



Ahead of the Game

Kent Football Strategy 2012-2015



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SPEAR

SPEAR is part of
Canterbury Christ Church University

SPORT, PHYSICAL EDUCATION
& ACTIVITY RESEARCH



Supporting the delivery of the FA National Game Strategy



TEAM TALK

Over the past 10 years Kent FA has attracted significant inward investment into football facilities and programmes. This inward investment, via the Football Foundation and alongside partnership funding, have secured the development of a number of capital and revenue projects. During this period, Kent FA has supported **234** grassroots football projects across the county with grants worth **£11.3 million** from the Football Foundation. These grants have attracted further partnership funding of **£13.4 million** into grassroots football. This investment has provided Kent with a lasting legacy of:

- **22** new pitches – both grass and artificial
- **23** new changing pavilions
- **68** revenue grants towards club development
- **134** new, safe goalposts
- **7,635** free junior football kits

This investment has been fundamental as Kent FA are astutely aware that public services, including sport and leisure services, are facing a substantial transformation in the ways in which they are delivered. The drive for efficiency savings has brought about a real need to ensure that all services deliver effectively against core objectives, demonstrating that they can offer 'value for money'.

Local Authorities are of course critical to the development of grassroots football with over 80% of the pitch and facility stock owned by the public sector. The reality of the current situation is that Local Authority funding cuts are deep which could lead to a potential loss of football pitches and facilities or a reduction in quality. Reduction in investment and maintenance could also mean that leisure services are outsourced, there is closure or reduced opening hours and the threat of rising football pitch fees is very real. This coupled with the pressure on open space, especially for housing, means that intervention is required to safeguard our game.

Sport, and football in particular, can impact positively on a number of key services that Local Authorities offer the local community. Football can help to contribute to reducing levels of crime and anti social behaviour, especially amongst children and young people, by providing positive and diversionary activities. This is an area that Kent FA have developed expertise through delivery of the Kent Social Inclusion programme in partnership with Charlton Athletic Community Trust, which demonstrated a reduction of up to **25%** in anti social behaviour calls on the evenings that the programme was being delivered.

This Strategy is not intended to be a grand mission statement or a far sighted vision for football in Kent. It is a plan to focus work on ensuring that the Kent FA becomes the link those that play football and those that provide the football pitches and facilities. The aim to demonstrate and prove that grassroots football delivers a valuable local service to vast numbers of local people.



THE WIDER CASE FOR FOOTBALL IN KENT

Kent FA recently commissioned the Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christ Church University to produce some academic research to form the basis of the Kent Football Strategy 2012 – 2015. The report which was produced explores evidence to support the wider case that football can contribute to broader social policy outcomes, investigates the messages and challenges involved in making the local case for football, and provides a framework to support clubs, leagues and the Kent FA in securing provision partnerships.

Throughout the report, a distinction is made between **football provision** and **football-related interventions**:

- **Football provision** is the simple provision of football participation opportunities by clubs or the public sector, with no overt aims to address social policy outcomes, and no supporting or related programmes targeting social policy outcomes.
- **Football-related interventions** are interventions that incorporate football participation opportunities into a wider programme of activities specifically targeting particular social policy outcomes, such as the reduction of crime or anti-social behaviour.

In making both the wider case, and the more local case, for football this report finds that football provision and football-related interventions can make a contribution to locally relevant community and social policy outcomes, and that there appears to be a persuasive case that can be made to Local Authorities and other potential provision partners.

The following key messages were highlighted from the research:

- A local competent football provider **can** help Local Authorities more efficiently provide local services by taking on responsibility for the management of local facilities
- Local football provision **can** engage large proportions of young people in the community
- Local football provision **can** contribute to cross-generational community integration
- Local football provision **can** help build respect within communities
- Local football provision **can** help develop a positive local profile and community pride
- Local football provision **can** contribute to football-related interventions that can support the delivery of local social and health objectives

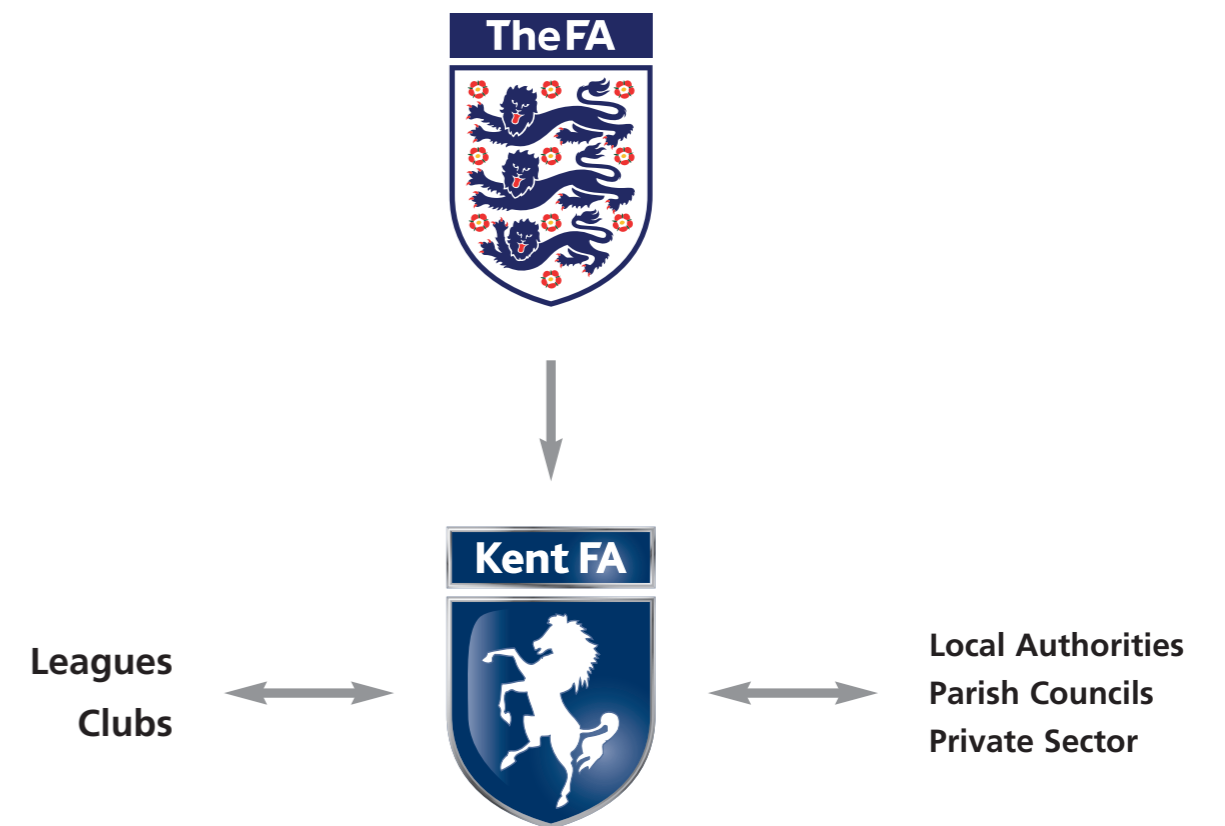


ROLE OF KENT FA

The research from the Centre for Sport, Physical Education & Activity Research (SPEAR) at Canterbury Christ Church University stated that Kent FA needs to lay the ground for local relationships to increase the actual and perceived professional capacity of clubs and leagues to engage in trusted relationships with Local Authorities and other potential provision partners. The appreciation of footballs capacity to contribute to local communities must be communicated if we are to secure and safeguard the future of football provision within Kent.

Evidence supports the case that there are advantages and benefits in relation to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour, positive health outcomes, and the development of community cohesion that can flow from either football provision or football-related interventions.

A reduction in Local Authority funding and internal Local Authority resource constraints are threatening how clubs and leagues operate in the county. This is why Kent FA must now intervene and not sit back and watch while clubs and leagues struggle to survive.





TACTICS

TACTIC 1: To invest in football facilities

- Attract £10 million of funding to improve football facilities in Kent
- Produce a priority list of football facility improvement projects based on strategic need
- Introduce a grass pitch improvement programme throughout Kent
- Highlight the benefits of 3G pitches and work towards ensuring that sand based artificial pitches are replaced where appropriate

TACTIC 2: To protect football facilities

- Supply evidence to Sport England as statutory consultee to the Government to ensure football facilities are not lost to developers
- Identify football facilities that are deemed as 'at risk' and ensure their protection by forming close relationships with Local Authority planning departments
- Lobby providers (Local Authorities/Parish Councils/Private Sector) and MPs to ensure that football facility providers are aware of the benefits of grassroots football
- Carry out an audit of Pitch Fees from providers (Local Authorities/Parish Councils/Private Sector) to ensure consistency

TACTIC 3: To educate the grassroots football community

- Produce an asset transfer toolkit for use by clubs/leagues
- Provide training and support for 'Liaison Officers' in clubs/leagues that can work with pitch providers (Local Authorities/Parish Councils/Private Sector)
- Arrange league forums and/ or workshops within each Local Authority to discuss football facility issues
- Engage with Local Authorities when producing Local Area Plans and Playing Pitch Strategies to ensure football facilities are protected and enhanced or replaced whenever lost to development

TACTIC 4: To reflect the grassroots football community

- Establish new Standing Committee structure for Kent FA that is in line with direction of the Association
- Create Kent FA Youth Council to ensure young people have the opportunity to be involved in grassroots football decision making
- Ensure Kent FA Council is represented by all sanctioned leagues and is reflective of the demographic make-up of Kent
- Modernise and streamline Kent FA management structures and ensure plans are in place for succession planning



GOALS

GOAL 1: To grow and retain participation

- Retain existing 1,185 adult male 11 v 11 teams and 40 adult female 11 v 11 teams
- Increase Male and Female Disability teams from 52 to 56
- Increase Adult Small Sided teams from 1,430 to 1,445
- Establish Futsal Youth Leagues within 3 FA Charter Standard Leagues
- Establish a Veterans Football structure
- Implement the FA Youth Development Review throughout the County supporting Clubs and Leagues implement the changes
- Support a comprehensive intra-mural programme in Kent Universities and Colleges

GOAL 2: To raise standards and address abusive behaviour

- Increase the percentage of Mini Soccer and Youth teams in FA Charter Standard Clubs to 80%
- Increase the number of FA Charter Standard Community Clubs to 32
- 30% of all Adult and Youth Teams to be playing in an FA Charter Standard League
- 65% of people think the Respect programme has improved their Football experience

GOAL 3: To develop better players

- A qualified FA Coach with every Youth Team
- Increase the number of playing opportunities within the FA Skills Programme
- Increase the opportunities for players to access the Disability Player pathway and elite development squads
- Increase the opportunities for female players to access the elite player pathway

GOAL 4: To run the game effectively

- 75% of stakeholders perceive Kent FA are successfully developing grassroots football
- Achieve Preliminary & Intermediate Levels of National Equality Standard for Sport
- 100% matches covered by a qualified Referee
- 60 young leaders in Kent FA Football Futures programme



RESULTS

Rewards for Clubs and Leagues include:

- Greater access to local facilities, or access to better quality facilities
- The possibility that the provision of facility management or maintenance services by clubs or leagues may be offset against facility rental costs
- Increased control over how and when clubs and leagues can use facilities
- Greater stability and an increased confidence in a secure future

Rewards for Local Authorities include:

- More effective and cost-efficient management and use of local sport and recreation facilities
- Safeguarding the future of local facilities as a community resource for sport and recreation
- Enhanced delivery of a range of social and community policy goals

Rewards for Kent FA include:

- Securing and safeguarding football provision within Kent
- Enhancing the appreciation of football's capacity to contribute to local communities
- An enhanced reputation among key opinion formers as an innovative and valued partner in delivering wider community and social goals through football

For more information contact
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