSR policies and strategy. Those working at the community

*'…but the only pressure internally especially, regarding putting together CSR policy has come from me'.* (Club D)

departments put a lot of pressure on themselves. Programmes develop from their beliefs in the responsibilities of the club and the needs of the community. In many Clubs the Chief Executive is very much embedded in the community and has strong community and family values, which influence how

the clubs view their role in the community. This is particularly true in clubs in smaller towns.

### 7.2.b Ownership

Club ownership appears to exert very little influence on CSR strategy. Where this does have an influence it is positive. Shareholder pressure is noticeably weak or absent.

### 7.2.c Right thing to do

This, both from an individual and institutional perspective, is the key internal driver for community engagement. At the clubs there is a belief that they have a responsibility to the community, that **there is a need in the community to be addressed, and that they have the tools and presence in the community to do so.** It's about doing good work in the community and is core to what the club stands for.

*'…if you went and asked anybody in the country what they thought of Club M they would come back and say it's a very well run, family orientated, community club.  It knows its place in the community and it knows it needs to work closely with its community so I think that fits well with what we are trying to achieve'.* (Club M)

Most clubs would say that the values of club and foundation match very closely, or are exactly the same. These values may stem from a chairman who has strong ties to the club and believes in the importance of family and community, or may come from a specific ethos and philosophy at the club, or from a very concrete set of values that have been set by the club and are integrated across the organisation. It is generally important for a club to be 'seen' as a community club, so the values should be very closely aligned.

# Section 8: How Does Community Engagement Benefit the Football Club?

The 'business case' for CSR refers to the internal and external factors that may encourage companies to adopt CSR programmes such as community engagement (see section 7) and also the business benefits that companies may enjoy by doing so. While many businesses will choose to undertake CSR for moral reasons, a more pragmatic approach recognizes that others do so in pursuit of benefits for their business. Typical business benefits may include improved image and reputation, improved trust and understanding, larger, more prominent profile, better market position, more business, increased employee motivation, increased staff retention and decreased absenteeism, increased ability to recruit and retain staff, cost savings and increased efficiency and benefits to company culture. Successful CSR brings benefits to both society and company.

Evidence from this research suggests that football clubs aren't focusing on the business benefits of their CSR. There are a number of reasons for this:

1. Community work is carried out because 'it is in the spirit of the club', the focus is on the local community, and how community needs can be addressed by football. Clubs frequently see their role as very focused outward on the community, rather than focused inwardly on the club and the benefits it can bring to the club.

2. The less strategic approach to CSR seen in the research sample (see section 10) suggests that clubs don't sit down and map the business opportunities that may result from CSR.

3. Most CSR is delivered by the charitable trusts; their remit is to deliver benefits to the community, not business benefits to the club.

4. The separation of CSR from the commercial activities of the club means that it is harder to link action with benefit.

**Recommendations**

- A more strategic approach to CSR in the whole organisation will help to make links between commercial and community activities and see where the business opportunities exist.

- Commercial departments, particularly those involved with sponsorship deals, need to get more involved with charitable trusts to see where the opportunities exist.

- Improved communication to football followers and match day attendees.

While none of the clubs measure the benefits of community work to the club, they are aware that they potentially exist, and what they might be.

## 8.1 Brand benefits

The community brand is a key strategy aimed at achieving sustainability for the football clubs in the medium to long-term given that it will:

- Help to maintain a strong link between the clubs and their respective communities.

- Build an affinity and increase the loyalty between local communities and the football clubs.

- Help to generate supporters of the future.

However, brand was rarely mentioned openly in interviews; these benefits are mostly implied rather than part of a strategic plan.

## 8.2 Improved image or reputation

From a PR perspective the community trust is a 'handy tool' for any club to have. For the club it covers their responsibility to demonstrate CSR and is also a way of communicating with fans, showing them what the club is doing at a community level. Premier League research shows that football followers and match day attendees believe that a focus on the local community is very important. It is interesting to note that this type of benefit is for some seen as 'cynical' by some interviewees, rather than a perfectly legitimate business reason for undertaking CSR. What is difficult to ascertain is what would be the impact on a club's image and reputation if the community work didn't exist- would fans of a club

### CSR benefit- Improved image and reputation

'So from a purely PR point of view I think we're a handy tool for the club, or for any club to have.......if you take a cynical route then obviously we are very, very good PR for the club, it demonstrates that a professional club is doing a certain amount of work in its local community'. (Club F)

'...the nice rosy sheen that you get from doing some fantastic community work'. (Premier League)

'It gives positive PR to the football club because of the resources the trust has... and they are the department working out in the community, taking the club's name to the community...' (Club C)

'I think the reason things like this were set up, was to offset the negative stories that are sometimes attached with football whether that be money related, behaviour related, behaviour on the pitch related, fans related behaviour. I think there has to be an element of balance within football and we are the sort of the positive side of it, the good news side of it that sometimes offsets stuff...' (Club D)

'Obviously clubs get pilloried for paying huge amounts of wages to players who do very few hours every week and I think it's the club's way of saying, 'no this is what we contribute to the local area and without the football club these kinds of projects wouldn't exist' because people are attracted to fund these kind of things because of the name'. (Club F)

withdraw their support? To paraphrase one interviewee the trust wouldn't exist without the club because they need their brand name and image to promote the projects, but the club would happily exist without the trust and wouldn't come to much harm without it. Without pressure from external stakeholders (see sections 7 & 12) who will hold a club to account over its CSR?

As much as it may help to improve a club's image, CSR is also seen as a way of bolstering against the negative side of football that is frequently portrayed in the media. Many negative stories are printed about the vast sums of money paid to footballers, their poor behaviour on and off the pitch, the bad behaviour of fans, racism etc.

## 8.3 Financial

Engaging in community work can 'add value' to sponsorship deals and can help to attract commercial partners seeking to demonstrate their own CSR. The Premier League certainly believes that this is a benefit citing 'inward commitment and expenditure from external sponsors'. However it is openly acknowledged at most clubs that this is an opportunity going begging at the moment. Here the separation of trust and club shows weaknesses, because it does not allow the commercial, marketing and community departments to fully develop the potential of CSR for the club. It's unlikely that a club would know if sound financial benefits do exist as this type of measurement does not take place.

*'…if we're undertaking a commercial sponsorship deal I think that it's important that we promote what we do in the community, as it probably adds value to that sponsor. Also the work we do in the community may have commercial benefit to the club …' (Club L)*

There is recognition that football may be prohibitively expensive for some and that it is competing with many other forms of entertainment. Community involvement is a way of positively advertising the brand and image of the club that may encourage people to attend the games or purchase club merchandise. It's a way to promote the game among young people- engaging with 'fans of the future'. More business can also mean the development of better commercial relationships with sponsors and corporate clients. But in general clubs are very un-strategic about how they might gain financial benefits from community work.

*'We provide opportunity for many people to utilise the stadium and its facilities who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity. That has an unquantifiable benefit back to the football club business because somebody might all of a sudden, feel enthusiastic or empowered to actually come and watch a football match, or buy a shirt from the club shop'. (Club O)*

*'……how we can basically provide almost a cradle to grave opportunity to be associated with the football club in a positive way'. (Club M)*

One club has used its community work to get a better understanding of its fans. Clearly understanding its customer base allows the club to target its business activities; involvement in community issues allows the club to better 'know' its customer base.

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## 8.4 Improved staff motivation and morale

None of the clubs explicitly mentioned this benefit in any way, and as at many clubs club employees at departments outside the trust don't really get involved in community work (with some notable exceptions, see Everton case study, page 35 ) it would be difficult to see whether there is any benefit. From a CSR perspective a key element is that in most businesses an important aspect of success in the delivery of a CSR programme is the involvement of company employees, also by involving employees in CSR companies can benefit for a number of reasons. The trusts get support from various departments from within the club such as finance and marketing, but as I didn't speak to employees in the departments I did not get a sense of whether there were employee related benefits to them in doing so. Players are also involved in community work, but how this is beneficial for them is another research question.

## 8.5 Youth development for future team

Given that football in the community schemes were originally developed as commercial operations delivering football coaching, and that until relatively recently football development still played a major role in the community programmes; it is surprising that this was barely mentioned as a goal or outcome of the community work. Only one club mentioned it as an aim of the community trust.

# Section 9: What Challenges do Community Trusts Face?

Interviewees were asked what barriers they faced when undertaking community engagement work. Many respondents said that there were no real barriers to their work, or played down any challenges. They had a very positive attitude to their work- they have a receptive audience and the power of the brand works wonders. However, there are acknowledged challenges, the most pressing being financial.

*9.1 Access to funding*

Given that all the trusts and community departments rely on external funding to deliver their programmes it is unsurprising that access to funding is proving an increasing challenge and was the most frequently noted concern, with the majority of clubs explicitly noting it as an issue and the Premier League itself acknowledging it as a challenge. With austerity measures beginning to bite, especially in Local Authorities who are key delivery partners of community initiatives, the community departments are operating in a period of uncertainty.

- There is now less and less opportunity to do development work so the ability of community departments to impact on the community is reducing.

- Uncertainty and cut backs in partner organisation budgets means that the long-term sustainability and efficiency of projects is threatened.

- The quality of projects is threatened by instability of employment and funding in partner organisations.

Despite the image of there being a lot of money in football, the reality is that this is not the case. There is very little spare money to commit to CSR; many clubs see themselves as Small and Medium sized Enterprises, under financial, time and resource pressures. It is therefore crucial that community departments secure themselves funding from an increasingly shrinking pot of money as they cannot rely on clubs to provide financial support.

## Challenge- Access to funding

'...we've got now less and less opportunity to do development work so the impact on the foundation is that our impact is reducing because there's less opportunities to do what we should be doing'. (Club F)

'Funding, funding. Funding is predominantly the thing. You can't move forward with projects that we want to do. Funding has been the biggest issue more so than anything else'. (Club J)

'Funding is always a massive barrier...' (Premier League)

'Funding is always an issue. The football club does support us but we're a separate entity and we do need to be financially viable ourselves'. (Club M)

**Consequences of financial climate:**

- How will the charitable trust model of funding adapt to changing financial circumstances? Will clubs have to look at new ways of funding community programmes?

- Will the financial climate cause Clubs to rethink the foundation/trust model of corporate governance? Will clubs need to step in to fund the trusts?

- Community trusts are increasingly looking at pooling their resources together to bid for large pots of funding, especially in areas with a high density of football clubs.

### 9.2 Organisational culture

While not a major issue some interviewees noted that there was a sense that the club itself wasn't as 'on message' with the community work as it could be, and in doing so was not fully taking advantage of the benefits and opportunities that can result from community engagement. Cultural issues will obviously come up from time to time as organisations are led by individuals who have differing opinions and attitudes towards community work. The separation of community work into an independent trust means that there may be less scope for the organisation as a whole to engage with the aims of community work and for the trust to influence the culture at the club.

### 9.3 Expectations and misconceptions

The club and trust may have different expectations of each other, while the general public may also have unrealistic expectations of football clubs due to misconceptions about the real nature of clubs. One interviewee discussed how the club had high expectations that the trust would deliver on the charity side of their CSR, while the trust itself would prefer to focus on the delivery of community initiatives. His solution was to do what was asked by the club in order to buy the *'political space'* needed for his staff to *'do the things that they love'* (Club K).

Football clubs- particularly the bigger clubs- are expected to live up to the brand name; but of course the trusts themselves are charitable organisations so are constrained by size and resources. This lack of awareness stems from poor communication on the work and set up of the community trusts. See section 14.

*'I don't think the club is as onboard as I would potentially like, given…the potential …. I don't think that the football club fully understands the possibilities, the potential, the added value that they can give…'* (Club M)

**Recommendations**

- A more strategic approach to CSR by the club will help to embed a culture of community engagement throughout every aspect of the clubs work.

- Having clear strategies and policies in place can help manage expectations.

- Clear communication can dispel misconceptions. Proper positioning, good publicity and reporting on the trusts good work will help to overcome this barrier- ensuring relevant parties know 'who you are and what you do'.

## 9.4 The football brand

A number of interviewees stated that whilst bearing the brand of the football club was obviously essential it also provided barriers, in that many funding bodies see the brand and ask why does a football club need to come cap in hand for funding for community activities? Some partners will refuse to work with football clubs precisely because of who they are. What trusts are struggling to do is to clearly define the way that the trust model of governance works. They have to make it clear that they are an independent, non-profit making organisation, but many struggle to do this, particularly those who have relatively recently moved to trust status. Could charitable status itself be a barrier- can't access funds due to misconceptions, but don't get funds from the club either. On the other hand if a trust can effectively prove that they are independent, need this external funding, and can add value by bringing football club's brand to the table, then it could act as an advantage.

## Challenge- the football brand

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 'They think, if you want 8 grand to run this surely the club can just give it to you and that is unfortunately, apart from one or two organisations that know better... that is the prevailing thought still......And even people involved in our projects, they just assume that the club are funding it.' (Club F) | 'I suppose a common theme...of any approach in terms of us to sponsors or partners, in terms of trying to access money to deliver projects, a common misconception is, 'oh you're a football club and you're a Premier League club and we hear about all the money that you receive so therefore you should pay for it yourself'. (Club O) | 'But I think also because we're a young organisation we're not particularly well known ... I think we've a... perception that because we are Club H Foundation that we have lots and lots and lots of money and are fully funded doesn't necessarily help us'. (Club H) |

*9.5 Overcoming barriers*

Being aware of potential obstacles and developing ways of overcoming them is a key measure of resilience. A more strategic approach to community engagement will allow a club to foresee potential barriers and develop ways of neutralizing them. The Premier League itself provides a structure that is based on consultation with government and other bodies- following this structure is a good idea as it gives the clubs a good idea of where the funding is likely to go. To be more strategic it has to fit within the expertise, remit and partner profile of the club, have long term aims and objectives and be measurable.

**Recommendations**

- A strategic approach will improve long-term resilience.

- Look for where there is a need and do your research.

- Look to work with partners.

- Follow social trends and government funding trends.

- Don't overstretch- keep trying to make a difference where you can.

- Ensure that the funding of projects is sustainable.

- Work with other clubs to secure large chunks of funding.

- Ensure that values and principles are well communicated and integrated throughout the organisation to ensure long term sustainability.

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**Case study**

**Overcoming challenges: Wolverhampton Wanderers**

Like all clubs Wolverhampton Wanderers face a constant challenge to identify funders to help continue their work because they are dependent on external funding. This has become more of a challenge in recent time with the economic struggle that the country is facing. To combat this challenge the trust has to 'move with the times'. Two years ago the trust wasn't delivering any health initiatives, but now they have a very strong health portfolio in terms of their project work, which reflects that health has been a big driver both locally and nationally. The trust has aligned its strategy to take advantage of developing trends and seeks out partners to work alongside and make an impact.

# Section 10: CSR Policy and Strategy

In a recent survey of European football clubs' approach to CSR, Walters and Tacon (2011) noted that the majority of national federations do not have a formal CSR strategy, but a small majority of football clubs do have a formal CSR strategy. In UK football it would appear that the move towards developing a more strategic approach to CSR is an evolutionary one. The process began when clubs realised that their community programmes were not necessarily making much of a difference in the community and that they were in danger of becoming too inward facing, more of a commercial exercise than a true outreach programme. Consequently, programmes have become more outward facing with the development of the trust model of corporate governance, and are targeting a much wider audience in programmes that have a much greater focus than just football. There has been a realisation that the football club brand is a powerful tool for reaching many that may be socially excluded, and that the trust model can be used to develop excellent working partnerships with a wide range of delivery agencies.

However, this evolutionary process still has a long way to go, because very few clubs have a clear strategic vision of their approach to CSR. Most of the football clubs in the sample do not have a written CSR policy, although some of the clubs are actively working on a policy or strategic review. Even if the club does have a policy, they are not publicly available and tend to be quite vague in specifics. Most clubs are however aware of the need to be better at demonstrating their CSR so in the next couple of years it is likely that more clubs will develop CSR policies and make them publicly available. Clubs are also beginning to recognise that all aspects of CSR should be included in a combined policy that covers all areas- community, environment, employment, health and safety, sponsorship, stakeholder relations. While the Premier League itself does not have a written CSR policy or strategy, its Creating Chances programme does give it a strategic direction and provides a framework for clubs to follow. However, in the same way as a football club's CSR is delivered through the charitable trusts, the Premier League's CSR efforts exist somewhat separately from the organisation as a whole. For all there is a need to integrate a CSR strategy across the whole organisation, and the Premier League could offer guidance in this area.

At present most information about a club's procedures and policies can be found in the Club Charter, which (with the exception of two clubs, although one has a charity policy available on its website) is publicly available on a club's website. Club Charter's contain information on club ticketing procedures, accessibility and disability issues, equal opportunities policies, and supporter consultation procedures. They also refer to the charitable work of the club, community engagement, and employment policies and in some cases CSR. The amount of detail on each of these issues varies, and some clubs make no, or very little mention of community engagement. Some clubs use standardised wording in their charters, while others have gone further and provided more club specific information. Only 5 clubs specifically made reference to CSR, albeit briefly.

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**Recommendations**

- Premier League to develop a CSR policy and strategy and provide leadership and guidance on this to football clubs.

- More involvement from the club in developing and integrating CSR policy and strategy.

- Better integration of CSR throughout the whole organisation, led by the club.

- CSR should have strategic benefits to a football club; these can only be fully realised through the development of a CSR strategy.

- The values and vision of club and charitable trust should align closely.

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## 10.1 The trust as the CSR policy/delivery vehicle

The community trust is often seen as the CSR face of the club, and through it the CSR of the club is discharged. This is often the case whether or not the club actually has a formal written policy or not. The club manages its approach to CSR through its support of the community trust. While there are clear benefits to the charitable trust model (see section 4) problems do arise when the CSR function is separated from the club itself. Particularly, can a club be truly socially responsible when the bulk of its CSR work is carried

### The community trust as the CSR delivery vehicle

'I think the club very much see us as the vehicle for that [CSR] and they sort of manage their approach to it through the support of us'. (Club J)

'…they've relied quite heavily on us; if they were ever questioned about CSR, Corporate Social Responsibility, they would look to us and say, well look at all the good work we do……Rather than having a formal policy by which they then have to report on…' (Club D)

'We represent a football club and the club's argument would be that through all the work that we do and the investment they make in us, we sort of satisfy any CSR queries that are thrown at them. However, we don't clearly demonstrate it through a policy, a procedure or a strategic plan'. (Club O)

out by an independent charity that is externally funded. To paraphrase one interviewee- you can't argue with the good work we do, but the problem is it isn't all in one place; this is true of all Premier League clubs. Frequently the impetus to try to integrate CSR throughout the club comes from individuals at the charitable trust not from the club itself.

## 10.2 Positioning

Whether or not they have a policy, most trusts have an idea of where they are positioned in the

*'…we don't have a policy of CSR that says we will do this, we will do that, presently, we have more of an attitude to say, right how do we position ourselves in a community where people think well of us, which I view as the same sort of thing really'.* **(Club K)**

community, and how they would like to engage with that community to be seen in a good light- this is often seen as one and the same as having a policy.

## 10.3 Strategy

The extent of the strategic approach taken by trusts/clubs varies significantly. A more strategic approach allows the community work to have focus and direction, it takes the business of football and the fan base into consideration so that well tailored programmes can be developed. CSR is therefore better targeted. Having a strategic direction also allows for CSR to be communicated across all departments of a club and potentially externally too, it also allows clubs to overcome some of the barriers they face. This seems to be done more successfully (although not exclusively) in clubs where the community function remains an internal department of the club or where the community trust maintains very close ties with the club. A club needs to decide what fits into its core values and vision, but also where it can create the most impact as well. It is important that the values and vision of club and charitable trust are well matched. Some clubs understand the importance of the linkages between the business, the community and commercial

interests, where the opportunities lie, and that CSR should also be of strategic benefit to the club. Some clubs are good examples of a club working along an increasingly formalized and strategic approach to CSR; however there is still work to be done integrating all aspects of CSR, **particularly the environment**.

There is an admission of the *ad hoc* nature of current attempts at CSR. In many clubs there are lots of good things going on but it is all fragmented, it needs to be pulled together under one vision and strategy and made into an overall strategy that is developed by the club as a whole.

*'…we do have a set vision and values associated with our foundation… in our community department we've always had a vision and values we've tried to achieve; I think what the club is looking to do is strengthen its CSR policies…'*(Club G)

*'…what we do is we look at where we have expertise and where we can help and we make the decisions that way and my role is to integrate the thought process around CSR into the whole of the club and transmit that message into the other departments which I think we've done quite successfully here……'* (Club B)

Overall it is felt that community work is embedded in the club, but it was somewhat unclear to what extent this is actually incorporated into club management strategies[9]. In most cases, the Chairman or Chief Executive of the club will sit on the board of trustees for the community trust, so in that respect there is cross-over and ensuring that the trusts strategic direction is in line with the club's. However, in very few instances does the head of community sit in on board meetings at the club, so there is potential for more cross-over. Generally, clubs and trusts are moving towards 'making sure their objectives link closely together', but this is a work in progress. Some clubs have had more success in doing this than others.

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[9] Most interviewees were unable to answer this question fully as they are not responsible for club management.

## 10.4 Values

Most clubs would say that the values of club and foundation match very closely, or are exactly the same. These values may stem from the owners who have strong ties to the club and believe in the importance of family and community, or may come from a specific ethos and philosophy at the club, or from a very concrete set of values that have been set by the club and are integrated across the organisation. It is generally important for the club to be seen as a community club, so the values must be very closely aligned.

*'…if you went and asked anybody in the country what they thought of ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ Football Club they would come back and say it's a very well ran, family orientated, community club. It knows its place in the community and it knows it needs to work closely with its community so I think that fits well with what we are trying to achieve'*. (Club M)

To ensure that these values are well communicated there needs to be a good understanding of the club by the community manager. The long relationship that some community managers have with the club means that they have a good understanding of the club and close relationship with it; this has inevitably influenced how close the trust is to the club.

Only one club sees that there is a potential mis-match between club and foundation values, noting that the football club is all about football and success- 'football rules', so its values and priorities centre around this, while the foundation is about community, so it is the 'CSR arm' of the business. The interviewee actually believes that this is true of all clubs, and indeed he is right in the sense that there is inevitably some tension between the desire to undertake all the community work and the imperative to demonstrate success on the football pitch.

*'It's a difficult one to be honest because ▮▮▮▮▮ ▮▮▮▮▮▮ football club is a football club and the aim at the start of every season, is to finish as high up the league as possible. And in football clubs, unfortunately football rules and I don't think it changes at any football club. So with regard to its*

*aims and objectives, I don't think it's the same, because the football club is all about footballing and success and what we are is the CSR side of a business...'* (Club D)

### 10.5 Individual influence

In many cases the development of a CSR policy and strategy is heavily influenced by the drive of one individual. This potentially can cause problems if that person leaves.

### 10.6 Ownership

Actual Club ownership only seems to have an effect on CSR strategy if it is a positive one i.e. in most cases it has no or little influence, and this usually comes from American ownership, where CSR in general, but particularly at a community level is well developed.

*'...the work we're doing certainly reflects the CSR objectives, of firstly for our owners as well, you know as you're probably gathering a lot of the clubs now have overseas owners and certainly what we're trying to do is match what ▮▮▮▮▮ sports are doing with the ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮...which is a very defined community programme, which I think is personally very good in terms of, again addressing local issues but also economic issues so training, development and having a stake in the community...'* (Club G)

# Section 11: Support for the Development of Community Initiatives

## 11.1 The club

When a community trust is set up as an independent charitable organisation they sign a service agreement with a club, this commits the club to provide administrative support in a range of areas- HR, PR, IT, legal, and finance; they have a licence to use the club's brand and access to player appearances, merchandise, corporate freebies etc. This agreement does not however commit the club to providing any financial assistance; this predominately comes from external sources[10].

The community trusts are usually housed at the club's stadium, or in special offices provided by the club. At the clubs where the community department remains a function within the club the support actually functions in much the same way, but they do of course receive direct funding from the club (although most money still comes from external funding).

The level of support received does vary, but on the whole clubs feel like they do get enough support from the club itself and from top-level management at the club. Where negativity does arise it stems from the acknowledgement that they could always do with more support, because there is so much potential for the work they do. Although in-kind funding occurs, it isn't actually measured or reported so the club can't say 'we contributed x amount to the foundation in x year'.

In every case the Chief Executive of the Club sits on the board of trustees for the community trust so there is a degree of involvement. In one instance the Head of Community is also the chief operations director at the club itself, providing more vertical integration of community work. On a day to day level the club's top manager's involvement in the running of the community trust is limited.

'I would like to receive more. Quite often it is down to individuals within posts, some people get it more than others so you know, I mean that's to do with people's backgrounds and experiences. Could always do with more help because I think it's pretty endless the amount we can do. We can't do it alone so we do need that support'. (Club J)

## 11.2 Government

Successive governments have talked at length about the social benefits of sport and this rhetoric is has been a particular focus of the London 2012 Olympic Games. The Premier League itself does spend a lot of time in discussion with the Government, and the direction of its Creating Chances programme has been developed in part from these discussions. However, at a trust level it is felt that more support and guidance could be provided by central Government. They should be helping to facilitate partnerships and to spread the word about the work of the community trusts.

> **Recommendation**
>
> - There is far more potential for national government to link its rhetoric on the power of sport with direct guidance, support and policy for sports organisations to follow.

'I think though that there is a gap in so much that, this movement, this work, is not being used in a collaborative approach by government. We're tending to get out there and do what we're doing in our local communities without a real co-ordinated approach from government in terms of policy on how sport can be used in a social context......I believe that the clubs shouldn't be doing it on their own, they should be doing it in partnership; and other agencies should be using the power of the football club brand to reach those that perhaps that they're not successful in reaching'. (Club J)

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[10] Only in a handful of clubs do they receive any money from the club, and in one case a small amount of financial support from club sponsors.

The Premier League provides both practical and financial support to club community trusts/departments. While the clubs are very much the delivery vehicle for the Premier League's activities (e.g. Kickz) they provide funding (along with the PFA) through the Premier League Professional Footballers' Association Community Fund, which empowers individual clubs to meet the needs of their local communities in key areas such as education, community cohesion, health and sports participation. The Premier League also provides legal advice, support and advice around the grants and funding process. They also set up Capability Status, which is a way of ensuring that community programmes are of a sufficient standard (making sure that they are well run, making sure that if they are a charity they fill all the charitable legal requirements and then putting in place internal policies and procedures to ensure their staff are well looked after, they are fully trained up and fully qualified and then helping them to deliver the individual programmes themselves), clubs cannot receive funding from the Community Fund without Capability status.

The PFA supports professional footballers and it is through this organisation that they are encouraged to get involved in community work. The FA's role in supporting community work is much more limited, and generally revolves around training and rules for the football delivery element of the community work. While the Premier League and the PFA do work together, they do not work with the FA. Most clubs do feel that they get enough support from the Premier League, but do not really mention the FA at all.

*11.4 Local Authority*

Most community trusts have formed strong **partnerships** with LA's and deliver much of their activities in partnership with them.

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**Case study**

**Stoke City**

Stoke City FC's Community Trust have developed a secondment programme with their Local Authority, which has provided them with a solid partnership and plentiful support and guidance on the strategic direction of community programmes.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

# Section 12: Working with and Engaging Key Stakeholders

See diagram 1. which shows the nature of the key stakeholder relationships of community trusts/football clubs in relation to community work.

As the trusts receive funding for their project from a variety of groups, their way of working is to work closely with a range of partner organisations.

> **Relationships with schools**
>
> All clubs have very close relationships with schools as a big percentage of their projects are aimed at school age children. Some clubs have taken this relationship quite far, sitting on governing bodies as trustees and setting up their staff to work in schools on a long-term basis.

*'…so we're not the individual experts around health, inclusion, education, enterprise, whatever it may be but the strength of the football club's profile and brand helps us work alongside partners to collectively achieve our targets, our goals in impacting our community'*. (Club O)

Key partners are the police, the Local Authority, Local Education Authorities, schools, Primary Care Trusts, disability groups and ethnic minority groups. They both receive funding from these organisations, and work on projects in partnership with them. In many instances, community trusts are becoming key delivery agents for a wide range of social programmes in communities across the UK.

*'…we're not saying that we're the answer to all problems, but we are saying that we can be part of a wider matrix of activities and initiatives that can improve society and can improve the community'* (Club M)

*'[I]t feels like we're becoming a mini-local authority support…'* (Club F)

Many clubs expressed a need to work more closely with certain stakeholders- especially sponsors and local businesses- in order to gain commercial benefits both to the football club and it's community trust. However, community trusts are cautious about preserving the independence of the work, about not associating with sponsors whose products contradict the work of the trust (e.g. alcohol and gambling companies) and ensuring that CSR is seen as much more than simply a PR exercise. The relationship between community trust and club sponsors is potentially difficult.

*'It's the one thing that I think clubs could, well certainly this club could do a little bit better, looking at how organisations like people who sponsor the club, could get more for their money and probably spend more money with the club by us addressing their CSR policies. That's not something we've got quite right at the minute, there's not enough hours in the day'*. (Club K)

> **Recommendation**
>
> A more strategic relationship between club sponsors and the community trust may lead to:
>
> 1. Financial benefits for the community trust.
>
> 2. A way of attracting sponsors to the football club, using the community trusts' work as a way of demonstrating their CSR.
>
> 3. Better integration between the football club and the community trust.

**Diagram 1. Stakeholder map of key relationships of football clubs/community trusts**

*'It's about people who are vulnerable and fragile in the community getting support …'* (Club E)

**'Communities of need'**

-unique feature of football is the ability to have reach and impact into communities that need support, such as:
-socially excluded
-disabled
-unemployed
-poor health

**SPONSORS & CORPORATE CLIENTS**
- potential for closer links between community trusts and club sponsors
- community trusts as a means of sponsors demonstrating their CSR?

*'…if we're undertaking a commercial sponsorship deal I think that it's important that we promote what we do in the community, which could add value to that potential sponsor and vice versa...'* (Club G)

*'…through showing a degree of leadership that 'you too can get involved in your community…'* (Club G)

**COMMUNITIES & LOCAL BUSINESSES**

**Two-way relationship**

**Strengthen links**

**FOOTBALL CLUB | COMMUNITY TRUST**

*'…whenever you do fan surveys it [community work] never rates that highly with fans…'* (Club B)

**Local businesses**
- Develop relationships with other local businesses.
- Football clubs providing leadership role in local business community.
- Local businesses as trust sponsors, financial donors or as a target of/partner in community outreach projects.

**Potential sponsorship**

*'…you can't escape being involved in the community scheme … it's key to being a member of staff here'.* (Club E)

**SUPPORTERS**
- seeking to improve supporter awareness of community initiatives
- how can supporter get more involved?

**PARTNERS**
- Key relationships with a wide range of partners to deliver community initiatives
-Major source of funding for community initiatives

**EMPLOYEES & PLAYERS**

**Key**          **Relationships**

*'… if you asked a lot of members of staff in the Club what the Foundation do I don't think they'd know......I don't think we've been successful yet …getting the message back to the Club as to what the Foundation does'.* (Club H)

**Employees**
- seeking to involve club employees in community programmes
- can help to build staff motivation and morale

**Players**
- using player appearances to promote community initiatives

| Local | Local Education |
| Schools | Primary Healthcare |
| Police | |

*'…we're not the individual experts around health, inclusion, education, enterprise…but the strength of the football club's profile and brand helps us work alongside partners to collectively achieve our targets, our goals in impacting our community.'*

# Section 13: Monitoring and Evaluation

While the potential of football to impact positively on society is demonstrated throughout this report, to truly know what the benefits to society of community outreach are (and therefore to justify the existence of such programmes, to rationalise them and ensure continuous improvements) rigorous monitoring and evaluation is needed. Considerable variation in how and how well the effectiveness of community initiatives is measured exists, although on the whole the impression is 'could do better'.

The external nature of most community programmes means that community trusts are accountable to and must provide a certain amount of information related to the success and operation of projects to their funders; but there is no standard set of monitoring and evaluation tools. The extent and success of monitoring and evaluation seems linked with the level of strategic direction that trusts have- the more strategic, the better the measuring systems in place. A major problem with developing comprehensive monitoring and evaluation tools is a lack of time, resources and experience. Trusts operate similarly to social enterprises[11] and are

therefore subject to the same constraints; they are not run by business managers, staff are engaged in the day to day running of activities so do not have time to do all the monitoring needed, developing measurement tools is complicated and requires experience that most trusts don't have.

## 13.1 Social accounting

The value of any business is not simply in the profits they generate for shareholders, the jobs they create and the sales that they make, but in the wider role they can play in local communities, and the social benefit they can generate. Due to the development of independent 'outward facing' community organisations there has been little attempt to assess the social value of football clubs themselves 'the club-company' beyond their community schemes (Substance, 2010). Football is a social and cultural business, and a local one as well as a financial one. The values placed on clubs by a range of stakeholders are often not financial and rarely purely so. The picture of how football clubs are valued is highly complex and makes the process of social accounting (measuring, monitoring and evaluation) very difficult (*ibid.*). The lack of any Universally agreed way to undertake social accounting complicates things further (as is illustrated by the quote from the Premier League) and goes beyond community trusts' realms of experience. Box 3 illustrates some of the approaches that may be taken to measuring social impact.

*'…we've never actually done anything as far as social return and [sic.] investment, reason for that being that was we worked very closely with previous Government who came up with a formula around social return that we were going to look to do something but then the*

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> **Box 3: Types of monitoring and evaluation**
>
> 1. Basic throughput on programmes (as per funding requirements) e.g. statistics on how many people are coming through activities, monitoring ages, names etc.
>
> 2. Evaluation of the attainment levels of participants at the beginning and end of a programme e.g. education or fitness.
>
> 3. More detailed case studies of impacts (these feed into Premier League requirements for their Creating Chances report[1]).
>
> '…it's the individual stories that we think count for more'. (Club A)
>
> 4. Collaboration with other institutions to measure impacts e.g. Universities.
>
> 5. Sets of targets (usually set in collaboration with funders) and KPIs.

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[11] Social enterprises are businesses which exist to address social or environmental need. Rather than maximising profit for shareholders or owners, profits are reinvested into the community or back into the business (definition from Social Enterprise London, http://www.sel.org.uk/definition-of-se/ accessed 20/08/2012)

*new Government came in and we've looked at the
new formula's that have been put into place and we're
not quite sure of the value and how much trust that
can be put on them …'* (Premier League).

# Section 14: Communication and Reporting

## 14. 1 Consultation

Community trusts tend to reflect the main agenda of the Premier League Creating Chances fund, which in turn often reflects central government ideas around social inclusion and the role of sport in society. However, an important part of working with the community is developing projects that reflect community need, rather than simply political agendas, so consulting with the community is very important to the development of community schemes. Community trusts are aware that it is important that they 'reflect need' and that there is a danger in 'parachuting in' projects that are not needed. It is therefore important to talk to, and work with, the community and associated partners, and ensure that programmes reflect local need and can generate measureable positive outcomes.

All trusts consult with 'the community', but the nature of community consultation does vary with some clubs taking a more strategic approach than others. Consultation takes place either directly, through key community leaders (e.g. religious leaders), or through partner organisations (e.g. Local Authorities). Trusts recognise that they are not 'expert' in all areas, particularly more sensitive areas such as racial and religious diversity, so it is more appropriate to partner with leaders in these communities to ensure that all sensitivities are considered.

A key challenge that all trusts face is raising awareness in the community about how they operate and promoting the good work that they do. Trusts are beginning to develop more innovative ways of communicating with and consulting with the community. For example holding community road-shows, running steering groups for projects once they are established, holding community representative workshops, and the establishment of fans parliaments. This also improves the trusts scope and opportunities for developing projects and accessing funding.

## 14.2 Communication and reporting

Clearly getting communication and consultation right is very important for the development and success of community programmes. While trusts are improving their consultation strategies there appears to be much work still to be done on communication and reporting. The publishing and reporting of information on community outreach, particularly externally is an admitted weakness, with many describing it as a 'battle' and a 'low priority'.

*'...we are rubbish at promoting what we do...if there's one flaw with us we're just not good at promoting what we do...'* (Club A)

'Best kept secret' is a phrase that came up repeatedly during the interviews. The community trusts do an awful lot of good work, but many people in the football world, let alone the public, media and business in general are unaware of it.

*'I think football clubs do very well; just unfortunately many people are just not aware of that. And certainly we meet a lot of corporates that we link with and they are always stunned by the numbers and the amount of work that we do...'* (Club A)

There are a number of reasons behind this- (see table 4)

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**Recommendations**

1. Improved external communication will improve awareness levels of the trusts' work and how they operate, improving understanding of their priorities and widening access to funding and participants.

2. Improved internal communication will help raise awareness of the trusts work throughout the football club and to other important stakeholders such as supporters and sponsors and to allow the benefits of such work (particularly improved image and reputation) to be more clearly realised.

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It is also very important for the trusts to communicate internally about the work they do, to get maximum support from the club and the involvement of employees and players. It also helps to raise the profile of and awareness of the work of the trusts to those at the club, who are perhaps not as engaged as they should be. Trusts try to engage staff in the clubs departments through emails and various *ad hoc* internal communications, but there is rarely anything systematic about it.

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**Case study**

**Everton**

At Everton FC the club has a staff engagement performance indicator. At present 60% of club employees are engaged in community initiatives such as volunteering, going into hospitals and e.g. reading to patients, taking part in their reading in schools schemes and community coaching. The club has a target of 100% staff engagement in community activities.

**Recommendations**

1. Improved external communication will improve awareness levels of the trusts' work and how they operate, improving understanding of their priorities and widening access to funding and participants.

2. Improved internal communication will help raise awareness of the trusts work throughout the football club and to other important stakeholders such as supporters and sponsors and to allow the benefits of such work (particularly improved image and reputation) to be more clearly realised.

3. Websites are an essential way of quickly and easily conveying information to a very wide audience- they can act as a portal for people to learn about the work and learn about how to get involved, and crucially to pick up more funding partners. They can provide case studies and measurement data and should be a place for the trust to communicate about its values, aims and strategy. They should also be a place for the trusts to clearly explain how they work and how they are linked to the club, so that any confusion in expectations is cleared up.

4. Use social media to its full advantage. This is a rapidly evolving area and one that is bound to capture the attention of the largely young target audience of the community trusts.

*'...we're working on a facebook, twitter, social media policy, encompasses everybody within the organisation, we're just working that through at the minute...'* (Club K)

5. Community trusts require more support and guidance from the Premier League to improve their communication and reporting.

6. Improve measuring, monitoring and reporting mechanisms throughout the football club.

| | |
|---|---|
| The trusts receive Public Relations support from the football club; however community work is less of a priority than the game itself. | *'I just think football clubs have more to worry about than trying to push good news stories out in the press and through the community trust. There's a much bigger picture within football...'* (Club D) |
| Football reporting in the British media is frequently negative and predominately about the playing, players, supporters or economics of the game. Community trusts are both afraid to stick their heads above the parapet in case they get shot down by the media, and are also aware that compared to the story about a footballer's misdemeanours in a nightclub, a story about the good work of the community trust isn't going to feature very highly. | *'Bad news sells newspapers doesn't it?'* (Club D) |
| There is a widely held belief that there is no 'appetite' for trusts/clubs to publish such information. There is certainly no significant external pressure on them to do so. | |
| Community work is mostly publicised on a website. While some trusts have a stand-alone website, for many their work is contained on the football club's own website, which are frequently poorly maintained, difficult to navigate and do not have a prominent position on the club's website. | *'I think it would help the foundation if we did have our own modes of communication such as our own website. We could start to focus on that kind of stuff more as opposed to like one good news story a week in the programme or on the main page of the club's website'.*(Club F) |
| The external reporting of financial, social and environmental reporting is not well developed across the football industry. Evidence from the secondary research supports this. There are no legal or other requirements on football clubs to disclose social and environmental information (although the Premier League does produce an occasional report on its Creating Chances programme and requires clubs to provide information. However this is more a 'snap-shot' of the work undertaken rather than a comprehensive evaluation of community outreach). Few clubs produce an annual 'social responsibility' report. Lessons may be learnt from those that do. | *'...no we don't produce a great glossy brochure telling everybody how good we are or anything like that'.* (Club K) |

**Table 4. Reasons why communication is a challenge for Community Trusts**

## Conclusions

This report demonstrates that football clubs, through the work of Community Trusts, are committed to engaging with their local communities and making a positive impact on the lives and lifestyles of people of all ages, ability, race, culture and religion. Sports of all kinds have the potential to have many benefits to society, and through the continued development of community initiatives such as those described in this report it is likely that this will improve. It is particularly satisfying to see football Community Trusts working in partnership with a wide range of expert organisations to use the power of sport to address issues of real social need.

The move towards a Community Trust model of delivering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has many positive features (see table 2, page 8) and has clearly allowed for an expansion of community programmes and a greater commitment to ensuring sustainability of funding. However, there are several issues that need to be addressed over the next few years to ensure that this model continues to thrive and that a commitment to CSR is fully integrated across the whole football club[12]. A discussion of these issues follows.

A more strategic approach to CSR by football clubs will help to embed a culture of community engagement throughout every aspect of the clubs' work. Having clear strategies and policies in place can help manage the expectations of all stakeholders and ensure a sustainable future for community initiatives; including highlighting where benefits and opportunities lie for both clubs and Community Trusts. The Premier League itself should develop a CSR policy and strategy and provide leadership and guidance on this to football clubs. There is far more potential for national government to link its rhetoric on the power of sport with direct guidance, support and policy for sports organisations to follow.

A more strategic approach to CSR in the whole organisation will help to make links between commercial and community activities and see where the business opportunities exist. Commercial departments, particularly those involved with

sponsorship deals, need to get more involved with Community Trusts to see where the opportunities exist. It is also very important that values and principles are well communicated and integrated throughout the organisation.

Communication is a key challenge for all Community Trusts and is something that both clubs and trusts need to work on together to improve. Many research respondents suggested that not enough is known about their work externally, and at times even in the football club itself. This creates funding barriers, misconceptions, and ambiguous expectations. Clear communication can dispel misunderstanding. Proper positioning, good publicity and reporting on the trusts good work will help to overcome this barrier- ensuring relevant parties know 'who you are, what you do, and WHY you do it'.

Improved internal communication will help raise awareness of the Community Trusts' work throughout the football club and to other important stakeholders such as supporters and sponsors. This will allow the benefits of such work (particularly improved image and reputation) to be more clearly realised. It is also important from a CSR perspective to ensure that staff are involved in community initiatives as this has a number of benefits to them, to the club and to the success of community initiatives.

Funding is clearly the biggest challenge that Community Trusts face. Not only is there continued insecurity and uncertainty in the finances of football clubs, but the Trusts rely on external funding from an ever shrinking pot of money to run community initiatives. There are many questions for the future that this report does not have the answers to, but will need to be addressed. How will the Community Trust model of funding adapt to changing financial circumstances? Will clubs have to look at new ways of funding community programmes? Will the financial climate cause clubs to rethink the Community Trust model of governance? Will clubs need to step in to fund the trusts? Community trusts are increasingly looking at pooling their resources together to bid for large pots of funding, especially in areas with a high density of football clubs. Improved monitoring and evaluation of community initiatives will help trusts to prove value for money and social impact.

This research has shown that football clubs have many unique characteristics that have shaped the

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[12] This is also important for those clubs whose community function remains within the club, as they function in a similar way to and face the same challenges as the Community Trusts.

development of their approach to CSR. These characteristics include the Community Trust model, a partnership approach to the delivery of community initiatives, relationships with a wide range of stakeholders such as sponsors and supporters (although there is room for improved relations here), high profile brand and the power to positively impact on communities, and the support of the Premier League. While CSR in football is an evolving process, and many of the clubs are at the beginning of their journey, there are many reasons to be positive. Football clubs, alongside their Community Trusts must capitalise on the opportunities provided by CSR and tackle the challenges faced together.

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