
Keep off the grass? Artificial Grass Pitch facilities and pathways to football participation

A report commissioned by
and presented to the
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1.0 Executive summary

1.1 *Overview*

1.1.2 Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) represent a key priority for Football Foundation investment.

1.1.3 At present the Football Foundation has funded 447 AGP projects. This represents 12% of the 3,657 AGP sites listed on Pitchfinder.org.uk.

1.1.4 One of the key factors for the large increase in participation (11.3% football and 13.5% multi-sport) demonstrated in the 2012 Football Foundation Strategic Performance Indicators is the investment into AGPs. This is highlighted by an increase in participation of 17.3% at Foundation AGP sites, with a total of 275,000 participants.

1.1.5 40% of funded AGPs are located in urban locations. These areas tend to contain the most deprived locations, to which the Football Foundation has a target of overinvesting in.

1.1.6 These factors provide the rationale for the commissioning of this research project by the Football Foundation in Spring 2013.

1.1.8 The report aims to provide a clearer understanding of the effect that AGPs have on the provision of sporting activity in the local community, with a focus on sites located in urban high density areas (and in some cases high IMD). In particular, it focuses on issues of access, user experience, displacement, user profile and income generation.

1.2 *Methods*

1.2.1 The research for the project consisted of: analysis of previous documentation and Football Foundation 2011-12 Monitoring and Evaluation data; a quantitative survey of 700 participants; site visits to five Football Foundation funded AGP facilities, at which interviews were carried out with eight individuals; and brief e-mail interviews with three members of Football Foundation staff.

1.2.2 The report provides and analyses quantitative survey data, with special reference to the experiences of players and coaches, on the following topics: user satisfaction, user preferences, usage patterns, travel patterns, participation costs, user demographics and user education levels. These data are used to identify trends in participation, and suggest priority areas for discussion and/or action.

1.2.3 The report provides and analyses qualitative interview data on issues of accessibility, user experience, displacement, user profile and income

generation. These data are used to identify trends in participation, and suggest priority areas for discussion and/or action.

1.3 *Accessibility*

- 1.3.1 According to the Football Foundation's annual M&E information, the average AGP is open 69 hours per week and is in use for 73% of the time. Peak usage is Monday-Thursday evenings. This accounts for 49% of weekly usage.
- 1.3.2 Latent capacity is to be found mid-week during the day (at non-school sites), and across the weekend afternoon and evenings.
- 1.3.3 In the AGP survey, respondents were asked to use a scale of 1 (least) to 5 (most) to agree with a number of statements.
- 1.3.4 Very positive responses were given by players to 'the location is easy for me to get to' (4.4) and 'the AGP enables me to play more sport when it is dark' (4.6).
- 1.3.5 Coaches also strongly agree that the 'AGP enables training sessions to take place whatever the weather' (4.3).
- 1.3.6 However there was a general opinion that AGPs could be promoted better in the local area and that it was sometimes difficult to play at the time slots that respondents wanted to.
- 1.3.7 79% of participants at AGPs travel less than 5 miles to the site. 45% travel less than 2 miles.
- 1.3.8 81% of participants travel less than 20 minutes to get to the AGP. 48% travel less than 10 minutes.
- 1.3.9 AGPs within areas of high deprivation appear to have a larger catchment area, with 63% of respondents travelling more than 2 miles to the site.
- 1.3.10 On Monday, Tuesday Wednesday or Thursday evenings, over a third of respondents participate at an AGP. This compares to 3% during mid-week mornings and fewer than 6% on weekend evenings.

1.4 *User Experience*

- 1.4.1 The mission statement of the Football Foundation is to 'improve the quality and experience of playing football at grassroots football'.
- 1.4.2 In the AGP survey, Football Foundation funded sites received a more positive score (4.3) than non-Foundation sites (3.9).

- 1.4.3 Positive ratings were also given to Football Foundation sites with regard to the quality of the AGP (4.3) and the enjoyment participants gained from playing sport on the artificial pitch (4.6).
- 1.4.4 In addition, there was a noticeable increase in positive responses from coaches using Football Foundation sites. In particular, there was a 0.9 increase when asked if the surface of the AGP improves the coaching they can deliver.
- 1.4.5 These ratings would suggest that the Foundation is meeting one of its core aims.
- 1.4.6 As might be expected there is a high preference for training (62%) and casual use (59%) on AGP surfaces rather than grass pitches. Arguably more surprising is the equal preference to playing matches on AGPs and grass pitches. This may be due to increased user experience on newer 3G artificial pitches.

1.5 *Displacement*

- 1.5.1 The AGP survey provides the first large scale insight into the issue of displacement by users of Football Foundations AGPs.
- 1.5.2 8% of participants had no sporting activity prior to playing at the AGP (with a further 3% only having 30 minutes of exercise once a month).
- 1.5.3 40% of participants had never played at a previous AGP.
- 1.5.4 21% of participants continue to play at a previous AGP *as well* as using the current AGP.
- 1.5.5 31% of participants no longer play at their previous AGP. This indicates that these have individuals been displaced. However, it is unknown what proportion of this shift is due to a recent change of location, as opposed to being displaced from a local site.

1.6 *User profile*

- 1.6.1 From the Football Foundation's annual M&E information, 90% of activity at Foundation funded AGPs is people playing football.
- 1.6.2 82% of the total participants are male.
- 1.6.3 50% of players play for clubs, 28% play for extra-curricular school teams and 9% are connected to community groups.
- 1.6.4 74.2% of AGP activity takes place on full-size pitches, either using the whole pitch or subdivided into smaller pitches.

- 1.6.5 The proportion of players from a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) background across all sites is 20%. This is above the national average of 14% as per the 2011 Census.
- 1.6.6 In the AGP survey, 15% of players have used the AGP for non-football activity.
- 1.6.7 91% of participants are male. 91% are White British. Two-thirds of participants have undertaken Further Education, of which half have gone on to achieve a degree.
- 1.6.8 75% of participants play small sided football at AGP sites, whilst only 33% have played on a full-size pitch (without being subdivided).
- 1.6.9 61% of participants use the AGP for training sessions, and 28% for casual use.
- 1.6.10 45% of participants play at least once a week during the whole year. A further 38-45% use the AGP at least twice a week during Autumn, Winter and Spring.
- 1.6.11 There is a significant drop off in the summer months, with 25% of respondents using the AGP rarely or not at all during this time.

- 1.7 *Income generation*
 - 1.7.1 From the Football Foundation's annual M&E information, the annual income for the whole site with an AGP is £106,192, with an expenditure of £95,959. When broken down by just the cost attributed to the AGP, income is £63,318 and expenditure is £39,185.
 - 1.7.2 Although each site makes an average profit of £10,233, this is 20% down on the annual profit forecast of £12,715.
 - 1.7.3 The annual contribution to a sinking fund for the replacement of the carpet is £13,641.
 - 1.7.4 To hire an AGP for an hour, it costs on average £63 for a full size pitch, £40.72 for a medium sized pitch and £32.52 for five-a-side pitch.
 - 1.7.5 This differs significantly regionally with a £16 pound variance from the most expensive region (London and the South East) to the cheapest (East Midlands and East Anglia).
 - 1.7.6 In the AGP survey, when asked if the Football Foundation funded AGP represents good value for money, players and coaches both scaled their answer 4 out of 5 in agreement.

- 1.7.7 The average cost of a typical trip to an AGP is £22.52, with £18.81 of this attributed to playing fees.
- 1.7.8 This price increases to £28.49 for those sites located in the highest areas of deprivation, which is likely to have an effect on the proportion of local residents who can afford to pay full price to use the AGP.
- 1.8 *Site visit data*
 - 1.8.1 Data derived from the site visits demonstrate a considerable variance with the facilities.
 - 1.8.2 In terms of access, some sites offer an “open gate” policy, whereas others are fully booked for clubs and coaching programmes, and have no casual use available.
 - 1.8.3 Interview data support the quantitative data regarding usage patterns over the course of the week and individual days.
 - 1.8.4 The inclusion of changing rooms at AGPs appears to be a moot point, due to the fact that players do not get dirty on the AGP and the trend for youth teams to arrive for play already in kit.
 - 1.8.5 The participation profile at the sites was overwhelmingly male, although most had some explicit provision for women and girls in place. All located in the urban areas of London (Inner and Greater), there was considerable ethnic diversity found among participants at these sites.
 - 1.8.6 Interview data support the quantitative data regarding increasing player preferences for AGP surfaces.
 - 1.8.7 Interview data support the quantitative data regarding divergent playing and booking patterns between Summer and Autumn/Winter/Spring.
 - 1.8.8 All of the facilities at the site visits were used for football – either exclusively or overwhelmingly – with evidence of other sports being displaced because of the 3G rubber crumb surface.
 - 1.8.9 Interview data support the quantitative data regarding the size of pitch most often used (i.e. divided rather than full-size), and the predominance of training and casual use.
- 1.9 *Recommendations and policy proposals*
 - 1.9.1 Due to the extent that investment in AGPs influences the Football Foundation’s capacity to achieve its participation targets, it could be argued

strategically that a higher proportion of the Foundation's annual investment should be directed into AGP projects.

- 1.9.2 A targeted campaign for new or refurbished AGPs within areas of high IMD – in a similar approach to the recent £12m IMD fund – would also help ensure that the Football Foundation meets its target of overinvesting in the top 20% deprived areas.
- 1.9.3 Investigation is needed to ascertain why sites are not open for use at the target 85 hours per week and why there are sustained periods of latent use on certain days and times.
- 1.9.4 Given the shift towards playing matches on smaller pitches, discussion is needed regarding the extent to which the Football Foundation funds purpose build smaller AGPs in the future, especially in urban locations where space is at a premium. This is likely to have implications for revenue and development, and may require the creation of alternative player pathways.
- 1.9.5 This research indicates that although AGP sites are making a profit, this appears to be less than what is forecasted in the business plan agreed within the assessment period.
- 1.9.6 This research shows the value in obtaining first hand experiences from users of funded sites to help establish whether the Football Foundation is meeting its strategic needs.
- 1.9.7 More detailed research needs to be conducted into issues of displacement and 'new users' to ensure that a clearer profile of AGP usage is known, together with the effects that new AGPs have on local sports provision.
- 1.9.8 Further information is required on marginalized football groups, particularly in High IMD areas.
- 1.9.9 The provision of changing facilities may not be critical at new AGPs, given that evidence suggests they are not being utilised by all participants.
- 1.9.10 The balance between commercial and community use at AGPs requires serious consideration.

2.0 Introduction and rationale for study

2.1 *Introduction*

2.1.1 This research project was commissioned by the Football Foundation in Spring 2013 as a means of trying to provide a clearer understanding of the effect that AGPs have on the provision of sporting activity in local communities. The report adopts a holistic approach and explores the various facets that underpin access (in the broadest sense of the word) to Foundation funded facilities.

2.2 *Rationale*

2.2.1 The Football Foundation has recently launched a £12 million AGP specific scheme aimed at the refurbishment of old AGPs in high Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) areas. This research aims to help influence and inform the delivery of these projects.

2.2.2 A primary driver in satisfaction for football participants (as identified by the Sport England satisfaction survey) is ease of participation, which has shown a significant increase in importance during the period 2009 to 2012.

2.2.3 One of the key reasons identified for lapsed participants is problems with access, i.e. the 'where could I play' barrier. This is especially true when individuals experience lifestyle changes – such as relocation, shifting working patterns and family responsibilities – which are the biggest factors influencing why people stop playing sport.

2.2.4 A key statement that underpins the Football Foundation strategy is to 'improve the quality and experience of playing football at the grassroots level'. However, limited primary evidence from users currently exists to demonstrate whether this is being achieved on AGPs and consequently how this effects user engagement.

2.2.5 There is a current lack of knowledge on the extent to which displacement from surrounding sites contributes to 'new' participation measured at AGP sites.

2.2.6 This research builds on some of the recommendations identified in the Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI) of a Football Foundation funded Artificial Grass Pitch report

2.3 *Aims*

2.3.1 This research aims to provide a clearer understanding of the effect that AGPs have on the provision of sporting activity in the local community, with a

focus on sites located in urban high density areas (and in some cases high IMD).

2.3.2 The following five areas have been explored in more depth in order to inform our understanding of this topic:

a) Accessibility – What impact does the location of the AGP and ease of access to the site have on user engagement? To what extent are projects making full use of the potential improved access opportunities an AGP provides (i.e. through increased hours of usage available)?

b) User experience – What is the experience of users participating in sport at AGPs and how does this experience affect the pattern of engagement, across a range of users?

c) Displacement – To what extent does an AGP attract *new* users to participate in sporting activity as opposed to displacing users from other sites in the local area?

d) User profile – To what extent does the user profile of the AGP reflect the demographics of the local community? To what extent does the AGP offer sporting opportunities for non-traditional club members?

e) Income generation – What level and type of user engagement is required to ensure that AGPs generate enough income to make a profit and provide funds towards a sinking fund?

2.3.3 The research identifies possible barriers – both real and perceived – preventing participants gaining access to the AGPs and explores the opportunities that these facilities offer to try to counter these.

3.0 Review of background literature

3.1 *Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs)*

3.1.1 In 2012, the Football Association estimated that 80% of football in England is played on publicly owned and managed facilities. This is comprised of 33,500 grass pitches and 1504 AGPs (of which 491 are full-size).

3.1.2 However, in its 2011 Big Grassroots Football Survey, the single most pressing issue (highlighted by 84% of respondents) was poor facilities (Football Association 2012:10). In the survey, 49% of respondents had experienced at least five games a season cancelled, primarily due to weather conditions and/or the state of the playing surface (ibid: 11).

3.1.3 AGPS are regarded by the FA as essential to coaching and player development – they are the top priority for training grounds and there is an increasing number of leagues allowing games to be played on them. The FA's current aim is to build 100 new AGPs and refurbish 150 existing ones (ibid: 36).

3.1.4 According to Ipsos MORI (2012):

- All sport satisfaction is currently at 80.6% (80% in 2009)
- Overall satisfaction in football is currently at 78.5% (78.2% in 2009)
- General participant satisfaction in football is currently at 78.7% (78.3% in 2009)

3.1.5 Key criteria underpinning satisfaction, and ranking high in importance for respondents are: ease of participation; facilities and playing environment; and value for money (ibid: 5). Satisfaction with ease of participating has decreased from a rank of 7.9 to 7.8 (ibid: 6). Key issues in relation to ease of participating are: ability to play at a convenient time; places not being overcrowded; and not being disturbed/interrupted by other participants (ibid: 7).

3.2 *Relevant general participation trends*

3.2.1 Goretzki and Esser (2008b) suggest that reasons for lapsed participation appear to fall into two main areas: *changes in personal experiences* and *changes in sport experience* (such as being too busy to play, facilities being too expensive, or an inability to book a pitch). They argue that lapsing is primarily driven by circumstance rather than experience. They conclude that 'while "life change" is the *ultimate* barrier, better ACCESS and ORGANISATION might help RETAIN organised participants for longer' (ibid: 21). They recommend the provision of sporting spaces closer to participants' work places/homes and a more effective means of communicating these opportunities (ibid: 30).

- 3.2.3 In a related report Goretzki and Esser (2008a: 18) add that ‘what makes a satisfying/‘great’ sport EXPERIENCE is far less about conditions (facilities, infrastructure, access) than subjective, emotional factors (how you are playing, how you feel)’.
- 3.2.4 According to Ipsos MORI (2012: 6) the main reasons for participant drop-out are time (29%), work (25%), cost (18%), age (17%) and injury (17%), although this survey did not include factors related to facilities themselves. Critically, 62% of people who have “dropped out” say that they likely to participate again in future (ibid: 9).

3.3 *Relevant football participation trends*

- 3.3.1. According to Football Foundation (2012: 10) strategic performance indicators:
- There has been a 11.3% increase in people playing football due to Football Foundation funding
 - There has been a 13.5% increase in people playing other sports due to Football Foundation funding
 - Nearly 92% of applicants see the support provided by the Football Foundation to their projects as good, very good or excellent
 - Over 8 out of 10 applicants are at least satisfied with customer service support from the Football Foundation
- 3.3.2 In terms of type of football provision participated in, 59% of players play outdoor small-sided football, with it being the main type of activity for 29% of players. 58% of players play outdoor 11-a-side football, with it being the main type of activity for 40% of players. 55% of players play indoor small-sided football, with it being the main type of activity for 27% of players (Ipsos MORI 2012: 13).
- 3.3.3 According to Sport England and Sport Scotland (2006: 2), AGP users are 3 times more likely to be male than female, except in hockey where males are twice as likely. 60% of users are aged under 25. There is a higher level of educational attainment than the population as a whole. A significantly higher percentage of users are in managerial/professional occupations than population as a whole.
- 3.3.4 80% of 3G AGP users play football, whereas in direct contrast 91% of water based AGP participants are hockey players (ibid).
- 3.3.5 76% of participants travel to their facility by car. The average distance travelled is 6 miles, with 70% of players travelling under 5 miles. The average journey time is 22 minutes. 77% of people travel to the facility straight from work (ibid).
- 3.3.6 69% users play football mainly and 22% play hockey (ibid).

- 3.3.7 In football, 54% of AGP usage is for small-sided game pitches and 46% is full size use. 11-a-side matches are more frequent on 3G surfaces, while small-sided games predominate on sand-based ones (ibid).
- 3.3.8 52% of activity is training and/or coaching, 24% is casual use and 23% is for matches (casual use is higher at 31% for football on its own) (ibid: 4).
- 3.3.9 84% of participants play at least once a week. Peak usage is Monday to Thursday 17.00-20.00 (although hockey is played mainly on Saturdays). Over the course of a week, on average 54% of total available pitch time is used, with 86% of peak availability used (ibid: 5).
- 3.3.10 74% of participants who use AGPs only for training would also like to play matches there (rising to 78% for 3G surface users). Of those people who stated that they would like to use the pitch more, 29% cited unavailability, 18% time and 15% cost as preventing factors (ibid).
- 3.3.11 However, players at football clubs prefer natural grass for matches (88% of respondents) but AGPs for training (67%) (ibid: 6).
- 3.3.12 The average participant visit spend is £9, with pitch charges comprising 47% and travel 40% (ibid: 6).
- 3.3.13 The “typical” participant profile is:
- male
 - under 25
 - playing 5 or 7 a-side
 - playing in a slot between 5-8pm midweek
 - playing once a week for training or casual use
 - travelling by car from home
 - spending £9 per visit
 - in a managerial/professional position and fairly well educated
- 3.3.14 The survey concludes that ‘the findings are in tune with the belief that sports participation may be becoming more casual, less formal and with greater demand for flexibility in activities, timing and location to fit in with increasingly complicated lifestyles’ (ibid: 9). It also states that it is unclear whether small pitch usage is a deliberate choice or because full-size pitches are not available or are too expensive. Moreover, the observation is made that some key target groups are not currently using AGPs.

4.0 Research methods

4.1 The research for this report was undertaken between June and July 2013. It consisted of a number of stages, relating to the secondary analysis of documentation and primary data collection.

4.2 First of all a literature review was carried out on the following reports and documentation which address matters relating to AGP use and football/sport participation (full bibliographic details are provided in the reference section of this report):

- Football Association, *National Facilities Strategy 2013-15*
- Football Foundation, *Monitoring and Evaluation Report 2012*
- Ipsos MORI, *Satisfaction with the Quality of the Sporting Experience Survey (SQSE 4): Drop Out Survey Report*
- Ipsos MORI, *Satisfaction with the Quality of the Sporting Experience Survey (SQSE 4): Results for Football – Trends 2009-12*
- Sport England, *Project 'Experience of Sport' Research Debrief*
- Sport England, *Project 'Experience of Sport': Understanding the Lapsed Target Research Debrief*
- Sport England/Sport Scotland, *Synthetic Turf Pitch User Survey*

4.3 Four methods of data collection were used in the study:

4.3.1 *In-depth analysis of existing Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data held by the Football Foundation on funded AGPs*

- Each project has to complete an annual M&E survey at the end of each season, providing detailed information about the activity that has taken place at the site
- An analysis of this information was undertaken, producing detailed reports to support the five main topics of interest in this research
- These findings underpinned and influenced the areas of interest subsequently explored via interviews at selected case study sites

4.3.2 *Online AGP survey completed by participants via the PitchFinder website*

- A simple online survey was developed to gain AGP users' feedback, with questions centred on the main topics underpinning the research study
- This survey was accessible via www.pitchfinder.org.uk/ which enabled survey responses to be linked to sites
- The main contact for every site which has a Football Foundation funded AGP (400+) was asked to pass on details of the survey to users of the site to complete
- A non-cash prize was offered as an incentive for people to complete the survey
- A total of 700 surveys were completed. These data were analysed to inform and provide the background for this research.

4.3.3 Site visits and in-depth interviews were undertaken with key stakeholders responsible for the delivery of activity at a selection of suitable projects in South-East England:

- These projects were newly funded AGPs located in urban areas and were chosen to include at least one example of a club, school and Local Authority based project
- A more targeted approach in getting users to submit online surveys was made at these sites
- 5 AGP projects were visited, with interviews undertaken with 8 individuals
- The site visits/interviews took place at the following clubs/locations:

Organisation name	Organisation type	Project description	County FA	Open for use date
London Borough Of Islington (Whittington Park)	Local Authority	New AGP and new changing rooms	London	1/7/2010
London Playing Fields Foundation (Douglas Eyre Sports Ground)	Other	Refurbishment of 3G AGP	London	31/8/2012
Princes Park Youth Football Club	Sports club	Refurbishment of AGP	Middlesex	14/5/2011
Trust Thamesmead	Other	New AGP and new changing rooms	London	28/12/2012
The Matthew Arnold School	Education establishment	New AGP	Middlesex	1/7/2010

4.3.4 In-depth, semi-structured interviews were undertaken with the following individuals:

- Mike MacNeill (London Borough of Islington)
- Alex Welsh (London Playing Fields Foundation)
- Paul Baker (London Playing Fields Foundation)
- Dawn Young (Trust Thamesmead)
- Gary King (Trust Thamesmead)
- Jon Bell (Princes Park Youth Football Club)
- Mandy Chambers (Princes Park Youth Football Club)
- Roland Davey (The Matthew Arnold School)

4.3.5 Brief e-mail interviews were undertaken with the following Football Foundation staff:

- One Investment Programme Manager

- Two Activity and Sustainability Advisors

These individuals remain anonymous in this report.

5.0 2011-12 Football Foundation Monitoring and Evaluation data

5.1 Overall participation at Football Foundation-funded AGPs

5.1.1 Overall participation figures demonstrate a significant increase in the number of people using Football Foundation-funded AGPs between 2010/11 and 2011/12. The most substantial rises are in adult male football and multi-sport activities (all ages and both genders). There is, however, a marked decrease in adult women's football participation. This reflects the broader issue of post-16 drop-out by young women once they leave compulsory full-time education.

	Type	2010/11	2011/12	Change	% change
Total	Male	171,734	201,517	29,783	17.3%
	Female	47,552	56,916	9,364	19.7%
	Total	219,286	258,433	39,147	17.9%
Football	Male	142,024	162,240	20,216	14.2%
	Female	23,700	25,547	1,847	7.8%
	Total	165,724	187,787	22,063	13.3%
Football - Under 16	Male	90,397	93,474	3,077	3.4%
	Female	18,901	21,275	2,374	12.6%
	Total	109,298	114,749	5,451	5.0%
Football - Over 16	Male	51,627	68,766	17,139	33.2%
	Female	4,799	4,272	-527	-11.0%
	Total	56,426	73,038	16,612	29.4%
Multi-sport	Male	29,710	39,277	9,567	32.2%
	Female	23,852	31,369	7,517	31.5%
	Total	53,562	70,646	17,084	31.9%
Multi-sport - Under 16	Male	25,351	33,447	8,096	31.9%
	Female	21,065	27,843	6,778	32.2%
	Total	46,416	61,290	14,874	32.0%
Multi-sport - Over 16	Male	4,359	5,830	1,471	33.8%
	Female	2,787	3,526	739	26.5%
	Total	7,146	9,356	2,210	30.9%

5.1.2 There were also significant participation increases in MU (31%) and R80 (55%) urban area classifications,¹ and in the lowest (35%) and second highest (32%) Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) quintiles. Participation

¹ See Appendix One for details of rural/urban area classifications.

increases are spread across all organisation types, although Local Authorities demonstrate the largest at 28%.

5.2 Background of funded AGPs

5.2.1 The Football Foundation has funded 447 AGP projects since its formation in 2000, with grants totalling over £165 million. A report taken from PitchFinder.org.uk, the Football Foundation managed database of football facilities in the UK, shows that there are 3,657 sites with AGPs. These have a total of 5,444 individual artificial pitches. This means that the Foundation has funded 12.2% of these sites.

5.2.2 Football Foundation funded AGP sites are spread over the following areas and funded to the following sums:

Area	Project value	Grant value	Count	%
East Midlands & East Anglia	£86,244,682	£45,700,512	130	29.1%
London & South-East	£96,537,959	£37,018,068	92	20.6%
North	£52,843,940	£27,004,904	75	16.8%
North-West & West Midlands	£129,001,215	£36,492,062	95	21.3%
South & South-West	£45,299,929	£19,195,846	55	12.3%
Total	£409,927,725	£165,411,392	447	100.0%

5.2.3 AGP projects are spread over the following IMD categories:

IMD range	Project value	Grant value	Count	%
0-20	£97,425,270	£43,078,340	98	21.9%
20-40	£124,598,435	£34,216,661	86	19.2%
40-60	£76,873,339	£36,229,484	85	19.0%
60-80	£52,782,172	£25,058,648	87	19.5%
80-100	£55,476,997	£25,375,564	87	19.5%
Not known	£2,771,512	£1,452,695	4	0.9%
Total	£409,927,725	£165,411,392	447	100.0%

5.2.4 In the East Midlands and East Anglia, and in the South and South-West, the majority of Football Foundation-funded AGPs are found in the higher IMD quintiles (least deprived). Conversely, in London and the South-East, North and North-West and West Midlands, the overriding majority of sites are in the lowest two IMD quintiles (most deprived).

5.2.5 Higher Education based AGPs are more likely to be found in the higher IMD quintiles, whereas Local Authority sites tend to be in the lowest two IMD quintiles. Club based sites are spread evenly across categories.

5.2.6 Most sites are found in the most densely populated urban area (MU):

Rural/urban classification	Project value	Grant value	Count	%
MU	£137,674,459	£56,892,316	137	30.6%
LU	£51,431,873	£18,631,968	44	9.8%
OU	£76,402,474	£25,296,045	65	14.5%
SR	£43,883,190	£22,464,802	63	14.1%
R50	£67,441,985	£25,183,740	82	18.3%
R80	£32,433,485	£16,630,991	54	12.1%
Not known	£660,259	£311,530	2	0.4%
Total	£409,927,725	£165,411,392	447	100.0%

5.2.7 The modal geographical area for Higher Education, Local Authority and club sites is MU, although in general Higher Education based sites are more evenly spread.

5.3 Usage and ownership

5.3.1 All Football Foundation funded projects are required to submit an annual Monitoring and Evaluation survey. This provides details of activity that has taken place at the site during the previous season. Based on M&E figures for the 2011-12 season, close to 275,000 participants took part in sporting activity at Foundation funded AGPs. 78% of these were male:

Gender	Football	Multisport	Total
Male	210,073	17,379	227,452
Female	34,547	12,099	46,646
Total	244,620	29,478	274,098

5.3.2 Close to three-quarters of this usage (74.2%) is on full-size pitches, whilst 88% of participation at AGPs is on rubber crumb pitches. As such, the modal use pattern is on a full-size, 3G surface:

Pitch type	Rubber	Sand	Concrete	Water	Other	Total
Full size	174,157	4,246	-	1,636	2,7	192,856
Medium	49,841	4,151	351	-	2,847	57,190
Five-a-side	17,885	2,454	1,590	-	2,123	24,052
Total	241,883	20,851	1,941	1,636	7,787	274,098

5.3.3 For Football Foundation funded projects, male dominance of overall usage begins at mini-soccer level (6-10 age), decreases at junior level (11-15), then increases again throughout youth, adult and veteran categories:

Age range	Male	Female	Total
Mini-soccer (6 - 10)	23,731	4,058	27,789
Junior (11-15)	56,865	21,264	78,129
Youth (16-17)	13,045	1,861	14,906
Adult (18+)	67,592	3,247	70,839
Veteran (over 35)	4,849	6	4,855
Multiple age group	61,370	16,210	77,580
Total	227,452	46,646	274,098

5.3.4 Male dominance is most prominent with club, community, league and pay-and-play usage. It is lowest for school activities (66%).

5.3.5 Female usage is highest in conjunction with Higher Education based sites (18%), on full size pitches, and on sand or water based surfaces. This may be explained by the fact that all of these elements are conducive to hockey, rather than purely football, participation.

5.3.6 The most prevalent organisation that participants are connected to when using AGPs is a football or sports club (49.8%). In addition to this, 28% of participation is in relation to extra-curricular school teams and 9% is in connection with community groups:

Age range	Male	Female	Total
Football/Sports club	121,639	15,074	136,713
School	51,093	26,390	77,483
Community group	23,011	2,654	25,665
League	21,495	2,107	23,602
Pay and play	10,214	421	10,635
Total	227,452	46,646	274,098

5.3.7 On average AGP sites are open for just under 69 hours per week. Sites are used for an average of 73% of available hours. Highest usage is between Monday and Thursday (77% to 79%) and lowest is between Friday and Sunday (60% to 73%). The highest usage figures are found for school-based projects which have over 87% midweek usage on average. The lowest figures (below 60% of available usage) are found at Local Authority sites at weekends.

5.3.8 Within the M&E survey, an indication of the typical weekly time slot for their activity had to be provided for each team listed as playing at an AGP. In total, there were 10,865 instances of teams playing at Football Foundation funded AGPs during season 2011/12 and the proportion of these attributed to each time slot is displayed:

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total
Morning	2.2%	1.8%	1.7%	1.7%	1.6%	3.9%	2.2%	15.2%
Afternoon	4.6%	4.6%	5.4%	4.5%	3.0%	2.3%	2.0%	26.4%
Evening	12.3%	12.3%	12.4%	12.2%	7.1%	0.7%	1.4%	58.4%
Total	19.1%	18.7%	19.5%	18.4%	11.7%	7.0%	5.7%	

NB: School curricular activity is not included in these figures

- 5.3.9 The peak time for using AGPs is during the midweek evening slots (Monday–Thursday), which accounts for just under half of the activity (49.2%). Weekend use only accounts for 12.6%, with evening use in particular a comparatively rare occurrence.
- 5.3.10 The percentage of participants playing at Football Foundation sites with AGPs who have a Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background (BAME) is over 20%, which is 6% above the latest census figures. This is due to above average proportion of players from each of the minority ethnic backgrounds. The exception is Asian participants, who are 0.9% below the national average.

Ethnicity	Participants	%	2011 Census
White	333,672	79.7%	86.0%
Asian	27,468	6.6%	7.5%
Black	28,229	6.7%	3.3%
Mixed	20,380	4.9%	2.2%
Other	8,783	2.1%	1.0%
BAME	84,861	20.3%	14.0%

5.4 *Ownership and costing*

- 5.4.1 Based on a sample of 3,408 operational sites with artificial surfaces (taken from Active Places website), the vast majority of AGPs are either owned commercially (24%), by community schools (18%) or Local Authorities (18%). In total, nearly two-thirds of sites are managed by commercial management (30%) and educational institutions (36%).
- 5.4.2 Full size and medium size pitches are, on average, most expensive to hire in London and the South-East, and cheapest to hire in the South and South-West. 5-a-side pitches are on average most expensive to hire in London and the South-East, and cheapest to hire in the North:

Region	Full size	Medium	Five-a-side	Total
East Midlands & East Anglia	£60.29	£34.54	£28.74	£43.05
London & South-East	£71.20	£55.27	£43.22	£59.31
North	£59.03	£37.07	£26.89	£43.94
North-West & West Midlands	£70.20	£38.77	£33.60	£50.58
South & South-West	£57.75	£30.41	£33.73	£46.77
Total	£63.88	£40.72	£32.52	£48.59

- 5.4.3 As might be expected, the average hourly hire charge is more expensive for newer 3G rubber crumb surfaces, with an overall average price across all surface types of just over £48:

Pitch type	Rubber	Sand	Other	Total
Full size	£64.57	£59.54	£56.75	£63.88
Medium	£42.17	£33.33	£36.79	£40.72
Five-a-side	£32.00	£33.75	£37.94	£32.52
Total	£49.51	£44.86	£40.98	£48.59

- 5.4.4 Based on a sample of 157 financial returns, the annual income and expenditure for both the site as a whole, and costs attributed to just the AGP are below:

Type	Whole site	AGP
Income	£106,192	£63,318
Expenditure	£95,959	£39,185
Surplus/(deficit)	£10,233	£24,133

- 5.4.5 In comparison, based on the projected income and expenditure forecasts submitted as part of the assessment process for 231 projects, the annual income was expected to be £126,484 and expenditure expected to be £113,769. This suggests that, although AGP sites are making a profit of over £10,000 per annum, it is close to 20% less than expected.

- 5.4.6 The average annual contribution to sinking funds set up for the replacement of artificial carpets is £13,641 per annum, based on a sample of 184 AGP projects.

6.0 2013 PitchFinder AGP survey data

6.1 Rating of facilities – all participants (n = 700)

6.1.1 When asked to provide their overall rating of the site using a scale (5 highest, 1 lowest), participants clearly express a high level of satisfaction with an average of 4.2:

Site rating	1	2	3	4	5	Count	Average
Foundation sites	3 0.6%	11 2.2%	63 12.4%	197 38.7%	236 46.3%	510	4.3
Non - Foundation sites	3 1.6%	12 6.3%	43 22.6%	82 43.2%	50 26.3%	190	3.9
Total	6 0.9%	23 3.3%	106 15.1%	279 39.9%	286 40.9%	700	4.2

6.1.2 Average satisfaction levels were noticeably higher when comparing Football Foundation sites (4.3) to non-Foundation sites (3.9), which indicates an increased level of user experience on facilities funded by the Foundation.

6.1.3 In terms of region, all average satisfaction levels were above 4, except London (3.8). All IMD and urban classification levels were above 4, except the lowest IMD quintile (3.9).

6.2 Usage patterns – participants identifying primarily as players (n = 379)

6.2.1 The vast majority of participants take part in football activities, with very few individuals taking part in other sports. This reflects the displacement of hockey, in particular, from 3G AGPs as a result of playing surface preferences.

Sports played	Count	%
Number of surveys	379	
Football - small sided	284	74.9%
Football - full size	143	37.7%
Football - training	231	60.9%
Football - casual	105	27.7%
Hockey	12	3.2%
Rugby	18	4.7%
Other	26	6.9%

NB: participants were able to select more than one category

6.2.2 Three-quarters of respondents play small sided football at their AGP and nearly two-thirds use it for training. Just over one-third use it in a full-size capacity for matches.

6.2.3 Over two-thirds (67.8%) of the players use their facility as part of an organised football club, with smaller pockets involved in educational institution-based activities:

Organisation	Count	%
Number of surveys	379	
Football or sports club	257	67.8%
School or college	44	11.6%
University	17	4.5%
Community group	45	11.9%
League	50	13.2%
Casual use	136	35.9%
Other	10	2.6%

NB: participants were able to select more than one category

6.2.4 In terms of their preferential surface for playing matches, approximately one-third of respondents each prefer AGPs, prefer grass or like them both the same. However, when it comes to training, nearly two-thirds of participants prefer the AGP, with only 6.9% favouring grass. This is reflected in casual use where just under 60% of players prefer the AGP, with just 9% choosing grass pitches:

Activity	AGP	Same	Grass
Matches	30.6%	30.9%	38.5%
Training	62.0%	31.1%	6.9%
Casual use	59.4%	31.7%	9.0%

6.3 *Usage patterns, times and reasons* – participants identifying primarily as players (n = 379)

6.3.1 Regular and recurrent usage characterises participation patterns, with 45% of people playing once a week and another 38-45% playing at least twice a week during Autumn, Winter and Spring seasons. The former figure holds up during the Summer as well, but more frequent usage (at least twice a week) drops considerably whilst inactivity (rarely or not at all) increases to over 25% suggesting that other leisure activities, the use of grass pitches and/or the fact it is the regular football close season have an impact.

6.3.2 As might be expected, there is a clear tendency for peak time use (evenings) and a preference for midweek use (Tuesday to Thursdays). Over a third of participants play on each of these nights (NB: respondents were able to select more than one day of the week). Less than one-third of respondents

play on Mondays, and between 20% and 25% play on Fridays, Saturdays or Sundays.

- 6.3.3. The majority of respondents to the survey had not started new physical activity at their chosen AGP, with 9 in 10 people having already undertaken at least 30 minutes of exercise once a month prior to participating at the “new” facility. However, this does mean that 8% of users have encountered their first form of exercise as a consequence of the sites facilities.
- 6.3.4 Of the 349 participants who had previously taken part in sporting activity, 43% of these had not previously played at another AGP facility. Of the remaining 57% who had, 41% continue to play at the previous AGP as well as the new facility. This indicates that 261 participants (69%) have not been displaced from another AGP facility. Of the remaining 31% of players who potentially have been displaced, additional information would be needed – such as information on how long an individual has been living in that area – to determine if this was directly from a surrounding site.
- 6.3.5 Players were asked to rate the extent to which they agree with each of the following statements, using a score of 1 (least) to 5 (most):

Statement	Foundation	Non - Foundation	All
Number of surveys	274	105	379
The artificial pitch enables me to play more sport when it is dark outside	4.6	4.4	4.6
My skill levels have improved since playing on the artificial pitch	3.7	3.5	3.6
I cannot play sport at the times I want to at the artificial pitch*	2.7	2.5	2.6
I feel like my health has improved due to playing at the artificial pitch	3.6	3.4	3.5
The quality of the artificial pitch is of a high standard	4.3	3.9	4.2
The location of the artificial pitch is easy for me to get to	4.5	4.2	4.4
Playing at the artificial pitch represents good value for money	4.0	3.5	3.8
The artificial pitch is not very well promoted in the local area*	2.2	2.1	2.2
It is easy to book a session at the artificial pitch	3.7	3.5	3.6
I enjoy playing sport at the artificial pitch	4.6	4.4	4.5

*NB: positive values shown for those questions marked **

6.3.6 In terms of the benefits/advantages of using the site, particularly positive ratings (4 and above) were given to the statements concerning the location, quality and enjoyment of the AGP, plus the ability to play on these facilities at night.

6.3.7 More positive responses were provided by people playing at Football Foundation sites, especially in relation to statements concerning both the quality of the AGP (+0.4) and the value for money (+0.5). These figures were consistent across gender, IMD area, urban classification and organisation type.

6.4 *Usage patterns, times and influences* – participants identifying primarily as coaches (n = 462)

6.4.1 The vast majority of coaches take part in football activities, with very few individuals taking part in other sports. This reflects the displacement of hockey in particular from 3G AGPs, due to issues with the surface for that sport:

Sports coached	Count	Percentage
Number of surveys	462	
Football	456	99.0%
Hockey	17	3.7%
Rugby	19	4.1%
Other sports	17	3.7%

NB: participants were able to select more than one category

6.4.2 Regular and recurrent usage characterises participation pattern with 59% of respondents coaching once a week and a further 31% coaching at least twice a week.

6.4.3 Coaches were asked to rate to what extent much they agree with each of the following statements, using a score of 1 (least) - 5 (most):

Statement	Foundation	Non - Foundation	All
Number of surveys	354	108	462
The surface of the artificial pitch improves the coaching I can deliver	4.4	3.5	4.2
I have noticed that player's skill levels have improved as a result of the artificial pitch	4.1	3.4	4.0
Players prefer training on grass if given the option*	2.2	1.5	2.0
The artificial pitch enables training sessions to take place whatever the weather	4.3	4.1	4.3
It is easy to book a session at the artificial pitch	3.7	3.4	3.6
More injuries occur at training sessions held on the artificial pitch*	3.0	2.4	2.8
Players enjoy my coaching sessions more when held at the artificial pitch	3.7	3.0	3.6
The artificial pitch is not very well promoted in the local area*	2.4	2.1	2.3
The artificial pitch is well maintained	4.2	3.6	4.1
The artificial pitch represents good value for money	4.0	3.2	3.8

*NB: positive values shown for those questions marked **

- 6.4.4 There is a noticeable increase in the figures provided by coaches at Football Foundation sites (even more so than responses by players). This is especially true for the statements concerning improvement of coaching afforded by the AGP (+0.9) and the value of money judgement (+0.8).
- 6.4.5 These figures were consistent across gender, IMD area, urban classification and organisation type.
- 6.5 *Travel* – all participants (n = 700)
- 6.5.1 Four-fifths of participants normally travel to their facility directly from home, with one-quarter travelling from work (NB: respondents were able to select more than one option).
- 6.5.2 Over three-quarters of participants travel less than 5 miles to get to the AGP. Close to half of the participants travel less than 2 miles, although this figure decreases to 36% for those sites based in the most deprived areas (lowest quintile of IMD). This suggests that these sites have a wider catchment area:

Distance	Count	%
Number of surveys	700	
Under a mile	124	17.7%
1 to 2 miles	194	27.7%
2 to 5 miles	234	33.4%
5 to 10 miles	107	15.3%
10 to 20 miles	30	4.3%
More than 20 miles	11	1.6%

6.5.3 Four-fifths of participants travel to the venue in a private vehicle (either as a driver or passenger), while one-sixth of participants walk or run (NB: respondents were able to select more than one option). Accordingly, four-fifths of individuals are able to access their chosen venue in less than 20 minutes travel time. The modal journey distance and time is 1-2 miles in less than 10 minutes. This accounts for over one third of participants:

Travel time	Count	%
Number of surveys	700	
Less than 10 minutes	338	48.3%
10 - 20 minutes	232	33.1%
20 - 30 minutes	93	13.3%
30 - 60 minutes	32	4.6%
Over 60 minutes	5	0.7%

6.6 *Cost* – all participants (n = 700)

6.6.1 The average cost of a typical visit to the AGP is just over £22, with the bulk of this cost due to playing fees (83%). For those sites based in the most deprived areas (lowest quintile of IMD) this figure increases to an average of £28.50. This may help explain why these AGPs have a larger catchment area in order to attract participants who can afford these fees.

Cost breakdown	Cost
Number of surveys	700
Playing fees	£18.81
Travel costs	£2.34
Food and drink	£0.98
Other expenditure	£0.39
Total	£22.52

6.7 Demographics

- 6.7.1 91% of respondents to the AGP survey were male. 91% of respondents identified as White British. All other ethnic groups comprised a maximum of 2.5% of the overall survey. The modal age was the 40-49 category (39%), with 20-29 (18%) and 30-39 (23%) also registering significant numbers.
- 6.7.2 Over one-third of participants aged over 16 have a degree or above and almost one-sixth have a Higher Degree. Two-thirds of participants are / have been in Further Education study (i.e. A Level, HNC, HND):

Education	Male	Female	All	%
A Level, Higher or Sixth Year study	90	7	97	14.3%
First Degree	154	14	168	24.8%
GCSE, O Level or Standard Grade	148	16	164	24.2%
Higher Degree	83	13	96	14.2%
HNC or HND	82	3	85	12.6%
No qualifications	16	1	17	2.5%
Other	33		33	4.9%
Still in education	10	7	17	2.4%
Total	616	61	677	

7.0 Site visit interviews

7.1 The following discussion is drawn from interviews with the stated individuals during the site visits, in relation to the five key topic areas of the study.

7.2 **Mike MacNeill**
Football Development Manager
Whittington Park (London Borough of Islington)
Archway, London
5 June 2013

7.2.1 *Aims and objectives (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.2.1.1 The aim of this project was to provide a fenced and floodlit 3G AGP and changing facility with community room at a North London park which previously had a run down redgra pitch and dilapidated changing rooms.

7.2.2 *Strategic need (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.2.2.1 Whittington Park is situated in inner London in an area of severe deprivation with an ethnically varied population. The borough suffers from a lack of green space, with only one grass pitch site. 3G AGPs are the most practical football facilities for the area which is densely populated with a huge demand for quality football facilities.

7.2.3 *Access*

7.2.3.1 Most participants at the site are local residents. The London Borough of Islington exhibits an “anti-car” philosophy and so the site is easy to access using public transport.

7.2.3.2 The facility operates an “open gate” policy, which means that when it is not pre-booked people can turn up and play for free. This reflects the strategic need relating to a lack of green space in the Borough, plus the fact that the site is designed to challenge some of the anti-social behaviour that used to take place before its refurbishment.

7.2.3.3 Bookings are currently undertaken by Aquaterra, though the aim is to go to a “one number” booking line for all the Borough’s facilities and for an online booking facility to be introduced. Activities are publicised through leaflets, the website, events and by going into schools.

7.2.4 *User experience*

7.2.4.1 The site is open from 09.00 to 22.00 on weekdays, from 10.00 to 18.00 on Saturdays and from 10.00 to 21.00 on Sundays. Three slots are reserved for

casual free play per week: from 15.00 to 17.00 on Mondays and Fridays, and from 14.00 to 18.00 on Sundays.

- 7.2.4.2 The facility tends to be booked out every day in the evenings from 18.00, although some availability occurs after 21.00 on a Friday. This reflects the quantitative trends found both in previous literature/studies and the PitchFinder AGP survey.
- 7.2.4.3 The majority of usage comes from regular bookings, much of which is season-based, e.g. the Summer League competition.
- 7.2.4.4 The inclusion of toilets and a training room in the main building at the venue is seen as important. Interestingly, the provision of changing rooms at AGPs is regarded as decreasingly important, with less demand in place for them (except for league team use at weekends). This is deemed to be the result of two main factors: 1) playing on an AGP surface means players do not get muddy and/or grass stains on their clothing; and 2) the current structure of youth football clubs means that many young players purchase and look after their own kit, and so turn up ready to play matches. The changing rooms can be used for other activities when needed, however, such as classroom sessions during wet weather.

7.2.5 *User profile*

- 7.2.5.1 98% of activity undertaken on the AGP is football. The remainder is basic/introductory level hockey and Kwik Cricket.
- 7.2.5.2 Matches taking place on the full AGP comprise less than 10% of total usage and occur primarily at weekends. Club training sessions represent 40-50% of total usage, with the remainder being pay-and-play social and “open gate” use.
- 7.2.5.3 Two-thirds of evening bookings are for adult use and one-third are for young people.
- 7.2.5.4 The other main site in the Borough – Market Road – is characterised by overwhelmingly male use. As a result, Whittington Park has tried to employ an over-bias towards girls’ and women’s football in order to balance out this disparity. The sport development team also runs various coaching and participation sessions aimed at female players.
- 7.2.5.5 It is estimated that approximately 40% of AGP users are from a minority ethnic background (above the Borough demographic), while approximately half the employed coaches working at the AGP (recruited through the venue’s own programmes) are from a minority ethnic background.
- 7.2.5.6 It is perceived that players are happier playing on a 3G surface than grass because they do not get muddy, the surface does not ruin their trainers and levels of skill/play are improved due to the fact the ball rolls well.

7.2.6 *Displacement*

7.2.6.1 It is perceived that the new AGP at Whittington Park has definitely generated new usage, rather than displacing it from elsewhere. The park previously had a reputation for anti-social behaviour and the Friday evening slot on the AGP is now very busy.

7.2.7 *Income generation*

7.2.7.1 Income generation for the venue is dictated by balancing adequate cost for hire with ensuring availability and access to a broad social demographic. Many initiatives are in place to try to make the venue affordable, such as charging just £2 per hour on Saturdays. It was noted that such processes can be difficult to implement at times as there is currently no till to process money and coaches have to collect it by hand.

7.2.7.2 It is believed that there needs to be space in the programme of delivery for local people to use the venue so that they develop a sense of “ownership”. This reflects one of the key findings of Burdsey’s (2011) report on sustainability in community sport spaces.

7.2.7.3 Regular and recurrent bookings are required to promote sustainability and planning in advance is critical. It was noted that the development of sinking funds can be difficult and unrealistic for Local Authority based sites.

7.3 Alex Welsh and Paul Baker Chief Executive and Operations Director Douglas Eyre Sports Ground (London Playing Fields Foundation) Walthamstow, London 6 June 2013

7.3.1 *Aims and objectives (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.3.1.1 The aim of this project was to upgrade an existing 21-year old sand-based AGP at the Douglas Eyre Sports Centre (DESC) to a 3G AGP. Whilst this refurbishment primarily meets the needs of the London FA for the Coach Education Programme, improving the AGP will also ensure the site will be used extensively for curriculum and local community use including a designated partner club.

7.3.1.2 The upgraded 3G AGP is serviced by the refurbished 14 team changing room block which is funded by additional funding streams.

7.3.2 *Strategic need (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.3.2.1 As London FA’s priority project for the past 12 months this project concentrates on the workforce by looking at providing a high quality

education programme for coaches, volunteers and referees making Douglas Eyre Sports Centre the flagship Coach Education Centre for London. The Centre caters for a London wide catchment as the vast majority of courses run by the London FA take place there.

7.3.2.2 It also helps deliver the National Game Strategy through the growth and retention of participation and raising standards. It will also help develop better players through the FA's new coaching courses around the 5-11 age group which will improve the basic skills to help provide a generation of talented players.

7.3.3 Access

7.3.3.1 The site is located in the centre of the Borough of Waltham Forest, close to Underground and bus routes. Most people come to the site on public transport. Some users travel from further away for the coach education courses run at the venue.

7.3.3.2 The site has a strong association with Waltham Forest Primary Schools Sports Association, Waltham Forest Secondary Schools Football and Cricket Association, Hackney School Sports Association and Islington School Sports Association.

7.3.3.3 It is also the home venue for the Inner London Schools Football Association.

7.3.3.4 Bookings are taken through the LPPF Head Office.

7.3.3.5 The facility is perceived to occupy a middle space: between a Local Authority owned open access site (such as Whittington Park) and a high-end club owned facility.

7.3.4 User experience

7.3.4.1 The site is open between 08.00 and 22.00.

7.3.4.2 The mini soccer pitches that map out over the main full size marked pitch are smaller than FA requirements but still work very well and are popular with players and coaches.

7.3.4.3 The venue's priority is developing club relations. It is used by universities (London Metropolitan, City), Leyton Orient FC's community scheme, Norwich City FC's satellite academy, local clubs, the Kickz social inclusion programme and coaching programmes.

7.3.4.4 Between the months of September and April the facility is easy to fill and there is no spare capacity. During this time it is dominated by training and coaching courses. It is less busy during the summer months, so London FA

affiliated competitions are held there and there is also some capacity for “pay and play” activities.

7.3.4.5 Considerable importance is placed on ancillary provision, and demonstrating that the pitches are part of a larger facility. This encourages clubs to see the venue as a whole and to develop the desire to “own” it. This reflects one of the key findings of Burdsey’s (2011) report on sustainability in community sport spaces. This is further facilitated by ensuring continuity of key staff and effective management.

7.3.5 *User profile*

7.3.5.1 The site is used exclusively for football. There had been no hockey in the Borough until the late 1980s when Waltham Forest (formerly Wanstead) and Cross Sticks clubs were brought to venue. However, hockey has since been displaced to other venues and Kwik Cricket has moved to the nearby Peter May Sports Ground. This is due to the fact that funding streams have promoted the installation of 3G rubber crumb pitch surfaces, which is not conducive to hockey or cricket.

7.3.5.2 The facility seeks to embody a ‘cradle to grave’ mentality enabling participation from young people’s play through to veterans’ football.

7.3.5.3 The facility is striving specifically at present to boost girls’ and young women’s participation. To this end it is running a wide range of development courses, tournaments and leagues.

7.3.5.4 A range of disability football participation takes place at the site, including St. John’s Deaf football, Coping Through Football (Mental Health Programme) and blind football. Discussions are under way for the England national Cerebral Palsy team to use the venue as its London base.

7.3.5.5 The ethnic background of participants matches the Borough’s demographics.

7.3.6 *Displacement*

7.3.6.1 While there is no suggestion that the facility has displaced participation from other venues, it is recognised that the Douglas Eyre sports ground is easier to “sell” than the other main facility in the Borough (Peter May Sports Ground).

7.3.7 *Additional comments*

7.3.7.1 It was noted that the All Nations Football Programme (initiated in 2000) led to the creation of the London Communities League and enabled to providers to facilitate the transition from casual use to affiliated football. There is concern that decreasing funding in this area (from the FA, FA Premier

League and National Lottery) reduces the ability to have a revenue tail on a capital bid, and lessens capacity to run competitions that might attract and engage excluded people.

**7.4 Dawn Young and Gary King
Head of Community Services and Deputy Centre Manager
Trust Thamesmead
Thamesmead, London
6 June 2013**

7.4.1 *Aims and objectives (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.4.1.2 This project involved upgrading the existing outdated and dilapidated facilities at Thamesmead Town FC to provide a high quality sports site for the local community. The site is known as Sporting Club Thamesmead and new facilities include a full size 3G AGP, a MUGA, new grass pitches and a changing pavilion with community rooms.

7.4.2 *Strategic need (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.4.2.1 The site is situated in the ward of Thamesmead East in the London Borough of Bexley, close to the border with the London Borough of Greenwich. The area is highly deprived and ethnically very varied, with a lack of cohesion between the different communities which causes tension.

7.4.2.2 There is a lack of community facilities, particularly sports facilities, in Thamesmead which this project aims to address. The project has been developed by Trust Thamesmead, which is a community development agency, following extensive consultation with the local community.

7.4.3 *Access*

7.4.3.1 Individuals access the site from the London Boroughs of Bexley, Greenwich, Woolwich and Dartford. Most people come to the site on the bus or by car, and there is provision of a minibus to help local schools.

7.4.3.2 The facility is used by Kent schools, and Charlton Athletic Ladies, Thamesmead Town and Bexley Borough football clubs. Two academies will be hiring the AGP from September 2013.

7.4.3.3 The site uses the Legend Leisure booking system, and is advertised through the sports club website, brochures and newsletters, and through the Local Authority.

7.4.4 *User experience*

7.4.4.1 The site is open from 09.00 to 22.00 between Monday and Friday, and from 09.00 to 18.00 at the weekend. The AGP can be booked as a full pitch or as a one-third segment for 7-a-side. Weekend use is normally for 11-a-side, while midweek use is primarily for small-sided games.

7.4.4.2 As the built environment (i.e. clubhouse, changing rooms and bar) is currently being rebuilt (at the time of writing – July 2013) usage levels are at 50% of capacity. When fully operational, the aim is to reach 80-90% usage. It is envisaged that casual use will be available within the programme of delivery. There are distinct seasonal differences with lowest demand during the summer.

7.4.4.3 The aim is to create a sports hub at the facility, based around the Sporting Club Thamesmead identity and “brand”.

7.4.5 *User profile*

7.4.5.1 The facility is used exclusively for football, although there is the capacity for providing outdoor fitness type activities.

7.4.5.2 Approximately 60% of current usage is for matches, 30% for training and 10% for casual/other football activities.

7.4.5.3 The user profile is predominantly male.

7.4.5.4 Participation reflects local demographics in terms of ethnicity.

7.4.6 *Displacement*

7.4.6.1 It is perceived that the new AGP at Sporting Club Thamesmead has definitely generated new usage, rather than displaced it from elsewhere.

7.4.7 *Income generation*

7.4.7.1 The facility offers special community rates, with an Access Card offering discounts to Thamesmead residents and discounts for Thamesmead Town FC members.

7.5 **Jon Bell and Mandy Chambers
Chair and Social Secretary
Princes Park Youth Football Club
Hendon, London
4 July 2013**

7.5.1 *Aims and objectives (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.5.1.2 To refurbish an AGP surface which has fallen into disrepair and is preventing the Football Club from developing further. The installation of a new 3G surface will allow club activities to be sustained for the foreseeable future and maximise the usage of the site, particularly daytime. The former facility was unsafe for use.

7.5.2 *Strategic need (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.5.2.1 The previous AGP had reached the end of its lifespan. The project to refurbish and install a 3G surface has secured the future of a much needed training facility at Woodfield Park and support a successful club, Princes Park Youth Football Club, to continue to deliver youth football. Currently the club run competitive and non-competitive football catering for young people aged between 5 and 20 years old. The club operate a total of 17 teams with approximately 250 girls and boys receiving FA qualified coaching once per week. The facility is also used by other local clubs in the evenings and Lyndhurst School carry out curriculum activities twice per week. Outside of term time the site is used for soccer schools and the pavilion, which supports the AGP, is available to local community groups.

7.5.3 *Access*

7.5.3.1 Young participants are taken to the site by parents, or walk or come by bicycle. The venue, while obscured somewhat by greenery on the road it is situated on, is still accessible by participants from Kingsbury, Burnt Oak, Edgware and Wembley. Local schools bus pupils in to the site.

7.5.3.2 Technically the site is available for hire all day and night. However, the fact that it is reliant entirely on volunteers means that this is not always feasible.

7.5.3.3 Booking details are available on the club's website.

7.5.3.4 Some bookings are specifically for the pavilion as opposed to for the AGP itself.

7.5.3.5 Publicity is generated via the club's website, plus the facility is on the facilities lists of the London Boroughs of Barnet and Brent.

7.5.3.6 It is perceived that the Local Authority have let the facility down in terms of publicising Princes Park as a good venue for hire.

7.5.4 *User experience*

7.5.4.1 The site is used primarily from late afternoon onwards. Princes Park Youth Football Club runs between 14 and 22 sides at any one time which takes up the vast majority of the facility's capacity. The facility is used from 16.00 for

training and coaching young people (with a designated slot for each age group), and then between 21.00 and 23.00 for adult casual use.

7.5.4.2 This tends to be regular, recurrent usage, which is deemed important in terms of developing a relationship of trust with participants.

7.5.4.3 It was noted that a section of the local Muslim community are currently hiring the pitch on Saturdays, with family and friends using the corollary facilities in the pavilion.

7.5.5 *User profile*

7.5.5.1 The site is used exclusively for football. It is set up primarily to develop football coaches and for use by Princes Park Youth Football Club. The club would entertain other sports if other agencies were to approach them.

7.5.5.2 There is an emphasis on young people and this is reflected in its provision.

7.5.5.3 The ethnic background of players reflects the demographics of the Borough, with approximately 29% of players from a black African background and 12% Asian.

7.5.5.4 The club has run a girls' section in the past which has been very successful. However, the club's senior side recently moved to play senior football elsewhere. The subsequent lack of role models means that it is difficult to sustain a girls' section and there are no teams at present.

7.5.5.5 The facility is keen to develop disability sport and special needs groups have hired the site for mini sports days.

7.5.5.6 The pitch size is approximately half the size of a full-size football pitch. While there used to be a curtain that divided the Pitch into two halves, it is now used only in its entirety due to health and safety issues.

7.5.5.7 Approximately 60% of total site usage is for coaching, 20% for training and 20% for adult casual usage.

7.5.5.8 The site runs a combined programme with Barnet FC regarding the facilitation of youth access. Princes Park Youth Football Club provides the facility and Barnet FC provides the coaching staff. The aim of the partnership is to develop a social inclusion programme on Saturday nights. Thus far the results have been successful.

7.5.5.9 During the football season the facility is booked completely, including weekends, although this is less the case over summer months where there is some available for casual pay-and-play use.

7.5.6 *Displacement*

7.5.6.1 As the facility was one of the first sites in the Borough, it is not perceived that it has displaced participation from elsewhere. Indeed, there is a lot of existing competition on the Borough, with AGPs at local Goalz and Power League sites, local schools, the Hive (Barnet FC), and at Burnt Oak and Brent Cross.

7.5.7 *Income generation*

7.5.7.1 It is estimated that 30% of income comes from subscriptions and fees. Membership is £110 per season to include all fees and has not been raised significantly in recent years. As a result the club offer the cheapest package in the area. 20-25% of income comes from AGP bookings.

7.5.7.2 Income also comes from sponsorship and donations from local businesses. Another significant source of income comes from the social activity run by Princes Park Youth Football Club plus the costs of membership.

7.5.7.3 Barnet Borough Council has a 50/50 income share on the facility which means that it is prohibitive in terms of income generation. It is perceived that the Local Authority is a further hindrance, not because of its rental rates but by failing to explore sources of increasing revenue.

**7.6 Roland Davey
Assistant Head / Community Manager
The Matthew Arnold School
Staines, Middlesex
5 July 2013**

7.6.1 *Aims and objectives (taken from Football Foundation assessment report)*

7.6.1.2 The Matthew Arnold School has a sports centre on site which operates various facilities. It has been running successfully for 17 years and has an excellent reputation in the community. This project refurbished an existing sand-filled artificial grass pitch (AGP) and replaced it with a 3G surface. The work replaced the existing fencing and the installed sports equipment.

7.6.1.3 There is a well-established football community based at the school and it has previously received a Football Foundation grant for the full sized 3G pitch which opened in July 2010. The demand for this pitch has been extremely high and as a result the pitch is booked to such capacity that a waiting list exists. This demand is catered for if they hire the adjacent sand-filled pitch to users. However, the surface is in poor condition which affects usage, and needed replacing. Matthew Arnold School is committed to continued development of football and is currently restricted in increasing activity by a lack of sufficient 3G pitches to meet the need that exists.

7.6.1.4 The pitch refurbishment has allowed Matthew Arnold School to provide another top quality and well maintained floodlit 3G football pitch for school, community and local club use alongside the existing full size one. They will continue to grow and develop football on site in partnership with clubs and the county FA to deliver a comprehensive education program as well as providing football opportunities to all aspects of the community. The new facility will enable the continued growth of existing clubs and the accommodation of clubs who are on the waiting list. It will also provide a suitable area for disability football already operating and developing on site, as well as extending the offering to include younger children between the ages of five and seven for small sided matches.

7.6.2 *Access*

7.6.2.1 The facility has a full size AGP (two years old) and a 60x40m AGP (new).

7.6.2.2 The facility is used primarily by people from the local vicinity, with users coming from a maximum distance of 3-5 miles.

7.6.2.3 As the majority of users are young people, the majority are brought to the site by parents in cars.

7.6.2.4 Booking is done via Roland Davey who inputs this onto an online system.

7.6.2.5 Publicity is not needed as it is perceived to be disingenuous to advertise a site that has no spare capacity.

7.6.3 *User experience*

7.6.3.1 The facility is open from 17.00 to 22.00 Monday to Friday, and from 09.00 to 18.00 at weekends. It is used by the school during the day.

7.6.3.2 The majority of bookings are from regular, recurrent clients, while special offers are available to pupils at the school.

7.6.3.3 The school's changing rooms are available to site users, but they are not used as much as might perhaps be expected. It is perceived that it is the pitch that players want, not the peripheries. It is felt that the belief that changing facilities are critical to the provision of new AGPs may be a misconception.

7.6.4 *User profile*

7.6.4.1 It is used exclusively for football

7.6.4.2 Usage shifts between the seasons, with the period between September and April booked almost to capacity, and the Summer programme exhibiting some gaps in bookings.

7.6.4.3 During April 2013, as a recent example, the AGP was booked to 96% of capacity on weekdays and 86% at weekends.

7.6.4.4 80% of usage is by clubs. There is no pay-and-play provision available as there is no space for it in the programme of delivery.

7.6.4.5 80% of usage is for training, 10% is for matches and 10% is for coach development.

7.6.4.6 The older, full-size AGP tends to be booked in thirds, although it can be booked in its entirety for matches.

7.6.4.7 75% of users are aged under 16.

7.6.4.8 15% of users are female.

7.6.4.9 Usage reflects the local ethnic demographics, in so much that the majority of participants are from a white European background.

7.6.5 *Displacement*

7.6.5.1 It is perceived that there is a fine line regarding the number of facilities that an area can accommodate. It is believed that the addition of a further 2-3 pitches in this location would have a detrimental effect on some existing sites.

7.6.5.2 In terms of the summer market and the availability of some pay-and-play provision, the opinion is that this definitely comes from new users rather than from participants displaced from elsewhere.

7.6.5.3 The facility has resisted approaches from commercial providers as it is felt that attempts to generate too much external revenue contravenes the Football Foundation's participatory philosophy. It is perceived that there needs to be a balance between trying to generate profit and trying to generate participation. It is suggested that there should be guidelines regarding what can be charged.

7.6.6 *Income generation*

7.6.6.1 Pupils at the school can hire the pitch for a small fee

7.6.6.2 One-third of a pitch can be hired for £30 (£15 for school pupils) and £20 in summer.

7.6.6.3 Money from the AGPs is sufficient to regenerate the site in terms of long term finance.

8.0 Football Foundation staff interviews

8.1 The following comments are taken verbatim (with some minor edits for clarity) from the Football Foundation staff interviewed by e-mail for the project.

8.2 *Accessibility*

8.2.1 “This can be an issue and especially for school based sites as opposed to Local Authority owned ones. Schools can be big campus style sites and it is not always obvious where the pitch is, and there can be minimum on-site support for new teams when they get there in terms of inductions. Booking systems vary greatly, the majority of bookings tend to be block ones and as such I do not think there is a need for an on-line booking system in most cases. There does though need to be clear information on how you book which includes a phone number or email request form from which somebody is available (on phone) or comes back to requests asap” – Activity and Sustainability Advisor A

8.2.2 “A key point is the lack of proactive marketing and promotion for latent periods of use. Therefore potential new users would be unaware there are free slots especially if the assumption is that if the site is fully booked at peak times it must be at other times (not necessarily the case)” – Activity and Sustainability Advisor B

8.2.3 “Many sites are incorporating new AGPs into their booking system seamlessly” - Investment Programme Manager

8.3 *User experience*

8.3.1 “I do not think in most situations this is something that is normally undertaken or, if it is, readily acted upon. Most sites do not regularly undertake customer satisfaction type surveys” – Activity and Sustainability Advisor A

8.3.2 “I think that user experience can be addressed and acted upon by ensuring the appropriate platforms are in place for users to address areas of concern. Therefore a facility which has regular development and user meetings/forums will be able to develop provision accordingly, and have on-going dialogue with its users. Again this differs with type of facility. Schools and Local Authority facilities tend not to have these platforms and clubs usually do. Better terms and conditions from the Football Foundation could ensure these platforms are in place and are managed appropriately” – Activity and Sustainability Advisor B

8.3.3 “The main reason for any dissatisfaction is when the facility starts falling in to disrepair (carpet turning up, compact carpet, broken lights/fencing). The

price at times can be prohibitive which would hamper some people's satisfaction" – Investment Programme Manager

8.4 *User profile*

8.4.1 "Sites tend to be predominantly accessed by males (adults and juniors). Some will also have the odd girls' team or a Centre of Excellence (CoE) which can help increase numbers. The vast majority of usage comes from football and training. Although the tide is slowly turning and the Youth Review should help with regard to sanctioned matches on the AGP. This number is still far too low with games taking place on poor quality over-used council grass pitches" – Activity and Sustainability Advisor A

8.4.2 "Again this depends on how a site/grantee monitors usage and type – the majority won't do much beyond piecemeal quantitative data" – Activity and Sustainability Advisor B

8.4.3 "There is very little other sport apart from football. There are some sites which rugby teams train on and occasionally there is some multi-sport use (particularly on school sites) but football takes up 90% of usage" – Investment Programme Manager

8.5 *Displacement*

8.5.1 "Although the principle is that new AGPs are to grow the market, displacement is an inevitable consequence in many situations. This can be true where a number of Football Foundation facilities end up in close proximity to each other. Often the demand for peak time slots, e.g. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 6-9pm, can still be filled but what happens is that the hard-to-fill slots on Mondays, Fridays and weekends become even more so" – Activity and Sustainability Advisor A

8.5.2 "I think the interesting point here is how we measure new participants, that weren't participating in sport before the new facility was built. Much of the application process focuses on attracting new users to a site and addressing need, but displacement is very much an unknown area. Better understanding of this is required to inform the development and sustainability of new facilities" – Activity and Sustainability Advisor B

8.5.3 "The Football Foundation will seldom fund a pitch where displacement will occur. In most cases there might be some migration from sand-based pitches to 3G but it would not be wise to risk the usage on one site for the sake of another" – Investment Programme Manager

8.6 *Income generation*

- 8.6.1 “In most cases income generation is below that set out in the business plan. A key factor in this is the drop off in the summer when all the Charter Standard junior users tend to stop playing or go on grass pitches for free. There is a real balance that needs to be made around providing high quality AGP facilities that help grow participation and supporting the FA National Games Strategy (NGS) for which the investment was predominantly given against the adult informal or small-sided provision. Access for FA Charter Standard clubs must be ensured but this then impacts on summer drop off which is then difficult to backfill. With a general rule that sites do not meet their business plan targets, sinking funds are rarely in place at the required amount which will have an impact further down the line when the surface needs replacing. School based sites also need to recognise that surface replacement cannot solely come from community usage especially when curriculum activities account for 50% of usage / wear and tear. A school site should also make an allowance from core funding into the sinking fund” – Activity and Sustainability Advisor A
- 8.6.2 “Several sites have their income underpinned by commercial leagues. For example, one 2 x 5-a-side site has a league Monday-Thursday evenings and the income from this helps support local youth coaching/games for kids from the nearby estates” – Investment Programme Manager

9.0 Key conclusions, recommendations and policy proposals

9.1 *Key conclusions*

- 9.1.1 The following conclusions are drawn from the empirical research – PitchFinder AGP Survey, M&E information, site visit interviews and e-mail interviews – undertaken as part of this research project.
- 9.1.2 There is a high level of satisfaction among users of Football Foundation AGPs, with consistent ratings of over 4 out of 5 (only dropping marginally below 4 in London, in the lowest IMD quintile, and in the MU Super Output Area classification). The overall rating for Foundation sites is 4.28, compared to 3.86 for non-Foundation sites.
- 9.1.3 Football constitutes the overwhelming majority of participation at AGPs. This supports the findings of previous research, such as Sport England and Sport Scotland (2006).
- 9.1.4 There has evidently been a displacement of hockey from 3G surfaces to facilities with sand or water based pitches.
- 9.1.5 There is an even balance of preference among participants between grass pitches and AGPs for match use. This differs from Sport England and Sport Scotland's (2006) research which found that 9 out of 10 players at football clubs prefer natural grass for matches. This research and the Sport England and Sport England (2006) research both conclude that two-thirds of participants prefer AGPs for training purposes.
- 9.1.6 Three-quarters of respondents play small sided football at their AGP and just over one-third use it in a full-size capacity for matches (NB: participants were able to select more than one category). In this study, the former figure is higher than previous research, while the latter figure is lower (ibid). In the present study, nearly two-thirds of participants use their AGP for training, which is slightly higher than suggested by previous research (ibid).
- 9.1.7 Over two-thirds of individuals play football at an AGP as part of an organised football club. This is a higher figure than suggested in Football Foundation 2011-12 monitoring data.
- 9.1.8 Participation patterns are characterised by regular and recurrent usage. Almost 9 out of 10 users play at least once a week.
- 9.1.9 Participation patterns are seasonal with considerable drop-off occurring during the summer.
- 9.1.10 There is a clear tendency for peak time use (evenings) and a preference for midweek use (Tuesday to Thursdays), with less use during the daytime and

at weekends. This reflects Sport England and Sport Scotland Research (2006) and Football Foundation 2011-12 monitoring data.

- 9.1.11 Despite significant ethnic diversity at the site visit venues, overall participation is disproportionately male and white in comparison to the general UK population. Moreover, nearly two-thirds of all participants are aged over 30 (with one third of all participants aged over 40). This is a higher age demographic than identified in the Sport England and Sport Scotland (2006) research. It also provides an interesting comparison to the Monitoring and Evaluation data, which suggest *above average* use for BAME groups. There is potentially a methodological issue here, in relation to the type of respondent who has the time and access to participate in an online survey. We note therefore that the survey may not be fully representative of all users.
- 9.1.12 Over one-third of participants have a Degree or above and almost one-sixth have a Higher Degree. Two-thirds of participants are / have been in Further Education study.
- 9.1.13 8% of respondents to the survey had started new physical activity at their chosen facility. This means that 9 in 10 people had already undertaken at least 30 minutes of exercise at least once a week prior to participating at the “new” facility. 40% of respondents had not previously played at an AGP, whilst a further 21% of the participants continue to play at the previous AGP *as well* as using the current AGP. The remaining 31% of respondents have potentially been displaced from playing at another AGP. Site visit interviewees were adamant though that their facility had not displaced participants from elsewhere. As interviews with Football Foundation staff demonstrate, measuring displacement is difficult and remains a relatively unknown quantity.
- 9.1.14 Site usage is quite local, although there are exceptions for special provision (e.g. the coach education at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre) when people travel from further afield.
- 9.1.15 The provision of changing facilities may not be as central to future facilities as currently thought. While ancillary provision is critical to the sustainability of a sports space (Burdsey 2011), there is some suggestion that changing rooms are not always required at sites purely with AGPs. This is deemed to be the result of two main factors: 1) playing on AGP surface means players do not get muddy and/or grass stains on their clothing; and 2) the current structure of youth football clubs means that many young players purchase and look after their own kit, and so turn up ready to play matches.

9.2 *Recommendations and policy proposals*

- 9.2.1 Due to the extent that investment in AGPs influences the Football Foundation’s capacity to achieve its participation targets, it could be argued strategically that a higher proportion of the Foundation’s annual investment

should be directed into AGP projects. A historical review of participation trends across different project types, locations and delivery organisations should be undertaken to support this discussion.

- 9.2.2 A targeted campaign for new or refurbished site within areas of high IMD would also help ensure that the Football Foundation meets its target of overinvesting in the top 20% deprived areas. A review of the recent £12m IMD fund should be undertaken to help inform policy decisions on future campaigns, with a particular focus on any additional support mechanisms that may be required due to the nature and location of these projects.
- 9.2.3 The current Football Foundation policy is that funded AGPs should be available for use for 85 hours per week, as set out in the sites' planning permission. However, based on the latest M&E information the average number of hours a site is open for is 69 hours per week. Further investigation is needed to obtain the reasons for this and outline a plan to rectify this trend.
- 9.2.4 This research highlights that there are sustained periods of latent use at AGP sites, with sites in use only 73% of the time. There are also noticeable periods of inactivity during Monday to Friday mornings and afternoons, and weekend evenings. This may be due to a combination of limited staff/volunteers, poor governance and a lack of perceived demand. Knowledge should be obtained from the ASA and Investment team on practical measures on how best to alleviate this problem, and to educate and support projects in rectifying this.
- 9.2.5 The majority of AGP projects funded by the Football Foundation are for full-size pitches. However, three quarters of the respondents to the survey indicate that they play small sided football at AGPs (with only a third playing full-size). This is in line with the growing shift of people wishing to play short, small sided games – either in leagues or on a casual basis – to fit in with changing lifestyles. As such, a discussion is needed regarding the extent to which the Foundation funds purpose build smaller AGPs in the future, especially in urban locations where space is at a premium.
- 9.2.6 It would be useful to explore the participation correlation between the small sides and 11 a side game in high IMD (Football Foundation Target) areas, and potential divergences in urban and non-urban areas. This is likely to have implications for revenue and development, and may require the creation of alternative player pathways.
- 9.2.7 Notwithstanding this, for existing full-size pitches, there does though appear to be a shift towards an increasing preference for playing matches at artificial pitches. As such, a consultation should take place with the FA to identify Football Foundation funded sites which can host 11-a-side leagues and competitions.
- 9.2.8 This research indicates that although AGP sites are making a profit, this appears to be less than what is forecasted in the business plan agreed

within the assessment period. This may have an impact of the amount of money that is being put aside into sinking funds, which is a pertinent issue with early Football Foundation projects now coming up to the end of their expected lifespan for the carpet initially laid. A more detailed review of financial information should be undertaken, once the latest financial returns are submitted, to provide greater analysis on this questions.

- 9.2.9 This research shows the value in obtaining first hand experiences from users of funded sites to help establish whether the Football Foundation is meeting its strategic needs. As such, similar surveys should be repeated in future as a means to ascertain this information and could be targeted on particular areas of interest.
- 9.2.10 The findings from this research indicate that the displacement for a typical AGP site is potentially as high as 31%. Conversely, for 8% of participants, it is the first time they have taken part in sporting activity. More detailed research needs to be conducted into these issues of displacement and 'new users' to ensure that a clearer profile of AGP usage is known, together with the effects that new AGPs have on local sports provision. More detailed information should be obtained from projects at the application prior to funding.
- 9.2.11 Further information is required on marginalized football groups, particularly in High IMD areas. The current "typical" AGP participant is a white male, in his 30s/40s, with at least a Degree qualification. This suggests that AGPs are, by and large, not driving up participation among marginalised social groups and young people.
- 9.2.12 The provision of changing facilities may not be critical at new AGPs, given that evidence suggests they are not being utilised by all participants.
- 9.2.13 The balance between commercial and community use at AGPs requires serious consideration. While the former generates income and can facilitate sustainability of the site, it is evident that such provision is also inhibiting certain AGPs from driving up participating and promoting inclusion among marginalised social groups and young people.

10.0 References

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11.0 Appendix One

11.1 *Rural/Urban Area classifications*

- MU - Local Authorities with either a minimum of 100,000 people or a minimum of 50 percent of their total population resident within a major urban area (i.e. an urban area with at least 750,000 population)
- LU - Local Authorities with either a minimum of 50,000 people or a minimum of 50 percent of their total population resident within a large urban area (i.e. an urban area with between 250,000 and 750,000 population)
- OU - Local Authorities that have less than 26 percent of their population living in rural settlements (including larger market towns) and do not have a substantial quantity or proportion of their population living within major or large urban areas
- SR - Local Authorities with more than 26 percent but less than 50 percent of their population in rural settlements and larger market towns
- R50 - Local Authorities with at least 50 percent but less than 80 percent of their population in rural settlements (including those urban areas with between 10,000 and 30,000 population regarded for this exercise as 'larger market towns')
- R80 - Local Authorities that have at least 80 percent of their population resident in rural settlements (including those urban areas with between 10,000 and 30,000 population regarded for this exercise as 'larger market towns')

12.0 Researcher details

12.1 *Author biographies*

Dr. Daniel Burdsey is a Principal Lecturer in the School of Sport and Service Management at the University of Brighton. His research to date has focused on issues of race, ethnicity and multiculturalism in the context of sport (primarily football), leisure and popular culture. This work is published in a number of international journals including *Cultural Sociology*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Leisure Studies*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, *Sociology*, *Sociology of Sport Journal* and *Sociological Review*. He is also the author of *British Asians and Football: Culture, Identity, Exclusion* (Routledge, 2007) and the editor of *Race, Ethnicity and Football: Persisting Debates and Emergent Issues* (Routledge, 2011). In 2011, he researched and authored a report for the Football Foundation, entitled 'Understanding sustainability in relation to Football Foundation and Barclays Spaces for Sports facility projects'.

12.2 *Acknowledgments*

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