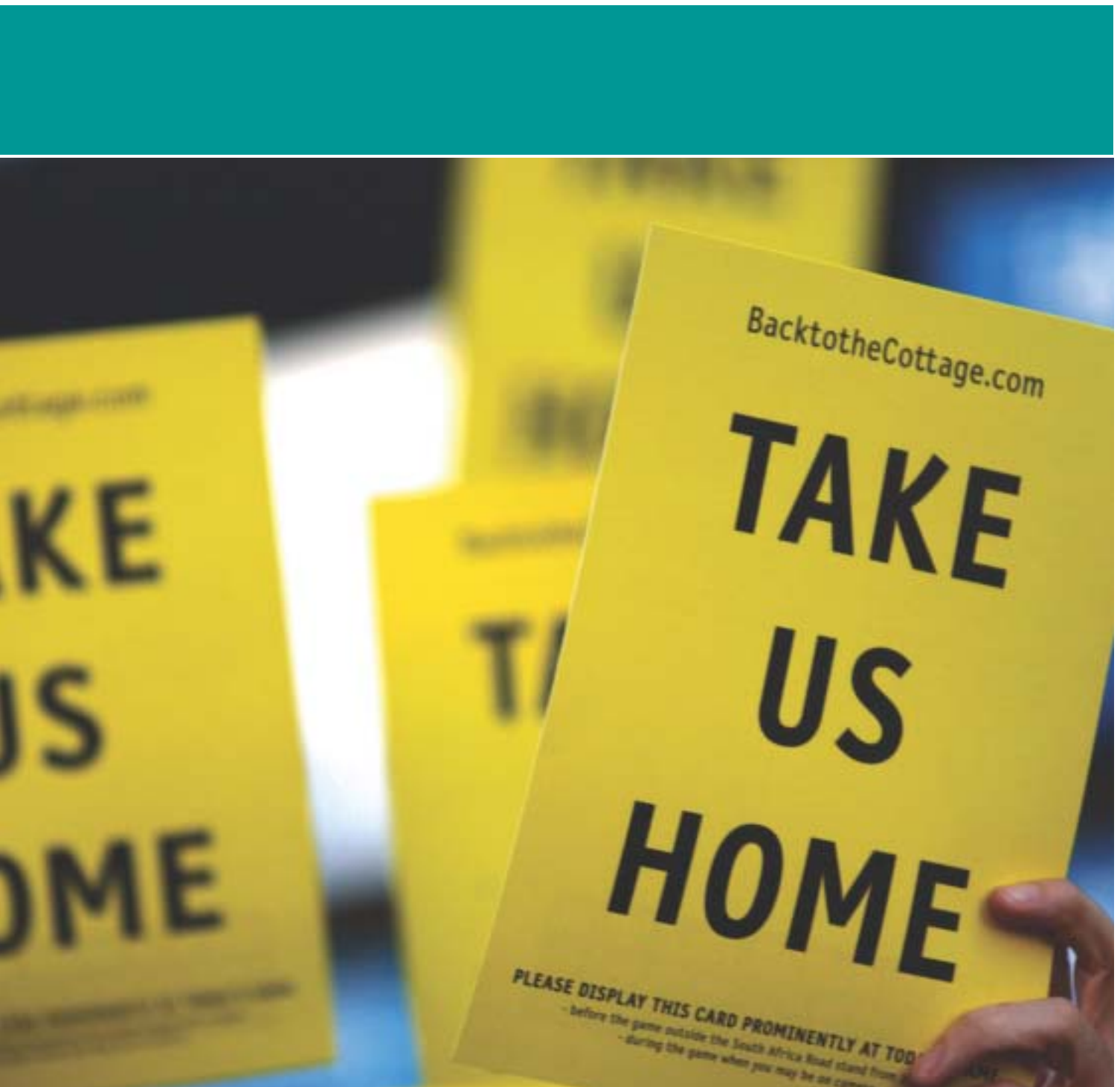


## Away from home

Scrutiny of London's Football Stadiums

June 2003



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## Chair's Foreword



The move by Wimbledon FC to Milton Keynes this summer is a critical moment in London's football history.

This move prompted the London Assembly's Culture, Sport and Tourism committee to look into the issue of redevelopment for London clubs.

With Fulham and Brentford yet to secure new stadiums for their clubs and question marks remaining over Arsenal's and Tottenham's grounds the issue is a live one. We do not want to see more clubs leave London.

During the 2002/03 season about 5 million fans watched professional football in London. In addition, hundreds of thousands of Londoners participate every year in club sponsored community projects and play football. This report seeks to ensure that this added value isn't lost to Londoners. We did not set out to judge local situations but to tease out lessons learnt by London football clubs.

Football is more than just a business: the ties that a club has with its area and the fans that live or come from there are great. We recommend that more clubs have supporters on their board and applaud the work of Supporters Direct in rejuvenating the links between clubs and their fan base.

There are also many examples of clubs which provide a great deal more than football: sensitive multi-use of a stadium is something we want to see more of. And the best practice by clubs such as Brentford in neighbour relations is something that other clubs would do well to learn from.

We also agreed that if a club moves far away from an area it should change its name to reflect that move.

Our investigation provoked a strong response from supporters. We also heard from residents about life with a football club as a neighbour, and received formal submissions from clubs, local authorities and the London planning and transport authorities.

Our thanks go to all those who gave their time freely to give evidence. Special thanks to the Football Foundation, Leyton Orient, Tottenham Hotspur and Charlton Athletic for hosting the Committee. My thanks go to members of the committee and to our scrutiny team, particularly Danny Myers whose knowledge, enthusiasm and skill was invaluable.

We hope that this report is not the end of the debate about the future of football in the capital. We are keen to engage further with Londoners on this issue. We also look forward to the work on funding issues by the All Party Parliamentary Panel on football later this year.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Meg Hillier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**Meg Hillier, Chair of the Committee**

# The Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee

**The London Assembly established the Culture, Sport and Tourism Committee on 10 April 2002. It is one of eight committees that, between them, cover the range of policy areas relevant to London government.**

## **The members of the Committee are:**

Meg Hillier (Chair)	Labour
Angie Bray (Deputy Chair)	Conservative
Mike Tuffrey	Liberal Democrat
Brian Coleman	Conservative
Len Duvall	Labour
Victor Anderson	Green (resigned on 4 May 2003)
Noel Lynch	Green (appointed on 4 May 2003)

On 16 January 2003, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee established the terms of reference for its football stadiums scrutiny, which were:

- To examine the case for and against Government and Mayoral intervention which enables football clubs to remain at their traditional grounds
- To establish what, if any, measures should be taken and to assess the effectiveness of other interventions from supporters, local communities and the clubs themselves
- To examine the benefits that football clubs can bring to the community, recognizing the disbenefits that living close to stadiums can have on local areas

## **The general terms of reference of the Committee are:**

To examine and report from time to time on-

- the strategies, policies and actions of the Mayor and the Functional Bodies
- matters of importance to Greater London

as they relate to culture, sport and tourism in London.

- To examine and report to the Assembly from time to time on the Mayor's Culture Strategy, in particular its implementation and revision.
- To take into deliberations the cross cutting themes of: the health of persons in Greater London; the achievement of sustainable development in the United Kingdom; and the promotion of opportunity account in its
- To respond on behalf of the Assembly to consultations and similar processes when within its terms of reference."

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## Executive Summary

Next season, Wimbledon FC, one of London's 12 professional football clubs, will play its home games in Milton Keynes – over seventy miles from the area from which the club takes its name.

Time will tell whether Wimbledon's move is a one-off event or a precursor of things to come. What we can safely say is that 3 out of London's remaining 11 professional clubs, and 2 of its larger non-league clubs, are under real pressure to either redevelop or relocate their stadiums. In addition, London's biggest club, Arsenal, has recently announced that its plans to move to a new stadium have been delayed.

This report outlines the changes that the Taylor report, big money and business have wrought on football in London. In doing so, it examines the way in which the traditional links between a community, the local football club and its stadium have fragmented. Today, many supporters of London clubs live outside the M25, several teams play their home games at other clubs stadiums and residents actively oppose the expansion of their local football team's ground.

The desire of London's football teams for their own ground is not simply nostalgia. A stadium is crucial to their ability to be promoted and to bring in additional revenue. Yet, where other English cities have only one or two professional clubs, London has twelve. Suitable land for expanding or relocating is at a premium; the costs are invariably high.

In these circumstances, the prospect of further departures is far from unlikely. Since most of these clubs are businesses, the real question is whether there are compelling reasons to encourage them to stay. Having considered the evidence, we believe there is.

Football stadiums are part of our cultural and sporting heritage, attended by over 5 million people per year. The Capital's clubs also deliver community and regenerative benefits to hundreds of thousands of Londoners. For this reason, local authorities, the Mayor and the football authorities should seek to accommodate football clubs' wishes to remain in their traditional area, wherever possible. We have recommended that:

- The football authorities (FA and Football League) should clearly outline what sanctions will be imposed for those leaving their traditional area or for prolonged ground-sharing
- The Mayor should give additional weight in his London Plan to the importance of football stadiums, including requiring local authorities to encourage clubs to remain in their traditional areas

This support should be balanced against an obligation on clubs to fulfil their role within their community, through community programmes and the use of their stadiums. We have suggested that there should be far better communication between clubs, supporters and local residents. In addition, clubs should seek to minimise their potentially disruptive impact on the local community's streets, transport and policing services.

Finally, we consider whether permanent ground share may be the future for London's football clubs. We conclude that jointly owned grounds may become a reality, and sharing home grounds with teams from other sports may be an option but, for financial and historical reasons, this approach is unlikely to be a long-term solution.





## Introduction

- 1.1 At Selhurst Park on 24 August 2002, Wimbledon FC beat Brighton & Hove Albion 1-0 in the Nationwide League Division One. An estimated 600 Wimbledon supporters witnessed the victory. Across South London in Kingston, AFC Wimbledon beat Cove 3-2 in the Seagrove Haulage Combined Counties League watched by over 3,000 supporters. Two clubs with the same name and same colours, playing on the same day claiming to represent the same area - but neither actually playing there – separated by a few miles and seven divisions.
- 1.2 The decision made by a Football Association appointed Panel on 28 May 2002 which allowed Wimbledon's owners to move the club to Milton Keynes, and which prompted its supporters to form their own club was the conclusion to years of dispute amongst supporters, club owners, residents, the London Borough of Merton and the football authorities. Wimbledon FC needed a home of its own and couldn't find one locally. The club decided that the only way forward was to move to Milton Keynes – a decision vociferously opposed by supporters.
- 1.3 In effect, the Panel had knowingly abandoned the club's eponymous roots and unwittingly divorced the club from its supporters. Weeks later, AFC Wimbledon was formed by angry supporters who were not prepared to make the 140 mile round trip to continue to support their local team. Next season, Wimbledon FC will play at the National Hockey Stadium in Milton Keynes and London will have lost one of its 12 professional clubs.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.4 The loss of Wimbledon FC demonstrates the problems London's football clubs face when trying to relocate or redevelop their stadiums in London. The high cost and short supply of land, often coupled with additional planning requirements, place London clubs at a comparative disadvantage.
- 1.5 Since 1990, 19 major new football stadiums have been built in England.<sup>2</sup> Only one, Millwall's New Den, has been in London. Considering that London boasts 12 of the 92 clubs that comprise the Premiership and Football League, the discrepancy is clear.
- 1.6 The problems experienced at Wimbledon are not isolated either. Tottenham Hotspur, Fulham, and Brentford are considering or actively embarking on developing new sites for their stadiums and others such as Leyton Orient, Charlton, and West Ham are at different stages of redeveloping their stadiums. Arsenal FC, which successfully received planning permission to move from its current ground at Highbury to a new stadium at Ashburton Grove, has just announced delays to its move, citing difficulties securing sufficient funding.<sup>3</sup>
- 1.7 It was within this context that we decided to investigate the issue of football stadiums and the situation of London's football clubs. Our aim was to look at the

<sup>1</sup> Arsenal, Charlton, Chelsea, Fulham, West Ham United, Tottenham Hotspur, Crystal Palace, Millwall, Wimbledon, Queens Park Rangers, Brentford, Leyton Orient. (Leading non-league clubs: Barnet, Dagenham & Redbridge, AFC Wimbledon, Dulwich Hamlet)

<sup>2</sup> Southampton, Oxford United, Millwall, Leicester City, Derby County, Sunderland, Middlesbrough, Northampton Town, Bolton Wanderers, Wigan Athletic, Darlington, Huddersfield Town, Hull City, Reading, Rushden & Diamonds, Stoke City, Wycombe Wanderers, (plus Chester City and Yeovil Town of the Conference both of whom have played or will play in the Football League)

<sup>3</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, May 2003.

benefits (and disbenefits) that football stadiums and clubs provide to London and what options there were to encourage London's football clubs to remain within the Capital.

- 1.8 The Committee collected evidence via the Assembly website and e-mail, an extensive written consultation, site visits to Leyton Orient and Tottenham Hotspur and held two evidentiary hearings where representatives from clubs, supporters, residents and regional bodies were questioned (see Appendix E for details).
- 1.9 This evidence overwhelmingly demonstrated a wish by fans, clubs and, in many cases, local authorities for football clubs to remain within their current neighbourhoods in London – and where possible, at or close to their traditional grounds. It also highlighted the frustrations of local residents who live near football stadiums.
- 1.10 In doing so, it revealed the changing nature of football. In London, perhaps more than anywhere else in the country, the traditional link between a community, its football team and the local stadium has weakened. You need only look at the battle between a club's supporters and local residents over the relocation or redevelopment of stadiums to see evidence of this rift. Many football fans, especially those of Premier and First Division clubs, do not live in that team's area – indeed many are not from London. We heard that 30 per cent of Fulham's fan base comes from the A3 corridor (moving out through South West London and into Surrey), only 5 per cent of West Ham United's members and season ticket holders live in the same borough as Upton Park<sup>4</sup> and only 6 per cent of Chelsea supporters live near Stamford Bridge.<sup>5</sup> Ground-share has similarly blurred the link between a football team and its own stadium.
- 1.11 Nonetheless, it remains true that a club's identity is intimately connected to its historic location. Geographical area still defines the name of most London football clubs and most fans passionately campaign for their own home stadium. Without doubt, there is a strong sentimental reason for keeping London's clubs within their historic community (and with their own grounds).
- 1.12 However, virtually all football clubs in London are businesses. The priority of their boards is to ensure the clubs' future and financial viability. For example, Wimbledon FC told us that the alternative to moving to Milton Keynes was to 'close the club. We had a majority shareholder who was not prepared to fund a club on the basis of its existence at Selhurst Park.'<sup>6</sup>
- 1.13 From a commercial perspective, if the majority of supporters no longer live in the traditional neighbourhood and the cost of relocating within that area is significant, then 'relocation at a distance [from London] may be seen as practical and commercially attractive.'<sup>7</sup> As Charles Koppel, Chairman of Wimbledon FC, put it, is a club 'the original ground, the place where it originally started, or is it a part of a fan base that it exists for? You have to question the implicit desire or obligation to return to an area which doesn't service the majority of fans.'<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> West Ham United, written evidence, April 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Chelsea FC, written evidence, May 2003

<sup>6</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary Hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>7</sup> Islington Stadium Communities Alliance (ISCA), written evidence, March 2003

<sup>8</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary Hearing 2, 1 April 2003

- 1.14 One submission to the Committee observed that ‘the central crux is the issue of whether clubs are free, sovereign corporate entities or something more than that.’<sup>9</sup> Having considered the evidence to the Committee, we suggest that London’s professional football clubs are something more.
- 1.15 Football clubs should not be looked upon as normal commercial enterprises and their stadiums as merely the location where their business is conducted. Putting it another way – footballs clubs are not just involved in producing football teams and football stadiums are not just used to host football matches.
- 1.16 As we explore in Chapter 2, the evidence to the Committee indicates that football clubs and stadiums have a major, and on balance positive, impact on their communities in terms of the regenerative effect on the local area’s economy and their interaction with the local community. This is not to say that this relationship is perfect. Residents, particularly those near larger clubs, have told us about the hassles they experience. We have sought to highlight some ways in which these problems can be ameliorated.
- 1.17 In Chapter 3, we sketch some of the pressures on London’s professional football clubs, the difficulties London’s clubs face in trying to relocate or renovate and how different clubs have sought to overcome these difficulties. Chapter 4 suggests some ways in which clubs themselves, the football regulators, local authorities, the GLA and residents and supporters can seek to preserve and enhance the role of football clubs in London. Finally, we consider whether ground sharing might be the solution to many of these problems.
- 1.18 Given the number of professional football clubs in London and the different sizes, wealth and levels of success of each, this report can only touch on some of the issues facing particular clubs. Our investigation aims to contribute to the growing debate about the direction of modern football and, more fundamentally, exactly where a club’s identity lies – with the management, with the fans or with its location. We hope that this report, as well as a forthcoming investigation by the House of Commons’ Culture, Media and Sport Committee will usefully add to this important debate.

<sup>9</sup> Supporters Direct, written evidence, March 2003

## **2. Taking each game as it comes: the impact of stadiums**

- 2.1 The evidence to our Committee has pointed to a relationship between clubs, stadiums and the local community that can be beneficial but is sometimes awkward, even hostile. In the 2002/03 season, almost five million people crowded into London's football stadiums (see Appendix C for details). Below, we explore a stadium's impact on its neighbourhood and highlight some examples of best practice.
- 2.2 The Mayor's planning team told us that 'there are potentially cultural, economic, social, regenerative, public transport and sustainability benefits for keeping football clubs close to their communities.'<sup>10</sup> The London boroughs of Hounslow, Islington and Hammersmith & Fulham have all attached great importance to the role that local football clubs can play within their borough. All three have endeavoured to keep clubs close to their historic communities– as a focus for civic pride, regenerative growth and community projects.

### **Civic Pride**

- 2.3 It's clear that football clubs can play a valuable role in the identity of an area and be a source of civic pride. As one local resident commented, 'without [the club] Brentford would become just another suburb of west London.'<sup>11</sup> Hounslow Council noted that 'a football club can offer a common interest and focus for people whether they have lived in the area for many years or are new arrivals.'<sup>12</sup> The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham stated that professional football in their borough 'provides a major source of entertainment and contributes to the life of the community.'<sup>13</sup> Supporters of Barnet Football Club told us 'if the football club does well, the community can bask in the reflective glory.'<sup>14</sup>
- 2.4 Islington Council pointed to the celebrations of Arsenal victories in its streets. 'No event in [our] history has generated crowds of the size, collective camaraderie and enthusiasm as those who gathered to celebrate Arsenal's winning 'the double''. In its view, 'Arsenal puts Islington on the map.'<sup>15</sup>

### **Football's potential economic and regenerative impact**

- 2.5 Evidence to the Committee stressed the significant economic and regenerative benefits of stadiums – especially those in deprived areas. Stadiums can have an impact on their area in three ways:
- a) The presence of the club on 'day-to-day' trading with the local economy;
  - b) The effect of the games themselves; and
  - c) The actual redevelopment of the stadium.

<sup>10</sup> GLA Planning Decisions Unit, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>11</sup> E-mail from Des Slattery, March 2003

<sup>12</sup> LB Hounslow, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>13</sup> *London Borough Hammersmith and Fulham Unitary Development Plan*

<sup>14</sup> Keep Barnet Alive, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>15</sup> LB Islington, written evidence, February 2003

- 2.6 The Mayor has recognised the impact a stadium can have on regenerating its surrounding community. For example, his draft Culture Strategy supports the development of a national stadium at Wembley in order to 'regenerate Wembley, [ensure] that the residents of Brent enjoy the benefits of regeneration' and 'boost the economy of north-west London through the creation of new jobs and other benefits.'<sup>16</sup>
- 2.7 Similarly, Tottenham Hotspur's Chairman, Daniel Levy, told us that the proposed renovations of White Hart Lane would represent 'the largest single private investment within the Tottenham area for many decades' which could act 'as a major catalyst for further regeneration of the immediate and wider area.'<sup>17</sup> The club is keen to play 'its part in seeing the area regenerated'. It is in early negotiations with the London Development Agency (LDA) about the potential role that both can play in the regeneration of the area.
- 2.8 A report conducted by the Football Research Centre at Liverpool University<sup>18</sup> into the impact of Liverpool's two major clubs on their local economy found that:
- 3,000 full-time jobs, plus 1,400 part-time jobs in the Merseyside economy are dependent on the football industry;
  - for every 100 jobs in the retail sector around the two grounds, five are dependent on match days;
  - for every 100 jobs in the clubs' suppliers, nine are dependent on the trade the firm has with the clubs
  - for every £1 spent by the two clubs combined, 31 pence remains within the local Liverpool economy
- 2.9 Liverpool and Everton compare realistically in terms of size, stature, tradition and fan base to London's two north London rivals, Arsenal and Tottenham. Using the Liverpool findings as a rough template, there appears to be a great deal of potential for London's 12 professional clubs to have a sizeable impact on London's economy.
- 2.10 At present, the only way of estimating this impact is through a report commissioned by LB Islington<sup>19</sup> as part of Arsenal's application to relocate to Ashburton Grove. The report found that the in-situ economic value 'can be felt through the club trading with other businesses'. It also noted that major Premier League clubs had many types of economic relationships that resulted in 'leakages' outside the locality. The report concluded that 'Premier League clubs do attract into a locality people to spend money who otherwise would not have travelled.'<sup>20</sup> In its oral evidence, the LDA agreed that the proposed Arsenal relocation could act as a potential 'regenerative engine'.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *Mayor's Draft Culture Strategy*, GLA, February 2003. p.16

<sup>17</sup> Tottenham Hotspur FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>18</sup> Johnstone, Southern & Taylor, *The Economic Benefits of Football in the City of Liverpool*, Football Industry Group 1999

<sup>19</sup> Southern & Cleland, *The effect of professional sports teams on the image and morale of the local community*, 2001

<sup>20</sup> Southern & Cleland, *The effect of professional sports teams on the image and morale of the local community*, 2001

<sup>21</sup> London Development Agency, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March, 2003

- 2.11 We have not examined in detail the extent to which clubs directly contribute to employment or employment conditions. Arsenal, London's largest club, told us that it currently employs 260 people full-time staff and another 900 part-time staff via themselves and contractors on match days.<sup>22</sup> However, the Islington Stadium Communities Alliance (ISCA) asserts that the 'the majority of [these] jobs are part-time, unskilled, stewarding ones' and that claims of 1,800 new jobs being created by the club's move to its new stadium are 'unproven'.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Community Impact of London's Football Clubs**

- 2.12 Evidence to the Committee demonstrated that there were not just economic benefits from local clubs and stadiums. On the basis of the submissions to the Committee, it would appear that hundreds of thousands of Londoners are assisted by the extensive work that London's clubs undertake in their community (see Appendix B).
- 2.13 A football stadium is often the location for a number of community schemes and football clubs are often the vehicles through which many social projects choose to achieve their aims. Football's broad appeal to young people, the stimulating environment of football stadiums and the respect given to players provides one means of addressing social, health and educational problems in London.
- 2.14 Local boroughs recognise the importance of these schemes. For example, Hounslow Council has insisted that any potential sale of Brentford's Griffin Park Stadium will be conditional on the club maintaining its community programme.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, LB Islington when considering Arsenal's application to relocate to Ashburton Grove, drew favourably on the work already done by Arsenal in the past 15 years and demanded that the work was not only maintained but expanded upon at the new Ashburton Grove site.<sup>25</sup>
- 2.15 Two examples of community initiatives were highlighted to the Committee during a site visit to Tottenham Hotspur's White Hart Lane Stadium: The Prince's Trust's Football Programme and the Home Office's Positives Futures Scheme.

#### Positive Futures

- 2.16 Positive Futures is managed within the Home Office Drugs Strategy Directorate and has an advisory board comprising Sport England, the Youth Justice Board, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Connexions and the Football Foundation. Its aims are to achieve:
- a reduction in youth offending in the locality of a project;
  - a reduction in drug use among 10-16 year olds participating in the schemes;
  - an increase in regular participation in sport and physical activity by 10-16 year olds.

In 2001 the Football Foundation – an organisation funded by the FA Premier League, Sport England and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport – joined

<sup>22</sup> Arsenal FC, written submission, March 2003

<sup>23</sup> 'Arsenal's Plans', ISCA, p.2

<sup>24</sup> Report of Hounslow Sustainable Development Committee, 31 October 2002

<sup>25</sup> LB Islington, written Evidence, February 2003

the national partnership and has, to date, funded an additional 10 projects around the country contributing to the aims of Positive Futures.

- 2.17 The use of football clubs as a vehicle for these projects is part of a wider recognition that 'sport and recreation play an important part in tackling a range of social problems.'<sup>26</sup> The Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme, now an independent charity but still closely associated with the club, is involved with the work of Positive Futures. Their involvement in the scheme has seen 'over 100 participants attend football coaching sessions in an evening, with ages ranging from 8 years to 18' at the Gascoigne estate in Barking.<sup>27</sup>

#### Prince's Trust Football Initiative

- 2.18 The Prince's Trust Scheme operates at the following London clubs: Barnet, Chelsea, Crystal Palace, Fulham, Queen's Park Rangers, Tottenham Hotspur, West Ham United, Wimbledon. The Scheme uses football stadiums as venues for 12 week courses to improve literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Tottenham Hotspur for example has its own resident study centre. The scheme targets unemployed 16-25 year olds. According to the Chair of the Prince's Trust, 4,000 people nationally have used the scheme to date (1,700 in 2002).<sup>28</sup>
- 2.19 These two examples demonstrate that the attraction of football, the reputation of London's clubs and their stadiums's facilities can have a unique role in delivering regenerative aims. That it not to say that this approach is universal. Some clubs take their responsibilities to their local communities very seriously; others are not as doing much as they can.
- 2.20 We are not alone in thinking that clubs are missing a valuable opportunity if they do not take full advantage of their reputation, stadiums and players to become part of their local community. Supporters' Direct point out that 'community schemes are a way to use the power of football for good within an area and a way of cementing relationships with the local area.'<sup>29</sup> The more that football clubs can do to play their role within the community, and demonstrate that their presence benefits all local residents – not just its fans – the easier the relationship will be. This should not just include specific community schemes but, like any large business, by engaging through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and community events. This proactive approach can yield unexpected dividends for clubs. As we heard, 'forging [these] constructive links with the local community can also provide clubs with access to funding opportunities which may otherwise be closed to them.'<sup>30</sup>
- 2.21 A key means for engaging with the local community is through a club's stadium. A recent report noted that 'clubs have under-used assets, often in locations of great need...[and] they appeal to those most excluded from our society.'<sup>31</sup> We would like to see all London football clubs looking into how their stadiums could better serve as a hub for the local community, encouraging local people to

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.drugs.gov.uk/NationalStrategy/YoungPeople/PositiveFutures>

<sup>27</sup> Leyton Orient Community Sports Programme, written Evidence, March 2003

<sup>28</sup> Site Visit, to White Hart Lane, Tottenham Hotspur, 24 March 2003

<sup>29</sup> Supporters' Direct, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>30</sup> *Stadium Communities Handbook*, Federation of Stadium Communities, 1999

<sup>31</sup> McClean M., 'Stadiums as Hubs for Communities: Opportunity, Access and Excitement', *Back Home: Returning Football Clubs to their communities*, Mutuo. March 2003. p.20



conduct activities and programmes at the ground. We agree with one submission to the Committee that noted:

Any further support for professional football clubs must include greater commitment and specific requirements to engage and contribute more directly with their host community – especially as they have so much potential to engage young people in particular.<sup>32</sup>

*Best Practice 1*

**Clubs should seek, wherever possible, to maximise the use of their stadium by their local community (for example, through facilities, use of ground etc).**

- 2.22 Football clubs and their stadiums can play an important role in helping to deliver the regeneration and social inclusion agenda in London. However, as the report commissioned by Islington Council noted, the benefits that local clubs can bring to local communities have to be planned for – they are not ‘an inevitable outcome.’<sup>33</sup>
- 2.23 For this reason, the report considered there was ‘an urgent requirement to fund in-depth research into the dynamic between clubs and their communities, particularly with respect to local regeneration, social inclusion, partnership and capacity building’ and called upon Regional Development Agencies to play a role in advancing this work.<sup>34</sup> When questioned, the LDA told us it had no plans to conduct an investigation into this issue and considered that any assessment of a football stadium’s impact should only be carried out where the need arises.<sup>35</sup>
- 2.24 We disagree; there is value in looking at this issue in more depth. The LDA should commission work to assess the local and regional impact that clubs have on London’s economy and determine exactly what role football based community projects play in delivering the LDA’s agenda for achieving greater social inclusion. As discussed above, we would like this report to examine the extent to which clubs directly generate employment (and the nature and conditions of this employment) and their indirect effects on the local economy.

*Recommendation 1*

**The LDA should commission a study to look at the economic and social impact that London’s professional football clubs have within London’s communities and what can be done to maximise their contribution. One focus should be the type and permanency of the employment created.**

<sup>32</sup> Email from Christine Double (Project Manager: North & East London Sports Network), March 2003

<sup>33</sup> Southern & Cleland, The effect of professional sports teams on the image and morale of the local community, 2001

<sup>34</sup> Southern & Cleland, The effect of professional sports teams on the image and morale of the local community, 2001

<sup>35</sup> :LDA, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

## Football Clubs as Neighbours

- 2.25 Of course, the relationship between clubs and their stadiums and the local community is not always harmonious. At the most basic and immediate level, they are neighbours to hundreds of Londoners and, as we discussed above, a beneficial relationship requires careful nurturing.
- 2.26 For residents who live with an immediate vicinity of a stadium problems include parking difficulties on match days, general traffic and pedestrian congestion, excess litter and the threat of violence. As one resident stated in submitting evidence to the Committee residents can, for one reason or another, find themselves arranging their lives 'around a fixture list.'<sup>36</sup>
- 2.27 The Federation of Stadium Communities' *Stadiums Handbook* highlights how the relationship between local community and clubs can be improved. As they point out, good communication is essential to alleviating potential tension between clubs and their neighbours but the evidence to the Committee suggested great contrast across London's clubs regarding how this has been achieved.
- 2.28 One resident echoed the views of many submissions we received when he noted that in the 18 years he had lived near a major London football club's stadium 'not once has the club contacted us about anything.'<sup>37</sup>
- 2.29 On the other hand, it was clear that several clubs were trying to improve their relations with residents. Wendy Perfect, former board member of Charlton Athletic, explained:
- We try to work with our local residents. If you live round a football club, you are going to have disruption and we recognise that...I will give you an example of that: when the North Stand went up there was a problem with their television signal and the club has...invested £50,000 in an aerial that will address that problem.<sup>38</sup>
- 2.30 Another example of good practice was highlighted by the Griffin Park Residents group. They drew attention to a liaison committee ran in conjunction with the Brentford FC and the local authority (London Borough of Hounslow) that was formalised about six years ago. Held every three months, it is chaired by a local councillor and attended by council officers who are responsible for the issues discussed (for example, litter collection, car parking and community policing). Matt Harmer, Vice Chair of Griffin Park Resident's Association, explained that 'the purpose of the meetings is to find out if something's gone wrong and why? The focus is on making sure it doesn't happen again.'<sup>39</sup>

### *Best Practice 2*

**Clubs should communicate regularly with their neighbours. One proactive approach would be for football clubs, in partnerships with their host local authorities, to seek to establish Resident Liaison Committees. These committees should meet regularly to discuss how match day arrangements and other issues should be handled.**

<sup>36</sup> ISCA, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>37</sup> E-mail from Kim Lovell, March 2003

<sup>38</sup> Charlton Athletic, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>39</sup> Griffin Park Residents Group, Hearing 2, 1 April 2003

- 2.31 The number one complaint from local residents is parking and the effect of parking schemes. Fixtures can often change at short notice and this can mean that residents are unexpectedly unable to park near their home. We heard that some clubs conducted leaflet drops to warn residents when there has been a late change for a fixture, this arrangement is by no means universal.
- 2.32 Concern was expressed that match day parking regulations can have their own problems. For example, the Islington Stadium Communities Alliance observed that 'match day schemes kick in for a very concentrated period of time, four or so hours, when that area is not allowed to have certain types of car, i.e. supporters' cars, and they try to restrict it to residents cars. Residents' cars have a permit but those residents can't have visitors so essentially [there's] a siege mentality.'<sup>40</sup>
- 2.33 The evidence submitted to the Committee strongly suggests that parking schemes must remain at the discretion of each local authority. Each stadium is reached by different means and each has its own arrival and dispersal patterns, levels of attendance and streetscape. In line with the draft London Plan and to reduce inconvenience for local residents, we strongly support parking policies which encourage public transport.

### **London stadiums and public transport**

- 2.34 However, if those parking policies are to be effective, there must be good access to stadiums by public transport. We are concerned that the Mayor's Transport Strategy makes only a vague commitment to supporting 'growth in sport' through transport initiatives in London and includes no specific reference to stadiums - football or otherwise.<sup>41</sup>
- 2.35 A map detailing public transport provision for each league stadium in London is provided at Appendix C. These maps show a significant variation in the level of access to each ground. Evidence from Tottenham Hotspur FC noted that the Tottenham area has seen 'very little inward public, or indeed private investment over the last decades, particularly in new public transport facilities.'<sup>42</sup> It was reluctant to commit to redevelop White Hart Lane unless it was sure that this investment would be forthcoming. In fact, 'without this comfort we will have to relocate to another stadium.'<sup>43</sup>
- 2.36 On the other hand, football games have a significant impact on existing public transport services. As part of the construction of its new stadium, for example, Arsenal has agreed to provide £7.6 million to enlarge Holloway Road tube station and additional funding to improve pedestrian crossings near Drayton Park. Studies predict that for example in the hour immediately following a match that over 35,000 spectators will use the tube or train to leave the area.<sup>44</sup> Obviously, the numbers and type of transport used will vary according to the size of clubs and

<sup>40</sup> ISCA, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>41</sup> 'Transport initiatives and plans which will contribute to improving the cultural life of London by supporting growth in tourism, sport and the creative industries in London', Policy 3.6, *The Mayor's Transport Strategy*, GLA, July 2001. p.78

<sup>42</sup> Tottenham Hotspur FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>43</sup> Tottenham Hotspur FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>44</sup> Mayor's Planning Report, 10 October 2001, paragraphs 68-74

the location of stadiums. Transport for London (TfL) told us that, where possible, special rail, Tube and bus services are run to cope with the additional demand<sup>45</sup>

- 2.37 We will be seeking further evidence from TfL about its contact with London's football clubs and how it proposes to address difficulties with access to stadiums on matchdays.

*Recommendation 2*

**London's football clubs and TfL should work together to improve information about using public transport to attend London's football stadiums. We also recommend that work be done to analyse the public transport services for each stadium and look strategically at how public transport access and provision can be improved. For example, examining arrival and exit patterns of supporters at grounds and what adjustments can be made to timetables to prevent backlog.**

**Making Match Days Safer: Policing London's Football Stadiums**

- 2.38 Police are charged with ensuring the safety of supporters and residents alike on match days. Although there has been marked reduction since the 1980s in the levels of violence inside and outside of stadiums in London, a high level vigilance is still required.
- 2.39 According to the Metropolitan Police Authority (MPA), the cost to the Metropolitan Police for policing London's football during the 2000/01 was at least £7.4m in police staffing costs alone, of which only £1.6 million was recovered from the clubs.<sup>46</sup> A report, which looked at recovering this discrepancy, calculated that a further £5 million could be recovered from Premier League Clubs alone.<sup>47</sup>
- 2.40 Clubs only pay for policing within the confines of their stadiums and are not billed for the policing that is required in the vicinity of a stadium on match days. Evidence to the Committee shows that the costs of policing differ dramatically between London stadiums. For example, patrolling Arsenal's Highbury ground costs £15,000 per match,<sup>48</sup> Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge ground costs £12,000 per match<sup>49</sup>, West Ham's Upton Park costs an average of £7,826 per match,<sup>50</sup> whereas policing Leyton Orient's Brisbane Road averages only £600 per match.<sup>51</sup>
- 2.41 We note that that the Metropolitan Police are currently considering whether they are 'willing to sustain the current level of support to what is a private commercial event held on private premises, either in terms of staffing or the direct cost of barriers and signs.'<sup>52</sup> A change to the *Police Act 1996* is one option.<sup>53</sup> At present,

<sup>45</sup> TfL, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>46</sup> 'MPA Finance Committee Report 08', 16 January 2003

<sup>47</sup> 'MPA Finance Committee Report 08', 16 January 2003

<sup>48</sup> Arsenal FC, written submission, May 2003.

<sup>49</sup> Chelsea FC, written submission, May 2003. Also noted additional £35,000 per game for stewards

<sup>50</sup> West Ham United FC, written submission, April 2003.

<sup>51</sup> Leyton Orient FC, written submission, April 2003

<sup>52</sup> 'MPA Finance Committee Report 08', 16 January 2003

<sup>53</sup> 'MPA Finance Committee Report 08', 16 January 2003

the MPA is currently seeking either an informal contribution from the clubs to the cost of policing or requiring clubs to request policing outside grounds so that they can be charged accordingly.

- 2.42 The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) is not the only service who claim that they are out of pocket. Unlike the MPS, the British Transport Police has no means of recovering the cost of policing football crowds on the Tube or rail services. According to its submission to the Committee, costs of policing football nationally were £9.3 million (7.8% of its total budget) and over one third of its overtime budget is spent on policing football.<sup>54</sup>
- 2.43 The issues around policing are not just about match days. Arsenal's recent success in the FA Cup Final was not followed this year by the usual victory parade. Among concerns expressed by the council and the Metropolitan Police was the cost of this. The Met also indicated that the safety aspects of a large public celebration which, of necessity, has little planning time are a matter of great concern and strongly influenced the decision not to go ahead with the victory parade. We have not been able to look into this issue in our report but feel that further work needs to be done about the roles expected of local councils, football clubs and the police for these events.
- 2.44 Football clubs are very quick to draw attention to the wider impact of their presence on their local area when it comes to community projects that they sponsor or the wider economic impact that they have. The impact that large crowds going to a football match have is not confined to the stadium alone and the policing of football matches reflects this. The responsibilities that clubs have to their immediate communities should extend to the provision of adequate policing on match days.

*Recommendation 3*

**The Committee calls upon football clubs to actively engage with the MPA and British Transport Police to seek a resolution to the funding discrepancy so that a voluntary or informal arrangement can be established preventing the need for changes to legislation.**

<sup>54</sup> British Transport Police, written submission, March 2003

### 3. Home or Away? The pressures that face London clubs

- 3.1 Two widely recognised pressures prompt a club to consider renovating their current ground or leaving their stadium altogether.
- 3.2 The first and most pressing are the rules of the FA Premier League and Football League. The death of 96 Liverpool FC fans at Hillsborough Stadium in 1989 forced the government and football to think again about spectator safety. English stadiums had been left largely undeveloped for decades and were unsafe, inhospitable places. The Taylor Report, responding to the disaster, demanded drastic changes to the stadiums of all clubs playing in the top two divisions in England.
- 3.3 Now, almost every club plays in all seater stadiums across England's top two divisions and any side getting promoted to football's second tier, Football League Division One, has three years to conform to the rule. The FA Premier League allowed Fulham to play the 2001-02 season at Craven Cottage in the Premiership with terracing but the rules have since been tightened. Now, any club playing in the Premier League must play their home matches in an all-seater stadium.<sup>55</sup>
- 3.4 For clubs playing or wishing to play in the Football League's lower two divisions, there are criteria a club's home ground must meet as well – including sufficient away support and safe terracing, as well as minimum capacity and seating at stadiums (6000 people, 2000 seats).<sup>56</sup> For example, Barnet FC who currently play in the division immediately below the Football League – the Conference – would not be permitted promotion to the Football League because its ground only has a capacity for 5,500 people.
- 3.5 The changes brought about by the Taylor Report were part of a series of changes to hit football in the 1990s. The revenues of clubs increased dramatically due to football's increased appeal and lucrative television deals. Between 1994 and 1999, average revenues in the Premier League almost trebled from just under £11.5 million to £33.5 million. There was a similar, though less spectacular, growth in the other divisions. Average Division One clubs revenues rose from £3.8 million a year in 1994 to £6.7 million in 1999; Division 2 from £1.4 million to £3.7 million and Division 3 from £1 million to £1.4 million.<sup>57</sup>
- 3.6 However, over the same period, players' wages and other expenditure (for example transfer costs) grew even more rapidly.<sup>58</sup> As one report notes, at the Premier League level 'even taking into account the enormous new TV deals...wages will outstrip available income in just five years time.'<sup>59</sup> In the lower levels, the collapse of television deals with the now defunct ITV Digital and the drying-up of income from the transfer market has meant that clubs urgently require new forms of revenue to remain financially viable.
- 3.7 One way in which this additional revenue can be generated is through redeveloping the existing site or building a larger stadium. Seven day-a-week

<sup>55</sup> Section I, Part 2, 'Ground Criteria', *FA Premier League Handbook*.

<sup>56</sup> Football League Rules, Appendix 1

<sup>57</sup> Dobson S & Goddard J, *The Economics of Football*, Cambridge University Press, p.97

<sup>58</sup> Dobson S & Goddard J, *The Economics of Football*, Cambridge University Press, p.97

<sup>59</sup> Williams J & Neatrou S, 'The New Economics of Football', University of Leicester, March 2002

facilities (for example, restaurants and conference centres), other commercial activities and additional seating can dramatically bolster the club's coffers. For example, Arsenal, London's largest and most successful club, seats 38,000 fans. Manchester United and Newcastle have developed capacities of 67,000 and 57,000 respectively. In cash terms, this difference is estimated to earn Manchester United around £1 million more per match than Arsenal.<sup>60</sup>

- 3.8 Most clubs across the country have been able to renovate their stadiums, including some notable success stories in London. West Ham United and Charlton Athletic (See Case Study 2, Page 36) have redeveloped their existing stadiums; Crystal Palace and Queens Park Rangers have adapted their grounds without any great difficulty and Leyton Orient are ready to embark on an innovative development of its existing ground in conjunction with a property developer who plan to use the space at the each corner of ground to develop housing. The greatest transformation has perhaps taken place at Chelsea's Stamford Bridge, where a 40,000 all seater stadium with restaurants, a hotel, casino and conference centre has replaced a disused dog track and dilapidated terracing.
- 3.9 Yet, as we have explored in this report, several of London's professional and non-league football clubs are struggling to redevelop their existing stadium or relocate to a new ground. Their reasons vary but the problems they face are the same – a lack of suitable land and high costs.
- 3.10 In cities like Leicester and Southampton where stadiums have recently been built, clubs have been able to relocate within their fan base and within the boundaries of the same planning authority where the previous ground existed. London's clubs do not have this luxury. The high cost and short supply of suitable sites in London as well as the regional planning restrictions imposed on future sales and purchases of sites has meant that London clubs find it more difficult than clubs from outside of London to secure new sites.
- 3.11 Evidence to the Committee illustrated this fact. Barnet FC in searching for a new site felt disadvantaged as 'no site exists which is not free from one constraint or another';<sup>61</sup> LB Hounslow admitted that the options for Brentford were limited because 'development land in West London is expensive, in short supply and is subject to competing demands from a variety of land uses [and] other land of less high value lies within the green belt or is designated as open space [so] there is a strong presumption against development.'<sup>62</sup> Wimbledon FC told us that it had contacted every single local authority with suitable land within a 25 mile radius of its former ground, Plough Lane, and finally extended its search to the outskirts of Brighton. 'Every single [authority] wrote back with a no.'<sup>63</sup>
- 3.12 By way of example, we highlight some of the pressures and constraints on particular football clubs in London at every level.

<sup>60</sup> See [http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/soccer/news/2003/05/05/arsenal\\_reax\\_ap/](http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/soccer/news/2003/05/05/arsenal_reax_ap/)

<sup>61</sup> Keep Barnet Alive, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>62</sup> LB Hounslow, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>63</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

### **Arsenal (Premier League)**

3.13 Arsenal's manager, Arsene Wenger recently commented:

If the club wants to become one of the biggest in the world, of course [it needs the stadium]. At the moment it has no more financial potential than seven or eight other clubs in the league.<sup>64</sup>

Redeveloping Highbury, Arsenal's existing ground, will only increase its capacity to 48,000 since it is hemmed in by housing redevelopment.<sup>65</sup> This was considered inadequate by the club if they wanted to compete effectively with other top English and European clubs. For this reason, Arsenal has sought a move to a new 60,000 seat stadium at Ashburton Grove.

### **Fulham (Premier League)**

3.14 Fulham's need to develop or relocate was two-fold. As explained above, its Craven Cottage ground, which had terracing at either end, was unfit for the Premiership. Having been recently promoted and with a sizeable investment from a high profile chairman, the club felt that a new stadium was required to keep pace with the club's progress on the pitch. Closing either end and reducing capacity was not financially feasible and so they elected to move temporarily to share Lotfus Road with Queens Park Rangers to the north of its host borough, Hammersmith & Fulham. They planned to redevelop Craven Cottage over a two-year period. Fulham's plans were constricted by a listed building on one side of the ground and the River Thames on the other. Planning permission was granted by LB Hammersmith and Fulham for work to go ahead on a 35,000 seat new stadium that would have incorporated many of the revenue raising features required of a seven day a week stadium. However, spiralling costs have since meant that Fulham have had to withdrawal those plans; its future remains in limbo. Options to ground share, acquire a new site or to return to the Cottage are still under consideration.

### **Brentford Football Club (Football League Division 2)**

3.15 Brentford FC's long-term survival hinges on its relocation. Brentford FC operate at a loss, currently estimated to be £500,000 a season.<sup>66</sup> Its Griffin Park Stadium has a capacity of just over 12,000 but a third of this is terracing. The stadium is hemmed in on all sides by residential properties. Previous attempts to develop the stadium, by either increasing the amount of seating or building facilities for corporate and conference entertainment have been rejected by the local authority, LB Hounslow. There is a consensus between the club, its supporters and the local authority that Brentford cannot remain at Griffin Park as a sustainable entity. As the LB Hounslow stated, 'the introduction of income generating activities is essential to the long-term financial sustainability of the club. These cannot be accommodated on the existing site.'<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> 'No rest for Wenger', *Guardian*, 7 May 2003.

<sup>65</sup> Arsenal FC, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March, 2003

<sup>66</sup> Ron Noades, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>67</sup> Report of Hounslow Sustainable Development Committee, 31 October 2002



### **Barnet FC (Conference League)**

- 3.16 As discussed in paragraph 3.4, Barnet's current ground, Underhill, does not meet the criteria to advance to the Football League should it be promoted. Not only is capacity insufficient but the pitch slopes and spectator accommodation is sub-standard. Once the Conference League adopts Football League criteria in 2004, it is possible that Barnet will be regulated to the Ryman Premier League because of its inability to meet these criteria.
- 3.17 The Barnet FC supporters group, Keep Barnet Alive (KBA), told us that 'the current stadium offers virtually no facilities which can be utilised by the wider community' and 'little or no scope for earning revenue from non-playing activities which could help secure the financial future of the club.'<sup>68</sup> Due to the proximity of housing and other facilities around the ground, the club has determined that it cannot redevelop its existing stadium within its current planning 'footprint'.
- 3.18 KBA claims that the club has surveyed over 50 sites and has found only two alternatives – a move to an existing athletics stadium at Copthall or a significant expansion at the current site (South Underhill proposal). Permission for the Copthall option was denied in 1999 and the South Underhill proposal, though receiving initial approval from Barnet Council's planning Committee and the consent of the Mayor has not been progressed due to concerns over the scale of the development. The club has considered ground sharing with Leyton Orient as a temporary solution and, from the evidence to the Committee, has been involved in subsequent negotiations with Barnet Council over the South Underhill site. The Council has declared themselves willing to work with Barnet FC to find a mutually agreeable solution.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Keep Barnet FC Alive, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>69</sup> Barnet Council – Motion 9.1, 9 July 2002

## 4. Keeping football in London

4.1 Due to the pressures outlined in the previous chapter, several clubs in London are considering redevelopment or relocation. Bearing in mind that most clubs wish to stay in (or in some cases, return to) their local area, we examine what football authorities, the local boroughs, the Mayor and the clubs themselves can do to make the process of relocation or redevelopment easier.

4.2 While we wish to encourage London clubs to remain within London, we do not advocate radical changes to the planning process or any 'special treatment' for particular clubs. The Chairman of Brentford suggested that decisions about redevelopment or relocation of stadiums should be:

[taken] out of..the local authority's hands because you start coming up against people with a vested interest...If we go to Feltham, three councillors are acting on behalf of the residents of Feltham and they don't want us [there]. Somebody really has to designate where we can relocate to...<sup>70</sup>

4.3 We understand these frustrations but do not agree that decisions on football stadiums should be treated any differently to other forms of planning application. Our major concern is to ensure strategic recognition is given to the value of football clubs and stadiums and that the planning process does not discriminate against smaller clubs. Successful Premier League clubs are in a much better position to shoulder the costs of acquiring land, hiring consultants and bearing the costs and additional planning obligations of a lengthy planning process.<sup>71</sup> As Arsenal acknowledged, it is much harder 'for clubs like [Leyton] Orient because..they do not have those sorts of resources, they don't have that sort of depth of support to be able to finance that type of move.'<sup>72</sup>

4.4 Even where a club has substantial resources and support from its local authority, it can run into trouble. On 16 April 2003, Arsenal released a statement to the Stock Exchange, which advised that the complexity of the project had led to delays. Although still 'fully committed to Ashburton Grove', it would be 'unable to deliver a stadium opening for the start of the 2005-06 season.'<sup>73</sup>

### Redeveloping or relocating

4.5 When a club decides to move or significantly redevelop its stadium, it is embarking on a massive undertaking.

4.6 The estimated costs of Arsenal's moves from Highbury, their home since 1913, to Ashburton Grove, less than a mile away from its current site, is estimated to cost 'well in excess of £300 million.'<sup>74</sup> The development is the largest planning application that the London Borough of Islington has ever received and will, once completed, be the largest stadium development for a club ever built on a new site

<sup>70</sup> Ron Noades, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>71</sup> For example, in the case of its relocation to Ashburton Grove, Arsenal resourced Islington's project team looking at the bid, without prejudice to Islington's independence as a local planning authority.

<sup>72</sup> Arsenal FC, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>73</sup> Official Statement, Arsenal FC, 16 April 2003

<sup>74</sup> Arsenal FC, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

in Britain.<sup>75</sup> Arsenal estimated the lengthy consultation and planning process alone cost the club in the region of £15 million.<sup>76</sup> Tottenham Hotspur FC estimates the costs of redeveloping parts of their existing stadium to achieve 45,000 capacity at between £50 - £100 million.<sup>77</sup>

- 4.7 Planning applications for football stadiums need to:
- Comply with local planning policy as set out in borough Unitary Development Plans.
  - Meet the strategic objectives set out in the Mayor's London Plan
  - May be referred to the Mayor as a strategic planning application (this is likely because of the likely scale and complexity of such applications)
  - May be subject to Section 106 agreements (planning gain) at both a local and strategic level (for example, agreement to fund additional transport improvements).
  - May be called in by the Secretary of State (see paragraph 4.21 below)
- 4.8 Throughout the whole of this process, the club – in partnership with the local authority – has to consult local residents and seek to gain the support of the clubs' fans. The process is, by necessity, lengthy.

### **The role of the local authorities**

- 4.9 The most important relationship throughout the planning process is that between the club and the local authority. Their interaction is the most important element in determining whether they remain in the local area. As one club told us '[only] the local authority can identify and give planning consent for a ground in the borough.'<sup>78</sup> Arsenal made it clear that they wanted to remain in Islington; 'this is where our home was and this is where we wanted to stay'<sup>79</sup> and it was fortunate that Islington Council broadly agreed and endeavoured to assist that aim. The relationship between Wimbledon FC and the London Borough of Merton, and that of Barnet FC and its local council, demonstrate that this is not always the case.
- 4.10 Evidence received from supporters' groups argues that 'where the possibility of relocation exists, statutory authorities should use their influence and powers to ensure that such a relocation is appropriate to the club's community identity, and does not encroach upon the traditional catchment area of another club.'<sup>80</sup>
- 4.11 We have identified at least two examples in London where local authorities have used their influence in this way. London Borough of Hounslow has attached planning (Section 106) conditions which state that permission to change Brentford FC's Griffin Park site from a recreational site to a residential site will only be granted should another site for the club be identified within Hounslow or

<sup>75</sup> The 60,000 seat new stadium involves the redevelopment of three separate sites; a community centre, a waste and recycling centre and nurseries and health facilities; 2,000 new and refurbished homes, over 17,000m<sup>2</sup> of business space, almost 11,000m<sup>2</sup> of financial and retail space and contributions to three tube stations, an overground station and a match day parking scheme.

<sup>76</sup> Arsenal FC, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>77</sup> Tottenham Hotspur FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>78</sup> Ron Nades, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>79</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>80</sup> Back to the Cottage, written evidence, March 2003

an adjoining borough. The site would also be subject to a provision of green space and a percentage of affordable housing. In addition, the club's community work should continue within the Brentford area.

- 4.12 London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham has marked the Craven Cottage site where Fulham FC played up to the end of last season as a site for recreational and sporting use only. Like Hounslow, permission to change the use of this site would only be granted should another site be identified within the borough. Any proposed development must also incorporate a percentage of affordable housing.
- 4.13 While these planning conditions do not prevent a club from physically relocating away from its traditional area, they restrict the ability of a club to realise the full value of its major asset, its existing stadium, without first securing another ground within the general area. In effect, these conditions force a club to remain near to its traditional ground.
- 4.14 As a submission from football supporters approvingly noted, this approach 'protects the long-term future of professional football clubs within the local communities to which they are closely tied, and simultaneously prevents owners from taking advantage of the commercial value of the site of a football stadium whilst leaving the club itself to sink into oblivion.'<sup>81</sup>
- 4.15 We support the use of planning conditions provided they retain a degree of flexibility in the case of relocation. As one club pointed out, 'borough boundaries are fairly arbitrary'<sup>82</sup> and most London clubs were in existence well before the current boundaries. Neighbouring boroughs as well as the home borough itself should be taken into account to reflect the club's links with its community and its reach in terms of a wider community impact.
- 4.16 Unsurprisingly, several clubs told us that they felt 'boxed in' by the local authorities' approach. Ron Noades, former Chairman of Brentford, explained the frustration that contributed to his resignation:
- [Hounslow Council's approach] meant, unless I could find a ground in the borough, we couldn't move, and as we had no resources to find one without selling our ground, it was impossible to do anything. The club was slowing losing £500,000 a year which was coming out of the resources we might have from the asset value of our ground.<sup>83</sup>

### **The role of the Mayor**

- 4.17 The Mayor can influence local authorities' planning decisions on stadiums in two ways:
- Directing local authorities to refuse specific planning applications if he has sufficient reason to do so; and
  - Through the requirement in law for the local Unitary Development Plan to conform to the London Plan

<sup>81</sup> Back to the Cottage, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>82</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>83</sup> Ron Noades, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

### Directing refusal for specific planning applications

- 4.18 Arsenal's application was referred to the Mayor because the application contained development that impacted on a number of areas that allows an application to be referred such as the number of houses, the size of the land involved, the location and the height of the application to name a few.<sup>84</sup>
- 4.19 For this reason, it is worth noting the comments of Ken Friar, Director of Arsenal Football Club, on the Mayoral and government interventions. In his view, the only positive Government intervention he has witnessed is the likely confirmation of Islington Council's Compulsory Purchase Order. He felt that the way in which the Mayor and Government could best assist a club to redevelop or relocate would be:
- The Mayor committing to the principle of a particular project at an early stage, and working with the Borough to prepare the Planning Brief, Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Opinion, and other 'base' documents.
  - The Mayor channelling resources to the new facilities, to help cover the massive infrastructure costs, rather than seeking to siphon off value by way of planning gain.
  - The Government Office giving guidance at an early stage as to its likely attitude towards the development proposal, and how best to avoid call-in.
  - The Government Office responding rapidly to the referral of the papers after determination by the Borough.
  - The Secretary of State being prepared to give full weight to the intangible community benefits of football clubs remaining in their traditional areas, when deciding on both calling-in and compulsory purchase.<sup>85</sup>
- 4.20 As to the Mayor's intervention in Arsenal's case, Mr Friar's view was mixed. While appreciating the Mayor's support, he felt that the drive by local authorities and the Greater London Authority to secure additional financial obligations (planning gain) to fund housing and transport 'nearly jeopardised the scheme.'<sup>86</sup> Arsenal has since reiterated to the Committee that these obligations, 'while understandable, have the potential to jeopardise the whole regeneration scheme.'<sup>87</sup>
- 4.21 Others noted that the Mayor's intervention had a largely positive effect in the case of the Arsenal application. Normally, the Secretary of State has the power to 'call in' an application for his own determination; that is, to transfer the responsibility for deciding the application from the London borough to the Government.<sup>88</sup> We heard that without the Mayor, it was likely that the Arsenal application would be 'called in'. This could 'delay things by up to 9 or 15 months...[and would have been] more expensive if the Mayor had not been involved.'<sup>89</sup>

<sup>84</sup> 'Mayoral Planning report PDU/0138/02, Arsenal FC Developments at Highbury Stadium; Ashburton Grove & Eden Grove/ Lough Road, London N5 & N7', 10 October 2001

<sup>85</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>86</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>87</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>88</sup> This power is exercised selectively and in general only when issues of more than local importance arise from the application- for example where an application conflicts with national policy or could have significant effects beyond the immediate locality.

<sup>89</sup> Roger Hepher, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

- 4.22 We are pleased to note that the Mayor's intervention in these issues appears to minimise both the cost and the time period of the planning process. It is the Mayor's responsibility to ensure there is a balance between, in this case, a football clubs' legitimate desire to redevelop or relocate and the community interest.

#### The London Plan

- 4.23 At a more strategic level, the Mayor is in the process of finalising his London Plan,<sup>90</sup> which will replace existing strategic guidance<sup>91</sup>, and set out regional planning and strategic guidance that London's 32 boroughs and the City of London must conform to in their Unitary Development Plans (UDPs). This regional overview could deliver real benefits, especially where London clubs are looking to relocate across London borough boundaries. We heard that:
- One advantage of the GLA's involvement and its role in London is that where it's necessary to contemplate relocation across borough boundaries...then we have an Authority which is able to take that comprehensive strategic view. I was thinking of the situation at the moment in Greater Manchester where there was the possibility of a club - not a football club in this case but another sports club - wanting to relocate from one borough to another borough. I can see all sorts of political problems arising in terms of rivalries between the respective borough councils [when] there is no strategic body to take things in hand.<sup>92</sup>
- 4.24 Currently, the Mayor's draft London Plan proposes that 'the Mayor will work with Sport England, boroughs and other agencies to promote and develop London's sporting facilities.'<sup>93</sup> The draft Plan also recommends that boroughs should 'identify sites for major international, national sports stadiums and facilities that meet the requirements of the English Institute of Sport's national network of sports centres (including Crystal Palace)' and sets out criteria for considering proposals.
- 4.25 As we have made clear in this report, football stadiums play a valuable part in London's communities and sporting heritage. As such, they have a strong case for consideration within the Mayor's London Plan.
- 4.26 There are limits on the extent to which the Mayor can, or should, dictate how local authorities should deal with planning decisions in relation to stadiums. However, we do not believe the current version of the London Plan goes far enough in recognising the cultural importance and value to the community of London's football stadiums. We believe that where professional sporting clubs play an historic and regenerative role within its community, this role should be preserved by requesting that local authorities only permit the relocation of stadiums if these clubs have been able to demonstrate that they have exhausted options to stay in their traditional area. As we note above, some local authorities have already taken this approach.

<sup>90</sup> The draft Plan has just undergone the Examination in Public and a revised, final version of the Plan is scheduled in December 2003. The Mayor is committed to an Annual Report on the Plan's progress as well as a formal review of the Plan in the next Mayoral term.

<sup>91</sup> *Regional Planning Guidance for London (RPG3)*, GOL, 1996

<sup>92</sup> Roger Hepher, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>93</sup> Policy 3D.6, *The draft London Plan*, GLA, June 2002

#### *Recommendation 4*

**We welcome the role that the Greater London Authority appears to have brought to speeding up the consideration of major planning applications for stadiums.**

**We recommend that the text of the Mayor's draft London Plan is altered in the following ways (changes in italics).**

**Policy 3.D6: The Mayor will work with *boroughs, Sport England, and other agencies* to promote, develop *and where appropriate preserve* London's *playing and professional* sporting facilities. This may include the promotion of London as the home of the 2012 Olympics Games and para Olympics.**

**Changes to supporting text (page 210):**

**'In reviewing UDPs, boroughs should identify sites for major international, national *and local* sports stadiums and facilities that meet the requirements of the English Institute of Sport's national network of sports centres (including Crystal Palace) and the needs of more specialist sports activities such as football academies.**

**In considering proposals for sports facilities boroughs should ensure that:**

- **a sequential approach is applied**
- **sites have good access by public transport, cycling and walking or improved access is planned**
- **facilities are accessible to all sections of the community, including disabled people**
- **new provision is focused on areas with existing deficiencies in facilities**
- **the multiple use of facilities is encouraged, including those of schools and commercial organisations.**
- ***Where there is a widely recognised historic and regenerative role played by professional sporting clubs within its community, that this role is preserved, and the redevelopment of the existing site should only be permitted if these clubs have been able to demonstrate:***
  - ***that they have exhausted the possibility of remaining at their existing location before considering leaving***
  - ***that they have exhausted the possibility of remaining within their host borough or an agreed neighbouring borough***

#### **Role of the Football Authorities**

- 4.27 The influence of the Football Association and the Football League on relocations and redevelopments is substantial. As discussed in Chapter 3, their rules have often instigated the need for the relocation or redevelopment in the first place. Ultimately, through the application of rules for playing within their leagues, the

Football League and Football Association can, and should, act to protect the game.

- 4.28 The FA Premier League rules relating to club grounds make explicit the desire to maintain the link between the name of a club and its traditional location. They state that, in considering whether to allow a club to play in the Premiership:<sup>94</sup>

the Board shall not consent unless reasonably satisfied that such consent would be appropriate having in mind the relationship (if any) between the locality with which by its name or otherwise the applicant Club is traditionally associated and that in which such Club proposes to establish its ground; and

the Board shall not consent unless reasonably satisfied that such consent would not adversely affect such Club's Officials, Players, supporters, shareholders, sponsors and others having an interest in its activities.

- 4.29 Similarly, Football League rules state that:

the Board will not generally approve any ground sharing arrangement where the club plays its matches outside of the conurbation, as defined by the Board, from which the club takes its name or which it is traditionally otherwise associated.

The location of the ground, in its relation to the conurbation, as defined by the Board, from which the club takes its name or is otherwise associated, must meet with the approval of the Board.<sup>95</sup>

- 4.30 Charles Koppel told us that, even once the club moves to Milton Keynes it will still be called Wimbledon Football Club – 'that's our history and tradition of the club... we're still the same club moving forward.'<sup>96</sup>

- 4.31 As Supporters' Direct point out, this sets a precedent that 'not only allows franchising, and the threat of a local community losing its cherished club. It allows all aspects of regulation to be challenged.'<sup>97</sup> We agree that if the intent of the FA and Football League's rules is not enforced then football in London will suffer.

- 4.32 We want to see the football authorities clearly state what sanctions will be taken for those clubs who do not comply with their rules. At the very least, we believe that once a club's connection with its traditional area has been permanently severed, the name of a club should reflect its new location. As one supporter told us 'you cannot just buy a team off the shelf and take their rights and history.'<sup>98</sup>

#### *Recommendation 5*

**The FA and Football League rules regarding ground location emphasise the importance of retaining links with the historic area. We recommend that both organisations should also clarify what sanctions will be imposed for not complying with these rules.**

<sup>94</sup> Section I, Part 2, 'Ground Criteria', *FA Premier League Handbook*.

<sup>95</sup> Appendix 1, Part 3, Football League rules

<sup>96</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>97</sup> Supporters' Direct, written evidence, March 2003

<sup>98</sup> Email from Darran Jennison, February 2003



## Role of football clubs

- 4.33 It was clear from the evidence that we received that good communication with both the local authority, supporters and local residents is crucial to gaining support for a redevelopment or relocation.
- 4.34 In terms of relations with the local authority, Brentford and Arsenal told us that they found that an 'open book' policy was useful in gaining the trust and cooperation of the councils. Arsenal told us that they 'made all of the figures available to both Islington and, indeed, to others within Government offices that asked for them.'<sup>99</sup> This was particularly important for realistically negotiating elements of planning gain – for example, settling on transport improvements and affordable housing.

### *Recommendation 6*

**Football clubs should adopt an open book policy with the local and regional planning authority throughout an application.**

- 4.35 Redevelopment or relocation tends to aggravate the relationship between those in the boardroom and those in the stands. Ron Noades, former Chairman of Brentford FC, told us that 'boards of directors are no different to supporters; they're supporters with the business acumen to become a director.' Yet a sample of evidence provided to the Committee demonstrates that many fans feel isolated from their club's board:

'The existing supporters groups were founded because of a problem between the club and the supporters and there was no communication at all at one point.' – Bees United<sup>100</sup>

'I think part of the reason I'm here and Back to the Cottage exists is because the communication between club and fans has effectively broken down in the past year or so.' – Back to the Cottage

'Essentially the club spent its time looking for different ways to talk to supporters because they didn't like what the supporters thought.' – AFC Wimbledon

- 4.36 Moves to new stadiums by Derby County, Southampton and Manchester City show that the relationship between clubs and supporters over this issue need not be antagonistic. In some cases, organising an independent ballot of season ticket and club members could assist. For example, although Everton's move will not go ahead and Leeds United's relocation may be on hold, both clubs polled their supporters when determining whether to move to another site. AFC Wimbledon and Chesterfield, both clubs owned by supporters, have also held votes amongst their fans on where they should play their games.<sup>101</sup>

### *Best Practice 3*

**An independent ballot of all season ticket holders and club members requiring a majority (from the forms returned) in favour of relocation.**

<sup>99</sup> Arsenal FC, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

<sup>100</sup> John McGlashan, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>101</sup> Submission from Supporters' Trust

### Supporters' trusts

- 4.37 In the longer term, the most effective way of ensuring communication is to involve supporters more closely with the business decisions of the club. As a spokesperson for Back to the Cottage put it, 'Fulham fans don't want to be in conflict with the club. We want to be working with the club to make sure it's successful and viable in the long term.'<sup>102</sup> AFC Wimbledon pointed out there are a 'huge numbers of professional people in supporters trusts: accountants, lawyers, surveyors, stadium architects and planning experts'<sup>103</sup>. Supporters' Direct also made the point that 'there is a solid commercial case for any club to involve its supporters more closely because of the consequential revenue streams that come in through increased gates.'<sup>104</sup>
- 4.38 As part of our investigation we received evidence from several organisations who had formed supporters trusts under the auspices of the Government's Supporters' Direct initiative. Unlike some other fan organisations, these trusts aim to provide a democratic and accountable structure by which fans can influence their clubs, seek to collectively acquire shares (and therefore voting power) in their football club and eventually secure a position on the club's board.
- 4.39 We take the point that 'a lot of these trusts are new and it will take time to see what transpires and whether there'll be a greater level of trust between supporters and supporters trusts because of their ownership in it.'<sup>105</sup> However, initial signs are promising. The democratic nature of supporters trusts means that those representing the trust are accountable to the fans.
- 4.40 To date, representatives from supporters trusts have tended to be included on the boards of smaller clubs (where a financial stake is easier to obtain) or when clubs are in crisis – for example, Port Vale, York, Bournemouth and Leicester. Eight of London's professional clubs have trusts established amongst their supporters; only one, Brentford, have managed to achieve boardroom representation.<sup>106</sup> We believe there may be a strong case for more London football clubs to consider including a representative from its supporters trust on the board.
- 4.41 Allowing representatives from the supporters' trust on to the board can promote a greater understanding of the pressures on the club's board and offer a 'moral authority' to a club's decision making process. Brian Lomax, Head of Supporters Direct, told us 'sometimes I had to explain to the fans what the board position was just as much and just as forcefully as I would explain to the board what the fans' position was. You're not simply there as a flag waver; you're there to promote communication.'<sup>107</sup>

#### *Recommendation 7*

**We support the growing democratisation of fans' organisations through structures like the Supporters Direct model.**

<sup>102</sup> Tom Greatrex, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>103</sup> Kris Stewart, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>104</sup> Supporters Direct, written submission, March 2003

<sup>105</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>106</sup> Charlton Athletic do have supporter representation at board level (but not via a supporters trust). Enfield FC and AFC Wimbledon, both non-league clubs, are run by trusts.

<sup>107</sup> Brian Lomax, Evidentiary hearing 1, 21 March 2003

*Best Practice 4*

**Where a supporters' trust has a significant membership (for example, 10% of the clubs total membership), clubs should consider allowing a member of that organisation to join its board.**

## 5 Share & Share Alike: Is ground sharing the solution?

- 5.1 The possibility of clubs sharing existing stadiums emerged again and again as a solution to the seemingly intractable problems of scant space and expensive redevelopment or relocation costs in London. As we discuss below, ground share in London has tended to occur by default and in its current state is unlikely to solve the problem.

### Landlord & Tenant arrangements

- 5.2 London, like no other city in England, has a history of ground share. Since 1986, at least one stadium has been the venue for more than one club. Below is a table outlining the recent history of ground share in London. Bar Bristol Rovers and Brighton who had temporary ground share arrangements in Bath and Gillingham respectively during the 80 & 90s, all ground-sharing arrangements have been in London.

Year	Tenant	Host Club/Stadium
1985-1991	<b>Charlton Athletic</b>	<b>Crystal Palace</b> /Selhurst Park
1991-93	<b>Charlton Athletic</b>	<b>West Ham</b> /Upton Park
1991-2003	<b>Wimbledon FC</b>	<b>Crystal Palace</b> /Selhurst Park
2002-2004	<b>Fulham FC</b>	<b>Queen's Park Rangers</b> /Loftus Road
2002-	<b>AFC Wimbledon</b>	<b>Kingstonians</b> /Kingsmeadow

- 5.3 Each ground share was embarked upon for different reasons. In the case of Charlton Athletic, the board sold the lease to the ground, without consulting supporters, when the club ran into financial trouble. Wimbledon's Plough Lane ground was deemed unfit for use in the Premiership by the club's board and was sold – albeit in a long, tangled and arduous process. The longest ground share arrangement to date began at Selhurst Park between Crystal Palace and Wimbledon which will infamously draw to a close this summer. AFC Wimbledon formed on the basis of that decision now play at Kingsmeadow, the home of Kingstonians, outside of Merton, but closer to its core fan base than Selhurst Park.
- 5.4 The situation at Fulham remains unclear. At the time of writing, Fulham's short term plans will see them play a second season at QPR's Loftus Road stadium. Rumours persist however that a longer-term arrangement is being sought with Chelsea FC to share its Stamford Bridge stadium.
- 5.5 However, there is a significant barrier to any progress on this potential arrangement. London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, in agreeing to the development of Chelsea's West Stand in 1999, attached a limit to the number of games that could be played at Stamford Bridge. This effectively rules out any ground share as two sets of home league fixtures would easily exceed the 30 game limit. Any change to such an agreement would take at least a six-month

process and has already met strong local opposition. One resident claimed that the ground share arrangement would place an 'intolerable strain on the local community'<sup>108</sup> and local councillors too have rallied to oppose any changes to the current arrangements.

- 5.6 Brent and Islington have attached major event quota arrangements, which effectively rule out ground share, to the recent applications at Wembley and Ashburton Grove respectively. And as the rumour of a proposed change at Stamford Bridge demonstrated, they are conditions which residents and local councillors are keen to protect. In short, ground sharing tends to be very unpopular with residents since it doubles the impact that a football stadium has on a particular area.
- 5.7 Ground sharing arrangements have also proved to be unpopular with fans and have consequently been temporary. In the evidence we have received, the reason was clear; the landlord-tenant relationship has built in tensions which are very difficult to resolve. Charles Koppel detailed Wimbledon's frustration at Selhurst Park. The stadium 'was branded in their colours, their logos and their staff.'<sup>109</sup> Judging by the dwindling attendance figures, Fulham FC's ground share at Loftus Road is not working. As Arsene Wenger recently commented, each club having its own ground is part of a 'special culture in England and you have to respect that.'<sup>110</sup>
- 5.8 A further issue is that of revenue. Charles Koppel estimated that in excess of £50 million was lost to Wimbledon FC over the 12 years the club played at Selhurst Park through not having its own source revenues, such as catering. As Ron Noades, who was the chairman of Crystal Palace when the club hosted both Charlton and Wimbledon, put it – 'ground sharing is marvellous for the club owning the freehold but ground sharing only works long term if a new stadium is built and two clubs move to it.'
- 5.9 Ground sharing under this model has been therefore the 'temporary expedient' Arsenal referred to in its written evidence. Clubs have used this temporary measure to bridge a gap over a development of its stadium. The problem arising from this temporary solution has been that it has been subject to abuse.
- 5.10 Substantial delay in obtaining a new site or redeveloping the old stadium could mean that the club's primary asset – the value of its ground – is expended on the day to day running of the club. In the case of both Fulham and Wimbledon, clubs have found themselves 'temporarily' ground sharing with no fixed plans in place to move to its own ground. The long-term future of the club is called into question as the club drifts further and further from its roots. Once this happens you get the problems experienced by Wimbledon FC and the suspicions, unfounded or not, at Brentford and Fulham that another 'Wimbledon' might occur.
- 5.11 We are pleased to see that there is evidence that the FA and Football League have hardened their stance on 'temporary' arrangements. For example, Brighton were allowed to play in Gillingham during the late 1990's but Brentford's

<sup>108</sup> E-mail from Julie Durrant, March .2003

<sup>109</sup> Charles Koppel, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>110</sup> 'No rest for Wenger', *The Guardian*, 7 May 2003.

application to share at Woking – a significantly closer ground share – was rejected last year by the Football League.

*Recommendation 8*

**The Committee calls upon the FA and Football League to require that planning permission on a new or redeveloped stadium has already been granted by a local authority before it permits a club to embark on a temporary ground share arrangement.**

- 5.12 The only successful example of ground-sharing under the landlord/tenant model appears to be where two different sports share the ground. For example the London Broncos rugby league team plays at Brentford's Griffin Park stadium from February to October. Matt Harmer, Vice Chair of Griffin Park Resident's Association, told us that 'sharing with [the Broncos] means less games as their season is shorter than the football season so it's about an extra ten games overall, and the crowds are smaller.' He also commented that the London Broncos had 'sugared the pill very well' through good communication with residents over changes to fixtures and free tickets to games.<sup>111</sup>

**Joint or Municipal Ownership**

- 5.13 This is not to dismiss ground share altogether. Ron Noades told us that it may be feasible for clubs and their supporters to accept ground sharing if a new stadium was built. As Arsenal stated in its written evidence, London clubs may be forced to seriously consider this option. 'If the costs faced by football clubs continue to rise, permanent ground sharing in the future cannot be ruled out. However, it would be a big step, and would probably only work if the shared ground was purpose-built 'neutral territory.'<sup>112</sup>
- 5.14 The benefits of a 'neutral stadium' are apparent. A new site would be able to start from scratch and design out the nuisance factors stadiums present to residents and design in sustainable transport links. Such sites are often located on the outskirts of residential areas. Examples frequently used in this debate are in Europe. For example, large-scale ground shares exist in Milan, Genoa, Rome, Turin and Munich to name a few. These stadiums are on neutral territory and are not based on a tenant landlord arrangement.
- 5.15 However the stadiums are municipally funded and hence do not provide a funding model which can be realistically be expected to be applied to London's football clubs. Unlike Rome, Milan, Genoa, Turin and Munich, London does not have two clubs of similar size. It has 12 professional clubs whose spread geographically unevenly across London and whose fan base varies in size. A one-size fits all approach would difficult in sections of London. For example, Chelsea's crowds are a lot larger than Fulham's; West Ham and Leyton Orient geographically close are separated by a difference in average attendance of over 30,000. Added to this, is an ingrained culture of separate home grounds.

<sup>111</sup> Matt Harmer, Evidentiary hearing 2, 1 April 2003

<sup>112</sup> Arsenal FC, written evidence, March 2003

- 5.16 Equally the popularity of such schemes with European supporters varies. In Milan and Rome, where there has been a long tradition of ground share, the arrangement is never questioned. However in Turin, the municipal stadium, built for the 1990 World Cup on the outskirts of the city, which now hosts Juventus and Torino has proved deeply unpopular. Both clubs, who had their own stadium prior to 1990, considered it too large and with a poor atmosphere. Juventus and Torino are planning returns to their old sites within Turin.
- 5.17 Such qualms are considered to be 'rooted in historic practice and sentimentality' according to the Islington Stadium Communities Alliance (ISCA). 'Doubling up,' ISCA adds, also 'has the incidental advantage to the clubs of halving their capital investment and fixed costs.' As we have discussed, it also halves the potential for raising revenue as the land where alternative sources of income could be situated is shared. Clubs do not only wish to have their own grounds for the traditional benefit it provides on the pitch but for the very modern benefit it provides raising significant funds off it.
- 5.18 **The Committee takes the view that ground share under the landlord/tenant model does not present itself as a realistic, sustainable option for London's football clubs. However, cross-sport ground shares may present a viable option.**

### **Wembley**

- 5.19 Following the recent delay in Arsenal's plans to relocate to Ashburton Grove, one newspaper commented that 'there is something quite illogical about two separate football organisations spending more than £1 billion on two new stadiums just a few miles apart in north London.'<sup>113</sup>
- 5.20 The shadow of Wembley has hung over any future stadium considerations for both Arsenal and Tottenham. It should also be remembered that it was only six years ago that Arsenal used Wembley as a venue to host its Champions League matches because they felt that Highbury's capacity was too small.
- 5.21 As Tottenham Hotspur too considers its options, a potential ground share between Arsenal and Tottenham is being touted for Wembley. There would seem a great deal of logic behind such a proposal. The two clubs are both based in North London and are both have a large enough support to play at the stadium.
- 5.22 However, in our view, this approach has several flaws:
- The potential loss of the prestige, economic impact and regeneration and community work to both Islington and Haringey
  - The London Borough of Brent has imposed a quota of 22 sporting events per year for at least the first two years of the new Wembley Stadium<sup>114</sup>
  - Sport England has provided a £120 million grant to the stadium's construction on the condition that the venue would only be used for national events. This grant would have to be returned.

<sup>113</sup> 'Wembley should be answer for Arsenal', *The Evening Standard*, 16 April 2003

<sup>114</sup> 'Report 1', LB Brent Planning (Major Developments) Sub-Committee, 20 March 2002. p.106

- Wembley is also a national stadium. A decision to allow two London clubs to make it their home would erode this sense.

5.23 In light of the recently announced bid for an Olympic Games for London in 2012, it is possible that another large stadium will be constructed in east London. We have previously heard that discussions have been held with a Premier League club (understood to be West Ham United FC) about the possibility of converting this Olympic stadium into a home ground.<sup>115</sup> The Committee did not receive sufficient evidence to comment on this possibility.

<sup>115</sup> *London's Bid for the 2012 Olympic Games*, GLA, January 2003



## Case Study 1: Wimbledon FC

### How might this report's proposals have affected Wimbledon's decision to leave London?

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The plight of Wimbledon FC is now the example that haunts supporters of London clubs who currently find themselves unsure as to where their club may play its home matches in the future.

On 1 April 2003, the Assembly invited Charles Koppel the chairman of Wimbledon FC to give evidence as to how this decision was taken. Evidence was also given by Kris Stewart of AFC Wimbledon and the LB Merton (written). This evidence is used here to map how the proposals suggested by the Assembly in this report might prevent another 'Wimbledon' situation in the future.

#### **The Problem**

'When the club left Plough Lane in 1991 no obligation was placed on the club to return. We ended up isolated and outside our borough with no obligation on anyone to find a solution for the club because no obligation had been placed by the authorities or the council, in partnership with the football authorities, to put a time limit on the club, or penalties that might have been incurred by the club had it not returned.'

Charles Koppel, Chairman Wimbledon FC

#### **Assembly Proposal**

- **The London Assembly has recommended that the Mayor's London Plan requires boroughs within their UDPs to identify sites for local sports stadiums and that these sites can only be used for another use should all efforts be exhausted to keep the facility within the borough or a neighbouring borough.**
- **The London Assembly has recommended that the FA and Football League only permit a temporary ground share once planning permission has been granted on a new development subject to the above conditions. An agreed time limit would be placed on the arrangement in accordance to the timetables agreed in the planning application.**

#### **The Problem**

'It remains Wimbledon Football Club. That's our history and tradition of the club. A lot has been said as to whether it should be Wimbledon but we're still the same club moving forward. The difficulty in finding an appropriate location should not take away from the club its history and tradition.'

Charles Koppel, Wimbledon Football Club

#### **Assembly Proposal**

**The London Assembly has asked the FA and Football League make clear what sanctions would be applied if clubs moved out of their historic and traditional locality.**

### **The Problem**

‘Previous owners took the view that they were the club.’

Kris Stewart, AFC Wimbledon

### **Assembly Proposal**

- **The London Assembly has suggested, as a matter of best practice, that clubs give places on their board to Supporters Trusts should the trust have a constitution in line with Supporters Direct guidelines and membership of the trust is significant in proportion to the total number of club’s membership and/or season ticket holders.**
- **The London Assembly has suggested that, as a matter of best practice, clubs adopt the independent balloting of club members and season ticket holders in reaching a decision as to whether to relocate or not.**

### **The Problem**

‘Having paid so much for the Club, the owners of Wimbledon Football Club felt they could not afford to develop either option, even though a consultants report (jointly funded by the Council) showed the re-use of the Plough Lane site for a modern seated stadium to be technically feasible.’

London Borough of Merton

### **Assembly Proposal**

- **The London Assembly has recommended that clubs adopt an open book policy with local planning authorities and regional strategic bodies such as Transport for London.**

## Case Study 2: Fulham FC and Charlton Athletic

***'Fulham is not the biggest club in London and never will be..... rather than being the Manchester United of the south, I think Fulham's secure future lies in being the Charlton of south west London' Tom Greatrex, Back to the Cottage***

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On 27 February 2001, London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham granted planning permission for the redevelopment of a new 30,000 football stadium, which included 16 residential units, a river walk, restaurant, café, clinic, beautician, museum, nursery and hospitality and conference facilities. The club estimated that the project would cost around £60 million. Fulham FC had secured its long term future and a source of revenue to support its Premiership status.



In April 2002 Fulham played its last home game at Cottage in the expectation that they would return after two years to the site following a ground share arrangement with QPR.

On 23 December 2002 Fulham's chairman announced that 'If the proposed Craven Cottage stadium were now to be built according to the original plans the cost would exceed £100 million. Clearly, to saddle the Club with this magnitude of debt in the current financial climate would be foolhardy in the extreme and could seriously jeopardise the long-term future of the Club. Accordingly, we are currently pursuing a range of more sensible options.'

Between these two announcements speculation was rife that the proposals had run into trouble. Rumours persisted about ground shares with Chelsea and attempts to secure new sites elsewhere in Hammersmith & Fulham. Following Fulham's announcement, a Guardian article revealed that in September 2002 a £15 million down payment had been made on the Craven Cottage site towards a £50 million deal, based on a presumption that the site would be used for residential development only. The Club responded by claiming that the deal secured a structure that 'would make it possible for us to sell Craven Cottage if as a last resort we are forced to do so.'

Since then, speculation persists that Fulham are seeking a ground share arrangement with Chelsea FC. In giving oral evidence to the Committee, Tom Greatrex from Back to the Cottage (Fulham Supporters Trust), felt that the club may have got into difficulties because they had overreached themselves. On assuming control of the club, the Chairman Mohammed Al Fayed said that he wished to create 'a Manchester United of the south'. In contrast, Mr Greatrex said that 'rather than being the Manchester United of the south, I think Fulham's secure future lies in being the Charlton south west London. Charlton has gone back to its own ground after a period away. An identity [can be] eroded whilst a club is ground sharing but Charlton have come back from the abyss from that. They had very low crowds even when in the top division. Going back to the Valley, rebuilding the stadium and redeveloping the community feeling of the club gives them a healthier position and they made a paper profit in the last season.'



In 1985 Charlton Athletic left the Valley, its home since 1906. Having got into financial difficulty the club, who no longer owned the lease to the ground, decided to rent at Crystal Palace, where a cheaper arrangement was agreed. Supporters who had been consulted or warned that such a course of action was to be taken, were stunned. The move to Selhurst Park proved deeply unpopular. Crowds dropped to just over 6,000.

Following a local campaign to get Charlton back to the Valley, Greenwich Council agreed to redevelopment plans proposed in 1991. In 1988 the club and the ownership of the lease had become reunited. The club undertook a redevelopment of the Valley; the stadium needed to fit the requirements of the Taylor Report. Initial plans worked to a limited capacity of fewer than 10,000, which over time got higher.

Charlton's fortunes on the pitch have also helped. Twice during the 1990s the club secured promotion to the Premiership where they have since re-established themselves. Charlton's capacity is heading towards 30,000 as the stadium continues to expand and over the course of this season the club have sold 98.3% of its seats achieving an average attendance of 26,264.

The club's supporters also elect a fans representative to sit on the board. Wendy Perfect, the board's departing supporter representative, gave evidence to the Committee at our first hearing. 'The relationship has developed, there is a natural trust between the two parties [fans and directors] and we work well together.'

For Fulham's supporters trust, Charlton offer an example of medium sized Premiership club which draws on an average support of between 20 and 30,000 forging a sustainable existence in the Premier League. Similar to Charlton, promotion could prove a catalyst to re-establishing Fulham as a top club and again this could be achieved in conjunction with a sensible redevelopment of Craven Cottage.

The Fulham Alliance, a group which was formed to oppose the development that was agreed in 2001, state on its website that its opposition was based not on any proposal per se just that development put forward by the club. A scaled down, sensitive redevelopment of Craven Cottage with a reduced capacity (between 20—25,000) would not only meet the demand for attendance displayed in the 2001-02 season but may also appease local fears.

## Annex A: Summary of Recommendations and Best Practice

### Recommendation 1

The LDA should commission a study to look at the economic and social impact that London's professional football clubs have within London's communities and what can be done to maximise their contribution. One focus should be the type and permanency of the employment created.

### Recommendation 2

London's football clubs and TfL should work together to improve information about using public transport to attend London's football stadiums. We also recommend that work be done to analyse the public transport services for each stadium and look strategically at how public transport access and provision can be improved. For example, examining arrival and exit patterns of supporters at grounds and what adjustments can be made to timetables to prevent backlog.

### Recommendation 3

The Committee calls upon football clubs to actively engage with the MPA and British Transport Police to seek a resolution to the funding discrepancy so that a voluntary or informal arrangement can be established preventing the need for changes to legislation.

### Recommendation 4

We welcome the role that the Greater London Authority appears to have brought to speeding up the consideration of major planning applications for stadiums.

We recommend that the text of the Mayor's draft London Plan is altered in the following ways (changes in italics).

Policy 3.D6: The Mayor will work with *boroughs, Sport England, and other agencies* to promote, develop *and where appropriate preserve* London's *playing and professional* sporting facilities. This may include the promotion of London as the home of the 2012 Olympics Games and para Olympics.

Changes to supporting text (page 210):

'In reviewing UDPs, boroughs should identify sites for major international, national *and local* sports stadiums and facilities that meet the requirements of the English Institute of Sport's national network of sports centres (including Crystal Palace) and the needs of more specialist sports activities such as football academies.

**Recommendation 4 (cont.)**

In considering proposals for sports facilities boroughs should ensure that:

- a sequential approach is applied
- sites have good access by public transport, cycling and walking or improved access is planned
- facilities are accessible to all sections of the community, including disabled people
- new provision is focused on areas with existing deficiencies in facilities
- the multiple use of facilities is encouraged, including those of schools and commercial organisations.
- *Where there is a widely recognised historic and regenerative role played by professional sporting clubs within its community, that this role is preserved, and the redevelopment of the existing site should only be permitted if these clubs have been able to demonstrate:*
  - *that they have exhausted the possibility of remaining at their existing location before considering leaving*
  - *that they have exhausted the possibility of remaining within their host borough or an agreed neighbouring borough*

**Recommendation 5**

The FA and Football League rules regarding ground location emphasise the importance of retaining links with the historic area. We recommend that both organisations should also clarify what sanctions will be imposed for not complying with these rules.

**Recommendation 6**

Football clubs should adopt an open book policy with the local and regional planning authority throughout an application.

**Recommendation 7**

We support the growing democratisation of fans' organisations through structures like Supporters Direct model.

**Best Practice 1**

Clubs should seek, wherever possible, to maximise the use of their stadium by their local community (for example, through facilities, use of ground etc).

**Best Practice 2**

Clubs should communicate regularly with their neighbours. One pro-active approach would be for football clubs, in partnerships with their host local authorities, to seek to establish Resident Liaison Committees. These committees should meet regularly to discuss how match day arrangements and other issues should be handled.

**Best Practice 3**

An independent ballot of all season ticket holders and club members requiring a majority (from the forms returned) in favour of relocation.

**Best Practice 4**

Where a supporters' trust has a significant membership (for example, 10% of the clubs total membership), clubs should consider allowing a member of that organisation to join its board.

## Annex B: Examples of community work conducted work by London's clubs

Below is brief summary of the work done by clubs who submitted evidence to the Committee.

Not every club submitted evidence to the Committee so if a club does not appear below, this does not mean that the club does not participate in community projects. We stress that the clubs themselves provided the figures.

Club	Scheme	Participants (per year unless stated)
Arsenal	<i>Schemes cover Camden &amp; Islington</i>	
	Club's soccer schools	5000
	Support for Islington-Camden Schools FA	
	Support for local hockey leagues	
	Support for Metro Sports Club for blind and visually impaired	
	The Arsenal Maimonides Soccer School (nurture good relations between Jewish and Muslim communities)	100
	SRB Finsbury Park Partnership	
	ICT Centre at Holloway School	
	Rosemary Gardens, Islington	
	AFC work with local Primary Schools	750 per week
	After School Clubs at club	50 per session
	Club sponsored after school clubs	570 per week
	Double Club (numeracy & literacy)	720
	Arsenal Trainee Programme (NVQ courses for school leavers)	20-30
Brentford	<i>Schemes cover Hounslow</i>	
	In School Coaching (privately funded by local company).	10,000
	After School Clubs	1000 per week
	Saturday Clubs	
	Disabled Football	
	Industry Days	
	Literacy Programme	
	Holiday Coaching Programme	
	Playing for Success (with Hounslow Education Authority to develop a study support centre at Griffin Park)	1,000
	Positive Futures (Working with Ealing Council and the Home Office on drugs intervention)	
	Social Cohesion Pathfinder	
	The Childrens Fund - Coaching qualifications for young people and developing community based leagues.	
	Football Focus in Spelthorne	25,000

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<b>Chelsea</b>	<i>Schemes cover Westminster, Wandsworth and Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</i>	
	Schools x-mas Party	400
	School Coaching	540 per week
	Stadium Tours	300
	Estate based after school training	80 (x4 per week)
	Schools Tournament	100
	After School Clubs	350 per week
	Girls Active Sport Kick Start	60 per week
	Eel Brook Common	160
	Disabled Schools Football	60
	Holiday Soccer Courses	1080 (x9 per year)
<b>Fulham</b>	<i>Schemes cover Hammersmith &amp; Fulham, Lambeth, Kingston and Wandsworth</i>	
	Schools coaching	26,000
	Saturday Clubs	12,000
	Soccer courses	10,000
	Lambeth	20,000
	Girls	5,000
	Disability	1,000
	Matchday Packages	1,000
	Training Ground Visits	1,000
	Special Initiatives	4,000
		<b>80,000</b>
<b>Leyton Orient</b>	<i>Schemes cover Tower Hamlets, Waltham Forest &amp; Hackney</i>	
	Positive Futures	100 per session
	Education Action Zones (Stamford Hill & Woodberry Down)	
	Football Academy (Hackney Community College)	
	Coaching Sessions (Shoreditch)	30-50 per week
	Homeless Project (Hackney)	
	Confident Communities (Isle of Dogs)	
	Sport & Educational Programmes (Poplar)	
	Shadwell Gardens & two Youth Centres	
	Sports Club Orient (SCORE) (Leyton)	
	Coaching Sessions (Leyton & Leytonstone)	
	Football for women across East London	
	Disabilities Programme	
	Eastside FC	

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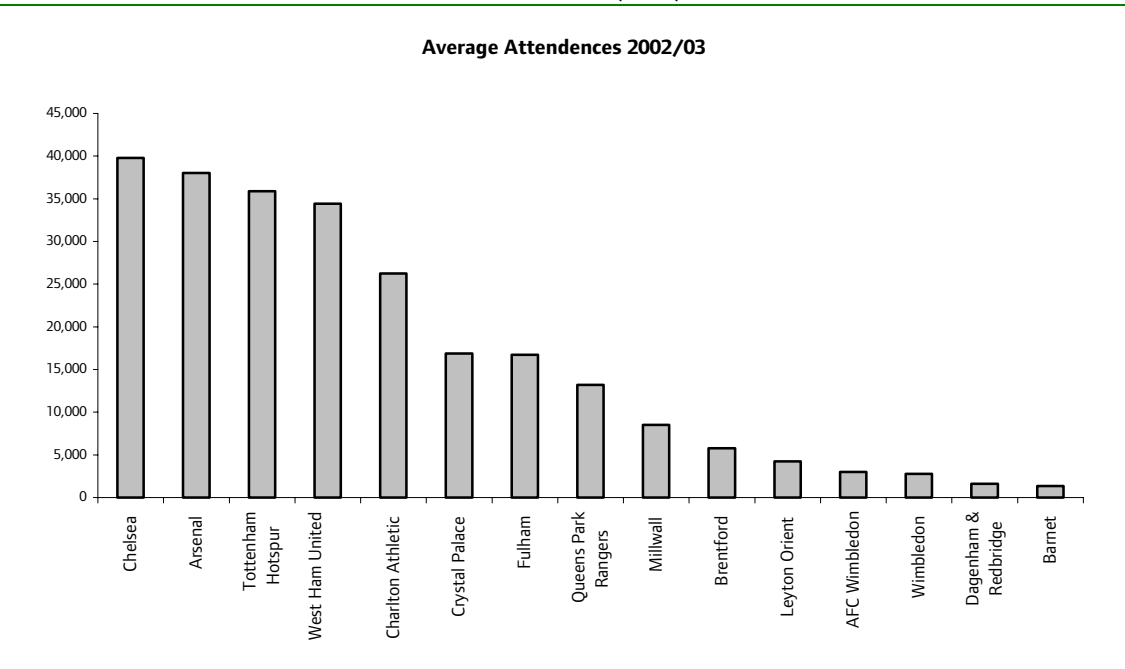
<b>Tottenham Hotspur</b>	<i>Schemes cover Haringey and neighbouring boroughs in London, Hertfordshire and Essex</i>	
	Curriculum Coaching	88,820
	After School Clubs	21,965
	Holiday Coaching Camps	9,900
	Maths Trail @ WHL	8,660
	Girls only coaching	8,250
	Evening coaching camps	6,270
	Saturday coaching camps	3,280
	Special needs coaching	3,250
	White Hart Lane Camps	1,890
	Tournaments at WHL	1,430
	Birthday Parties	720
		<b>154,435</b>
<b>West Ham United</b>	<i>Schemes cover Newham, Barking &amp; Dagenham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Havering</i>	
	Football in the Community	137,980
	Matchday Coaching	700
	Football Continuum	n/a
	Asians in Football	31,050
	Thames Gateway	5,972
	NELPS	2250
	Playing for Success	420
	Prince's Trust Volunteers	60
		<b>178,432</b>

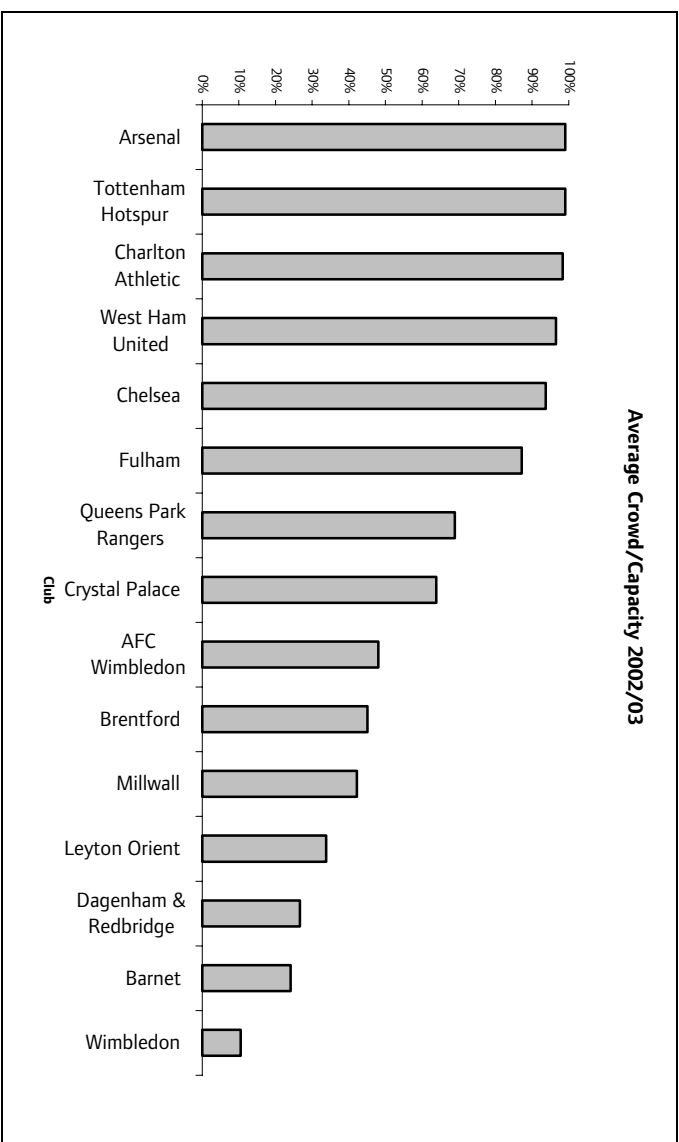
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## Annex C: Attendances 2002/03

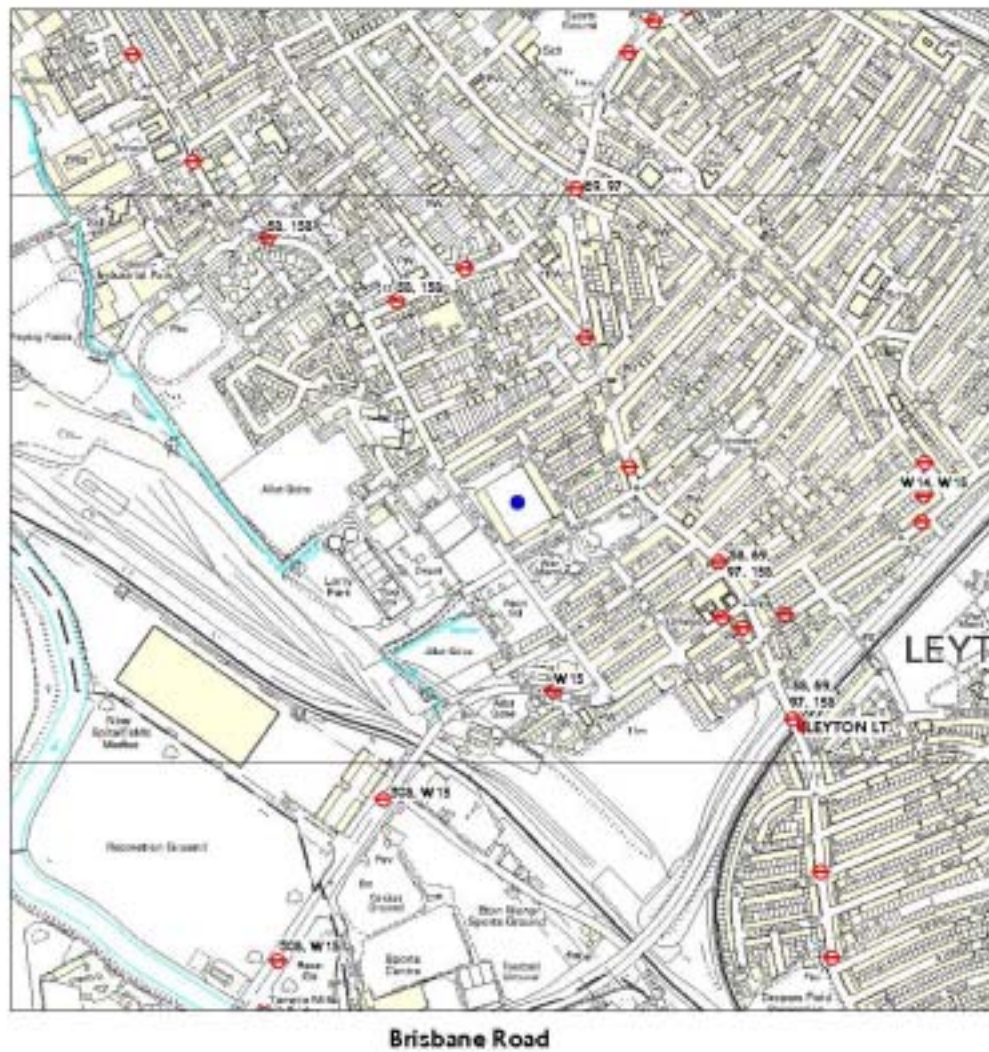
Club	Capacity	Av Crowd	Total Crowd
<b>Chelsea</b>	94%	39,784	755896
<b>Arsenal</b>	99%	38,042	722798
<b>Tottenham Hotspur</b>	99%	35,897	682043
<b>West Ham United</b>	97%	34,432	654208
<b>Charlton Athletic</b>	98%	26,256	498864
<b>Crystal Palace</b>	64%	16,867	387941
<b>Fulham</b>	87%	16,707	317433
<b>Queens Park Rangers</b>	69%	13,206	303738
<b>Millwall</b>	42%	8,510	195730
<b>Brentford</b>	45%	5,759	132457
<b>Leyton Orient</b>	34%	4,255	97865
<b>AFC Wimbledon</b>	48%	3,003	69069
<b>Wimbledon</b>	11%	2,786	64078
<b>Dagenham &amp; Redbridge</b>	27%	1,599	36777
<b>Barnet</b>	24%	1,343	30889
<b>Total Visits</b>			<b>4,949,786</b>

These figures only  
include league  
fixtures





## Annex D: Transport maps of league stadiums

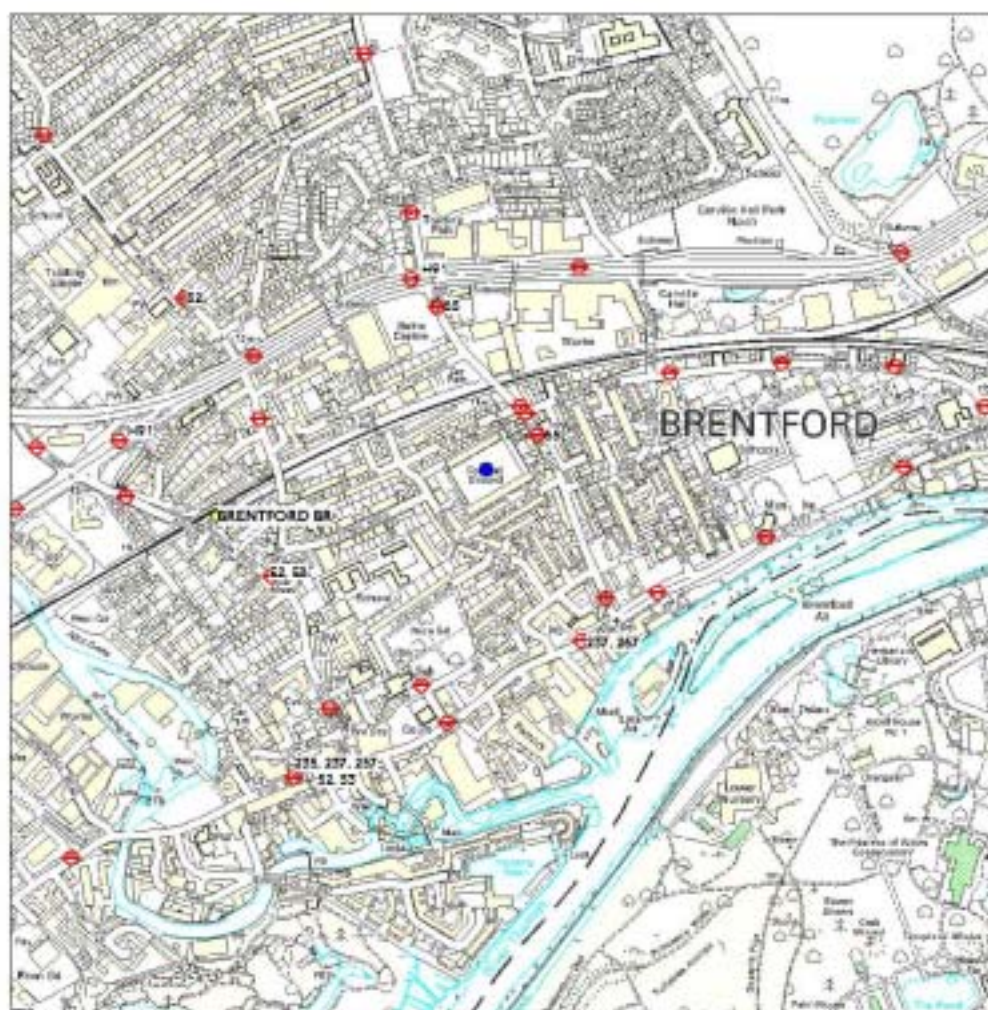


<b>Bus Stops</b>

<b>Underground Station</b>

<b>National Rail Stations</b>


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Griffin Park



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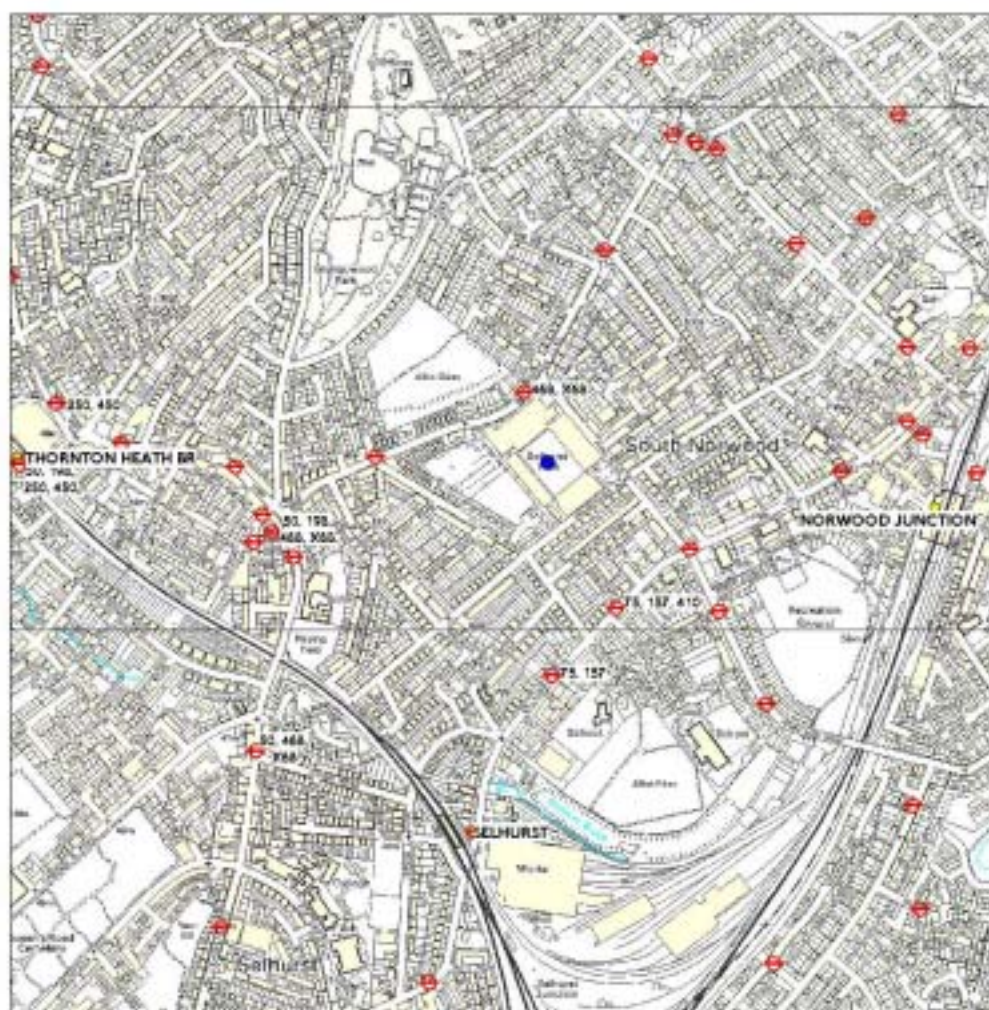


Loftus Road

	Bus Stops
	Underground Station
	National Rail Stations

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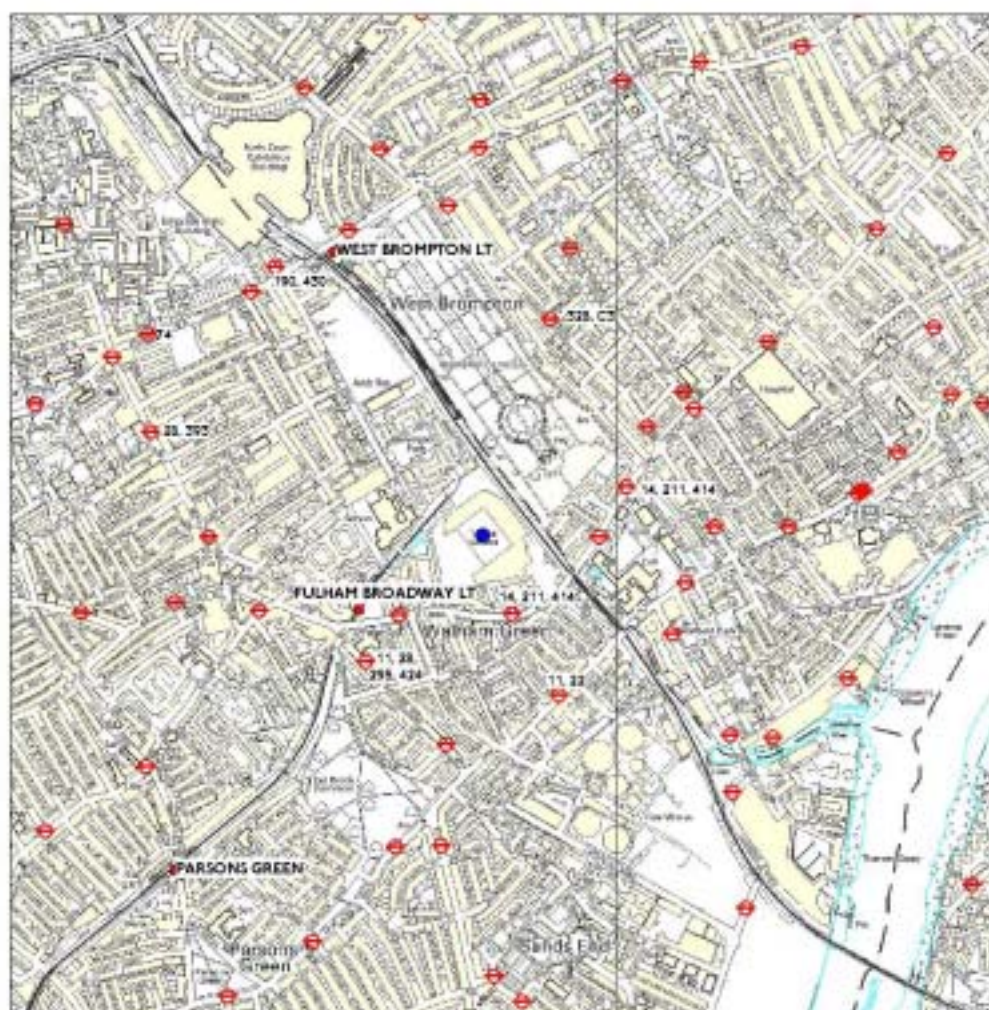


Selhurst Park

	Bus Stops
	Underground Station
	National Rail Stations

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Stamford Bridge

	Bus Stops
	Underground Station
	National Rail Stations

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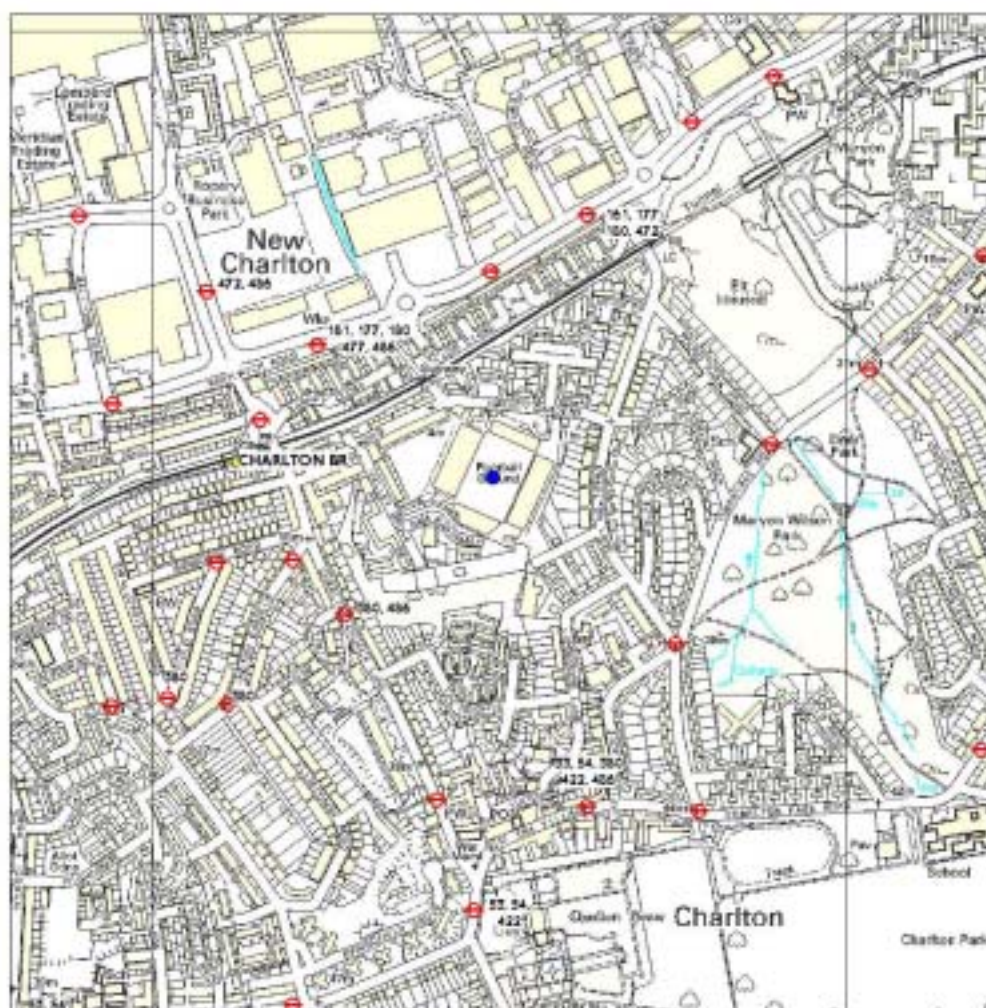


The New Den



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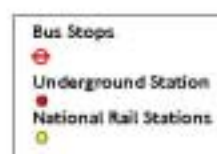
The Valley



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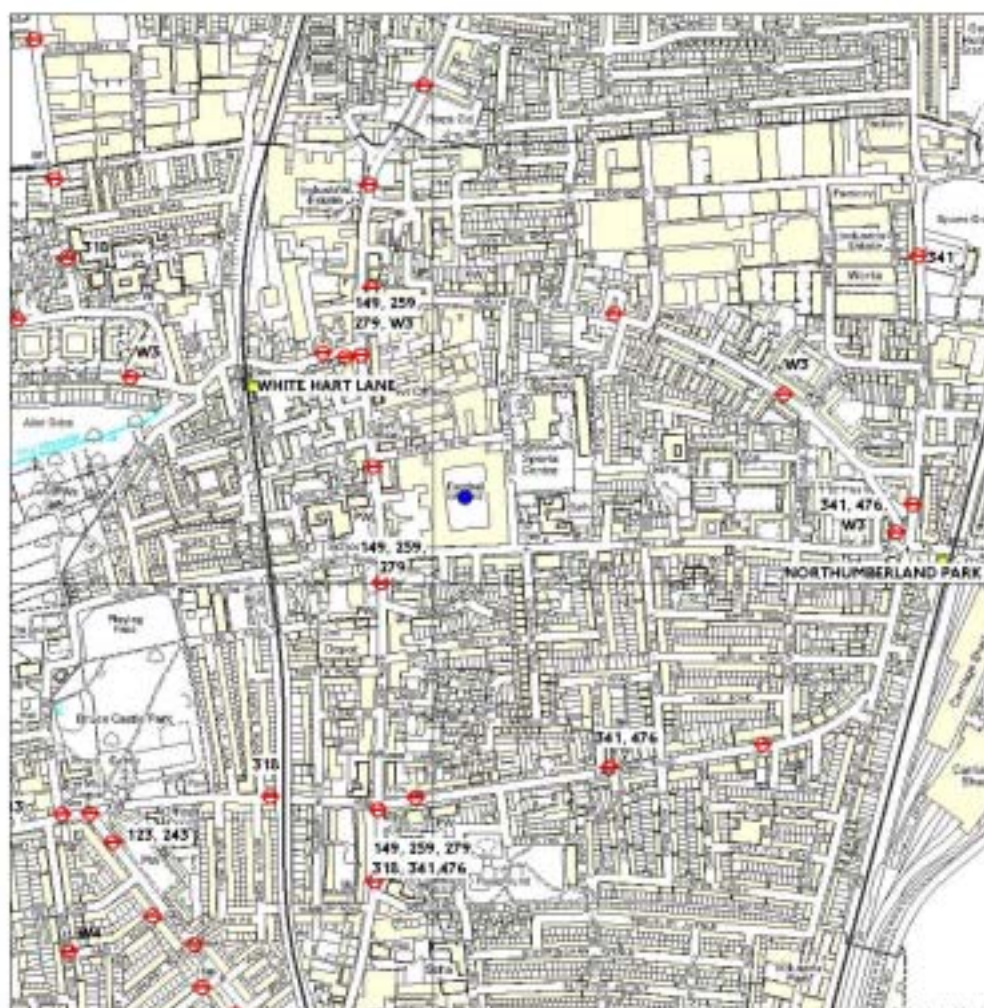


Upton Park



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White Hart Lane



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## **Annex E: Evidentiary hearings and written evidence**

### **Site Visits**

Leyton Orient Football Club – March 17<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
Tottenham Hotspur Football Club – March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2003

### **Oral Evidence**

#### **Hearing 1, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2003**

Ken Friar – Director, Arsenal Football Club  
Roger Hephner – Planning Consultant to Arsenal FC  
Brain Lomax – Head of Supporters Direct  
Graham Loveland – London Borough of Islington  
Wendy Perfect – Director, Charlton Athletic Football Club  
Sam Richards – Transport for London  
Paul Ricketts – Mayor Planning  
Tony Winterbottom – London Development Agency

#### **Hearing 2, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2003**

Alison Carmichael – Islington Stadium Communities Alliance - ISCA  
Matt Harmer – Griffin Park Residents Association  
Lee Hoos – Assistant Managing Director, Fulham FC  
Tom Greatrex – Back to the Cottage (Fulham Supporters Trust)  
Charles Koppel – Chairman, Wimbledon FC  
John McGlashan – Bees United (Brentford Supporters Trust), Director, Brentford FC  
Ron Noades – ex-Chairman, Brentford FC  
Robert Scott – Islington Stadium Communities Alliance - ISCA  
Kris Stewart – Chairman, AFC Wimbledon  
Roger Weston: Bishops Park Co-ordinating Group

### **Written Evidence**

Altonwood Ltd  
Arsenal FC (March & May 2003)  
Back to the Cottage (Fulham FC Supporters Trust)  
Barnet FC Supporters Association  
Bees United (Brentford FC Supporters Trust)  
Bishops Park Co-ordinating Group  
Brentford FC (March & May 2003)  
Brentford Independent Association of Supporters (BIAS)  
British Transport Police  
Chelsea FC (February and May 2003)  
Enfield Town FC  
FA Premier League  
Football Fans Census  
Football Foundation

Football League  
Football Supporters Federation  
Fulham FC (May 2003)  
Griffin Park Residents Association  
Keep Barnet Alive  
Islington Stadium Communities Alliance (ISCA)  
Leyton Orient FC (May 2003)  
London Borough of Islington  
London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham  
London Borough of Lewisham  
London Borough of Hounslow  
London Borough of Merton  
London Development Agency  
Mayor's Planning  
North & East London Sports Network  
Queens Park Rangers (May 2003)  
Prince's Trust  
Ranleagh Sailing Club  
Royal Borough of Kenisngton & Chelsea (Cllr Taylor)  
Supporters Direct  
Sutton United Football Club  
Transport for London  
Tottenham Hotspur FC (March and May 2003)  
University of Liverpool Football Research Unit  
West Ham United FC (May 2003)  
White City Residents Association  
Wimbledon Independent Supporters Association (WISA)

## **Email**

The investigation also received a further 79 e-mails via the address [football@London.gov.uk](mailto:football@London.gov.uk)

## Annex F: Orders and Translations

### How to Order

For further information on this report or to order a copy, please contact Greg Norton, Scrutiny Manager, on 0207 983 4947 or email at [greg.norton@london.gov.uk](mailto:greg.norton@london.gov.uk)

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## **Annex G: Principles of Assembly Scrutiny**

The powers of the London Assembly include the power to investigate and report on the decisions and actions of the Mayor, or on matters relating to the principal purposes of the Greater London Authority, and on any other matters which the Assembly considers to be of importance to Londoners. In the conduct of scrutiny and investigation the Assembly abides by a number of principles.

Scrutinies:

- aim to recommend action to achieve improvements;
- are conducted with objectivity and independence;
- examine all aspects of the Mayor's strategies;
- consult widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost;
- are conducted in a constructive and positive manner; and
- are conducted with an awareness of the need to spend taxpayers money wisely and well.

More information about the scrutiny work of the London Assembly, including published reports, details of committee meetings and contact information, can be found on the GLA Website at <http://www.london.gov.uk/approot/assembly/index.jsp>

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