

This thesis is dedicated to my parents,
Tony and Margaret.

Thank you for your continued support and encouragement
throughout my education.

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**LOCAL AUTHORITIES ROLE IN THE
RELOCATION OF FOOTBALL LEAGUE
CLUBS; ENABLERS OR RESTRAINERS?**

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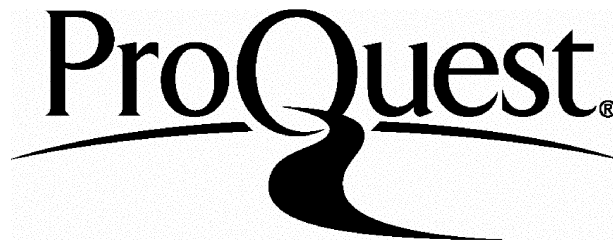
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ABSTRACT

The majority of Football League clubs in England and Wales located on the sites they now occupy before 1910. These grounds are now commonly sited in residential areas. The demands from a football stadium have also changed during this time, and to meet these changes football clubs have been looking into ways to meet the demands of football in the twenty-first century, and meet the requirements of the Taylor Report into Safety at Football Grounds. The site constraints faced by many grounds located in urban areas has forced clubs to consider relocation as well as redevelopment to meet these changing demands.

This thesis examines the four main problems faced by clubs in their search for improved facilities : the planning system and the planners who operate within this system, the willingness to meet changing needs from clubs, site constraints and finance.

To facilitate a detailed examination, the study concentrated on two clubs, Cambridge United and Oxford United, and the affects of the first of these problems, the planning system and the planners who operate within this system.

The aim of the study was not to suggest where or how these clubs should develop, but to suggest the way forward for clubs whichever path they choose. The aim was to suggest the way forward for clubs, local planning authorities and the other actors in the development process for each of the options open to clubs, including redevelopment and relocation.

The main conclusion of the study was that the emphasis must be put on co-ordination and co-operation between actors rather than conflict, and the most appropriate way to do this is to convene a forum to include the major actors in the process.

CONTENTS

	page no.
TITLE PAGE	1
ABSTRACT	2
CONTENTS PAGE	3
LIST OF FIGURES AND MAPS	4
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION	5
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW	15
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	30
CHAPTER FOUR THE PROBLEMS OF AN INADEQUATE CAPACITY AND FACILITIES, AND THE AIMS OF PROPOSALS	44
CHAPTER FIVE THE INTERACTION OF ACTORS IN THE PROCESS	56
CHAPTER SIX OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB - LESSONS TO BE LEARNED	80
CHAPTER SEVEN THE WAY FORWARD	98
CHAPTER EIGHT CONCLUSION	110
BIBLIOGRAPHY	122
APPENDICES	127

FIGURES AND MAPS

<u>FIGURES</u>		Page no.
FIG 1	Number of clubs who have moved or were considering relocation at the time of the 3 RTPI surveys	19
FIG 2	Costs of the development of a new stadium with full facilities	25
FIG 3	Net transfer income / expenditure for Divisions 1-4 1991/2	26
FIG 4	Structure of linkages between actors in Cambridge	36
FIG 5	Proposed structure of linkages between actors in Cambridge with a forum	117
<u>MAPS</u>		
MAP 1	The Six District and City Councils in Cambridgeshire	38
MAP 2	The Location of the 5 Proposed Sites for Development in Cambridge	57
MAP 3	The Cambridge Green Belt	68
MAP 4	The Locations of the Present Stadium, 1992 Appeal Site and the New Proposed Site	93

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Football is our national sport, both as a participant and spectator pastime. In England and Wales alone almost half a million people watch the 92 Football League clubs on a Saturday afternoon, while millions watch live televised games or recorded highlights. Many hundreds of thousands more either play or watch local football during a weekend. For many though, football is not just a sport, it is a way of life. Supporters spend all their disposable income to support their club, successful clubs have the ability to bring large proportions of a town or city's population together, and supporters moods often reflect the recent success or otherwise of their club. For many towns, particularly in the North of England where employment and the local industries have disappeared, the local football club has increased in importance as an aspect of life of which the local population can be truly proud. A successful club also has the ability to bring a town to prominence through national newspaper, radio and television coverage.

This 'love' of the game is not only displayed in Britain, but increasingly across the world. The introduction of the J-League in Japan has created huge interest within the country, and has attracted former World Cup stars including Zico from Brazil and Gary Lineker from England. However, it is still particularly evident in Europe and South America, where clubs like Barcelona can attract crowds in excess of 100 000, although with World Cup 1994 being held in the United States of America, and 106 countries from 5 continents entering the qualifying competition, the games support around the world is expanding.

Despite the sports importance within British culture, its long history and financial difficulties have presented many problems. Inglis (1987) notes that 58 of the current league clubs moved into the grounds they now occupy between 1889 and 1910. Many of these grounds have been engulfed by expanding urban areas, and are now commonly sited in residential areas.

The financial nature of the football industry, where clubs commonly run at a loss, has meant that by the late 1980s many of our nation's stadia are outdated and in need of repair. During this period few clubs could boast a stadium looking towards football in the twenty-first century.

The game's huge popularity, notably as a spectator sport, has also led to its major problems. The concentration of huge numbers of spectators at grounds on match days (up to 45 000 in England and Wales), raises problems. These problems include safety inside and outside the stadium, traffic congestion in the surrounding area, car parking problems, noise and criminal activity. Institutional responses, from clubs, police and Government have been largely reactionary. Attempts to resolve the problems of hooliganism in the 1980s were a result of major disasters during that decade, particularly after the Heysel stadium disaster in 1985.

Throughout the 1980s many clubs have been evaluating options to improve the facilities provided at grounds, but it was another disaster that placed the question of safety at football grounds on the political agenda, and provided the impetus and stimulated the financial backing for more detailed investigation. The Hillsborough stadium disaster on the 15th April 1989, during the F.A. Cup semi-final between Liverpool F.C. and Nottingham Forest F.C., resulted in almost 100 fatalities. Public outrage at the organisational and physical structures that allowed this to happen resulted in an examination by an inquiry by the Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Taylor, whose final report was presented to parliament in January 1990. The inquiry's aim was, "to inquire into the events at Sheffield Wednesday Football Ground on 15 April 1989 and to make recommendations about the needs of crowd control and safety at sports events" (Home Office 1990).

The first of these recommendations has proved the most problematic for clubs and planning authorities alike. The report requires all first and second division clubs (Premier and first

division after the introduction of the Premier division for the 1992/3 season) to become all-seater by the start of the 1994/5 season, and all third and fourth division clubs (now second and third) to become all-seater by the start of the 1999/2000 season. The main problem for the implementation of this recommendation has been that seated spectators take up more room than standing spectators, resulting in a reduced capacity. Without increasing ticket prices, which is likely to alienate or exclude some sections of the club's support, this will result in a reduced income for the club from a grandstand. In order to maintain revenue, clubs have been looking into ways to expand the total area for spectators, so as to maintain the same number of seated spectators as standing spectators prior to the implementation of the Taylor report.

The requirement for all-seater accommodation has led to widespread debate within and outside the football world as to the best way to incorporate these requirements. Should clubs redevelop their existing stadiums, or should they start anew on a different site within or outside the urban area. The legal requirements for change were not considered in isolation, but in concert with economic and social considerations, the preferred course of action to implement the reports findings has been identified by each club.

The problem does not however stop here. Even when a club has decided on its best course of action after considering legal, economic and social implications, development still requires planning permission. These problems are not insurmountable, and many clubs have already incorporated the report's proposals in new development. Arsenal F.C. and Leeds United F.C. have done this by constructing huge new stands as part of a redevelopment project, and Millwall F.C. moved to a new 20 000 all-seater stadium, costing £15.5m just 400 yards from their old ground at the beginning of the 1993/4 season (The Times 1993a).

The passage of change has not proved to be as smooth for many other clubs, who have been dogged by financial problems or

planning obstacles. According to a recent Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) survey, 63 clubs have considered relocation at some stage over the last 5 years, but only 6 have moved permanently to new grounds. A total of 26 clubs are still considering relocation, 15 of whom have moved or are likely to move (Shepley A 1993) (Appendix 1). Planning concern and objection has also caused problems for clubs attempting to redevelop their existing grounds, 29 of the 57 clubs who have improved or are planning to improve their existing grounds have raised public concern and objection, particularly due to the height of new stands, intrusion into nearby residential areas, traffic, noise, disturbance and litter (Shepley A 1993).

THE STUDY

Clubs face 4 major problems in their search for improved facilities to meet and exceed the Taylor Report requirements. Consideration of these 4 factors will determine the direction of the clubs search for improvements.

1) PLANNING AND PLANNERS

The first consideration is the planning system and the individuals at local planning authorities who implement this system. Clubs must make decisions giving due consideration to planning policies including development plans, regional planning guidance, national policy guidance notes and Government circulars, local planners interpretation of this policy and any assistance available from local authorities. Clubs must also be aware of local politics and attitudes, particularly if the aim is to move from one local authority area, into another.

2) WILLINGNESS OF CLUBS

The willingness of the club and its supporters to improve facilities, and the perceived needs of the club in the future.

3) SITE CONSTRAINTS

Site constraints on the existing or a proposed site. This may include land availability, present land-use, location, price, planning policies (e.g. Green Belt), and access.

4) FINANCE

Improvements, whether redevelopment or relocation require money. Clubs have to consider how much money they have, or can obtain or borrow, and decide how this may best be spent. Should money be spent in the short-term to meet the Taylor report requirements, or should the club be looking towards a stadium for the twenty-first century.

All four of these problems play a part in affecting the decisions clubs make and the constraints that confront decision-makers. These problems are also interrelated and changes to any one of them will have a considerable impact on the other three. Assistance from local planning authorities may, for example, increase the willingness of the club's officials to pursue improvements. An improvement in the club's financial position may reduce the site constraints due to the club's increased ability to compete with other demands for land. Changes to planning policy, including green belt designation may also affect the site constraints that clubs face.

This study will concentrate on the examination of the effect of the planning system, and more importantly the local authority planners who implement this system on the search by clubs for improved facilities. The study will concentrate on the way planners communicate and interact with other actors in the search, and how they interpret and apply policy. The aim of this thesis is not to suggest how clubs should incorporate the Taylor report requirements and improve their facilities, but to suggest the way forward for clubs whichever path they choose. The aim is to suggest the way forward for clubs, local planning authorities and the other actors in the

development process for each of the options open to clubs, including redevelopment and relocation.

Chris Shepley, with reference to the RTPI survey on football league grounds noted that "there are few indications of hostility or bitterness between planners and clubs" (Planning 1993c). This study will concentrate on the role of the planning system and planners in the process, as opposed to any of the 3 other problems for clubs mentioned earlier, to test this statement, but also to examine the 'hostility or bitterness,' or otherwise between local authorities, and between local authorities and other actors in the process. Planning is very important as it can have a huge impact on the other 3 'problems': site constraints, finance and willingness. Planning has an affect on site constraints through policy application, and finance through its effect on land prices, permission for associated development to help finance development, and permission for the former site if a club decides to relocate, which will determine the price the club will get for the land. Planning's influence and level of assistance will also affect the willingness of a club to develop, and the level of money and resources it wants to employ. An examination of the present problems being faced, the conflicts that have arisen, the opportunities that remain, and the headway that has been made will allow this thesis to suggest the way forward.

The RTPI study was based on a brief examination of a large number of clubs. This study, in order to allow a fuller, more detailed examination of the affect of planning and planners, will concentrate on only two, Cambridge United Football Club and Oxford United Football Club.

The great strength of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work, these processes may remain hidden in a large-scale survey but may be crucial to the success or failure of systems or organisations.
(Bell 1987).

Critics of the case study approach point to the fact that generalisation is not usually possible and question the value of the study of single events (Bell 1987). In the case of football league clubs, the specific reasons why each has found it difficult to improve facilities cannot be generalised. Individual clubs need to understand the specific problems that they are facing, rather than a generalised view of all problems faced by all clubs. This study should also not be considered in isolation, but together with wider studies like those undertaken by the RTPI it will provide a full picture of the situation facing clubs.

Cambridge United and Oxford United were chosen because they are two of the clubs who are confronted by the largest problems. They are medium-sized clubs in Divisions 2 and 1 respectively in 1993/4 with ambition, but unlike large clubs like Manchester United, not resources. As prosperous expanding cities in the South of England they are also confronted by tight planning regimes and high land prices. Unlike in the north of the country there are also few examples of derelict land, which has enabled the relocation of clubs like Walsall. Local authority support is also less favourable for these clubs than in the north where Sunderland have recently received local authority support for a £70m sports, entertainment and conference centre on green belt land outside the city (Financial Times 1994). This is a result of the smaller support base and influence of Oxford United and Cambridge United compared to many of their northern rivals.

Cambridge, like Oxford, has a world renowned heritage, notably dating back to 1284, when Peterhouse College, the first University college was founded (Cambridge City Council 1983). The desire to maintain the city's heritage and prevent further expansion has led to a tight planning regime, and a tight green belt.

Cambridge United have also considered relocation to sites within a neighbouring local authorities area, allowing examination of the discussion between neighbouring authorities

involved in development, and the strategic authority, Cambridgeshire County Council.

Cambridge United have also proved highly successful on the field in recent years, being only two games from the Premier division at the end of the 1991/2 season, after losing the play-off semi-final. Despite this, and the aspirations of all at the club for future success, the club's stadium is basic and relatively small (9 980 capacity). The Taylor Report requirements have proven to be a great opportunity for the club to rethink its strategy for its stadium, and provide an arena that recent years on the field have deserved.

The majority of the study will be devoted to the examination of Cambridge United, but one chapter will look at the problems Oxford United Football Club have faced, and how they have tried to overcome these. This comparison is important for two main reasons. Firstly, the physical and planning structures of Cambridge and Oxford are very similar, with tight planning regimes and policies based on the preservation of the cities Universities, and the constraint of a booming city. Secondly, in 1992 Oxford United appealed against non-determination by South Oxfordshire District Council for a new stadium and associated development on Green Belt land outside the city. Although the appeal was refused, the inspector's and Secretary of State's comments regarding acceptable development on Green Belts, and procedures that should have been followed during the determination of the original application, are directly relevant to the case of Cambridge United F.C, and the relationship between the club and the local authorities.

THESIS STRUCTURE

To provide balance to the detailed examination of the relationship between actors in Cambridge in chapters 4 and 5, chapter 2 reviews the main literature in the area and provides a general introduction to some of the main issues in this field of study.

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology adopted, primary data collected through interviews and discussions with representatives of the main actors in the planning process, including the club, local authorities, Members of Parliament in the areas, and potential partners for development. Each actor was questioned on the role they have or will play in the process of redevelopment and / or relocation, any additional assistance they can offer, or feel should have been offered to them, and the role they feel the other major actors should be playing in the process.

Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the information collected from the Cambridge case study. These chapters will focus on three broad questions: who's problem is an inadequate capacity and facilities at Cambridge United? what are the aims of the proposals for redevelopment and relocation? and how do the actors in the process interact? The Oxford case study is discussed in chapter 6 and related to the Cambridge example, and investigates the lessons that Cambridge United can learn from the experiences of Oxford in their search for a new stadium over the last 30 years.

Chapter 7 incorporates all of the previous discussion and lessons, and suggests the way forward for Cambridge United in its search for improved facilities for each of the options open to the club. The conclusions of the study are summarised in chapter 8.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the establishment of the Football Association in 1863, the world's oldest football institution, the game of football has changed dramatically. Rules have changed, clubs have come and gone, the way the game is played has changed, and supporters have changed. Britain's reputation on the field has also diminished. This came to a head in 1993 when for the first time since the war no British national team qualified for the World Cup. The end of England's hopes and the subsequent resignation of their manager came in a particularly embarrassing manner, conceding the fastest goal in World cup football to San Marino.

Britain's domination of Europe at club level has also been eclipsed, most notably by the Italians. In the late 1970s and early 1980s Nottingham Forest, Aston Villa, Everton, Tottenham Hotspur and most notably Liverpool dominated European competition, but England's ban from Europe after the Heysel stadium disaster, except for Manchester United's 1991, and Arsenal's 1994 European Cup Winners Cup wins, has ended British domination.

The introduction of a superleague, the Premier Division, provided an opportunity to address many of the criticisms directed at the old Football League First Division, but this opportunity has as yet been wasted. Players are still playing too many games and the emphasis towards a more physical game has appeared to continue to hurt the country's footballing reputation.

While the non-qualification for the 1994 World Cup has been seen as a national disaster, it was not entirely unexpected. It has provided an opportunity and support for the restructuring of the country's Premier Division, and the national selection and management structure.

Football has also changed as a spectator sport. The increased commercialisation of Football at the top level requires huge

amounts of money for success. Wealthy backers, like Jack Walker at Blackburn Rovers plough millions into their favourite clubs, but this fairy godmother figure has not come to the aid of most clubs. To pay the increasing wage bills to be competitive and to provide improved facilities at grounds, clubs have looked for new ways to attract revenue. For many this has led to a restructuring of spectator provision, and a shift away from the traditional swaying terraces, to multi-million pound seated stands and executive boxes. Attempts have also been made to attract families to games. Carrow Road, home of Norwich City F.C. exemplifies this shift, a 20 000 capacity "made up mostly of men with beards, and women and children draped in their teams favours putting on happy faces for the cameras. Not a baying, swaying mob in sight" (Kelner 1993). "Those who mourn the inevitable passing of football's power to mobilise the working man, or its ability to arouse the most primeval of passions, are hankering after an age that will never return" (Kelner 1993).

This shift is by no means complete, and may never be complete, but as in America, attending matches is becoming a middle-class pursuit. Football must never forget its roots, but the increasing money required for success and meeting the Taylor report requirements requires an ever-increasing revenue for those who want to stay at the top.

These changes will place different requirements from spectators and clubs on the facilities provided by football grounds. Changes will have to be made to bring English football into the twenty-first century, but clubs have been confronted by many problems in their search for improved facilities. These problems have been discussed within and outside the football world, in planning journals like 'Planning', 'The Planner' and 'Planningweek', local and national newspapers, and sports magazines. These problems can be categorised into four areas, as noted in the introduction: planning, willingness of clubs, site constraints and finance. All are interrelated and all play their part.

1) PLANNING AND PLANNERS

All developments of this size and nature require planning permission from the local planning authority responsible for the area in which development is proposed. This includes proposals for redevelopment and relocation. This means that any proposals put forward by clubs as applications for planning permission require the appropriate planning authority to consider the application on its merits and demerits, in relation to local development plans and local policy, as well as regional and national policy. An RTPPI survey in 1993 summarised the current state of play between clubs and local authorities. Andrew Shepley (1993) notes that "there are very few indications of hostility or bitterness between planners and clubs". Is this true? The survey by the RTPPI showed that by 1993 fewer clubs were actively considering relocation than three years previously, and that "on-site Taylorization is the normal approach" (Shepley A 1993). The survey does little to attempt to suggest why this has occurred.

One reason for the conclusion that there are very few indications of hostility or bitterness is the one-sided nature of the survey. Questionnaires were sent out to all local authorities in which relocation or redevelopment was being considered, but the clubs themselves were not consulted. Any conclusions on relations between local authorities and clubs must involve consultation with both parties. This study will examine the interaction and relationship between all the major actors in the development process, through consultation and investigation of all these actors. This will facilitate meaningful evaluation of the nature and level of 'hostility or bitterness between planners and clubs' in relation to the cases of Cambridge United and Oxford United.

The figures provided by the RTPPI survey on the current state of play are very useful as a starting point from which more detailed studies on the particular reasons behind club's decisions can begin. Time, resources or a perceived lack of need prevented the

survey from carrying out a more detailed examination of each club, but it does provide a context in which examinations like this thesis can be discussed.

There are two main problems with literature on the relationships between planning, planners and clubs. Firstly, whilst the topic has aroused considerable interest and space in newspapers and journals, no well-researched and comprehensive documents or books have been published by experienced professionals in the field, facilitating lengthy discussion. Although the subject has attracted considerable attention from students at all levels and from many varied backgrounds. This is possibly due to the relative short-time that this topic has been a 'hot' issue, and the comparatively long-time needed for the publication of a book.

The other main problem is that articles in papers and journals tend to be very descriptive of the present and the past positions, but little space is reserved for future predictions, evaluations and discussion. Articles report what has happened, they report for example that "Airdrie stadium gets red card" (Planning 1993a), and make note of the reasons for refusal, but make no effort to discuss these decisions. Professional journals are probably not the place for such discussion, but there appears no other vehicle for such issues to be discussed.

2) WILLINGNESS TO MOVE

As well as planning issues, clubs are also curtailed by their willingness, and perceived need to move, and the resources they inject into the search for improved supporter facilities. How do clubs want to meet the Taylor Report requirements? Is relocation perceived as the best option? Is redevelopment practical and feasible? These are the type of questions that officials at football clubs need to address in order to make informed decisions on the clubs best perceived course of action, and the willingness of the club to pursue these priorities.

The willingness of clubs to pursue improvements is hugely affected by the club's relationship with the local authority in whose area development is proposed, and the assistance offered by this authority. Local authority support for development, exemplified by the cases of Millwall F.C. (The Times 1993a) and Sunderland (Financial Times 1994), is a huge advantage for clubs in their search.

Prior to the RTPI survey of 1993 previously discussed, the RTPI had undertaken two studies, in September 1990 (Shepley C 1990b) and May 1991 (Shepley C & Barratt 1991) on the position of clubs on relocation. In 1990 planning authorities were aware of no less than 42 proposals for English and Welsh Football League clubs to relocate (Shepley C 1990b). But by 1993 this figure had fallen to 24. The Figure 1 shows the situation concerning relocation at the time of the three RTPI surveys.

Fig 1 Number of clubs who have moved or are considering relocation at the time of the 3 RTPI surveys.

	1990	1991	1993
Moved permanently to new ground	2	2	6
Moved temporarily - likely to move again	4	4	2
Other probable moves		5	7
Other possible moves	36	23	11

Sources : 1990 data Shepley C (1990b), 1991 data Shepley C & Barratt (1991), 1993 data Shepley A (1993).

The 1993 survey notes that no fewer than 63 clubs have considered relocation at some stage over the last five years (Shepley A 1993). This suggests a considerable enthusiasm and willingness by clubs to relocate, but also shows that many have been met with as yet insurmountable problems.

These studies make no attempt to examine why clubs have abandoned plans to relocate, but this willingness or otherwise is strongly affected and influenced by the other three problems faced by clubs: planning and planners, site constraints and

finance. This thesis will examine the problems faced by clubs in their attempts to relocate with the emphasis on planning and planners. But consideration of the other three problems will also be made due to their interrelated nature and effects on planning considerations.

The perceived need and willingness for Cambridge United to relocate has received considerable time and space in local newspapers. John Beck, the ex-Cambridge United manager noted in 1991 that "we desperately need that new ground at Teversham or somewhere as suitable, Friday highlighted that (400 supporters were locked out from a game against Derby because the ground was at capacity). I hope everyone concerned with the process of relocation, like the Council, will give it very serious thought now so that we can get things moving as soon as possible" (Cambridge Evening News 1991). Cambridge United's appointment of a planning advisor, as well as an overwhelming desire by the supporters for a ground to reflect the club's ambition, shows a willingness by all at the club to relocate. The willingness to move has been displayed by a huge number of clubs, it is only the obstacles of planning, suitable sites and finance that have prevented a greater number of relocated grounds.

3) SITE CONSTRAINTS

The problem of site constraints for clubs attempting to redevelop or relocate, the third major problem faced by clubs, is probably the most contentious in the literature. In order to meet the Taylor Report requirements clubs have to decide whether to redevelop insitu, or move to a new site more suited to the needs of a twenty-first century football ground.

Inglis (1987) noted that 58 of the current league clubs moved into the grounds they now occupy between 1889 and 1910. The problematic siting of many grounds in large urban areas, and a shift in support base for clubs because of increased

commercialisation has put the redevelopment versus relocation issue on the political agenda.

Despite the lack of books in this field, discussion papers have appeared in the professional journals, notably Fyson's article on 'Should football decentralise?' (1990) and 'Political football could be a professional foul' (Hayes 1990). Both of the articles are written by planners, from the point of view of planning, and whilst attention is given to the needs of football in the twenty-first century, the emphasis appears to be put on the maintenance of the status quo. Fyson notes that the "countryside should no more be sacrificed to this cause (relocation) than that of the shopping centre" (Fyson 1990). Whilst in many circumstances this is undoubtedly true we must not forget how different these two competitors for space really are.

Many clubs, needing to become all-seater, cannot physically expand because of the closeness and density of surrounding development. Many clubs originally sited grounds outside the urban area, as in the case of Cambridge United, but urban expansion has engulfed many of these grounds. Cambridge United have played on their present ground since 1932 (Daw 1988). At that time, the site stood on the edge of the built-up area, and outside the city boundary as it stood in 1932, but since this time Cambridge has expanded enormously. Since the war the ground has been located in the centre of the Cambridge suburbs. Subsequent reduced capacities, if clubs cannot expand will force them to follow clubs like Aldershot and Maidstone into bankruptcy. The essential difference between retail and football is that retailing makes money, and football loses money. Attention to this problem will be made in the following discussion on finance.

Hayes (1990) lists seven reasons why relocation is a "nightmare scenario for both planners and supporters";

- 1) Grounds would have to be located in Green Belts.
- 2) Residents in areas like Surrey would have to accept the location of football grounds in their districts.

- 3) Development at the old stadium site would disrupt infrastructure 365 days a year, compared to the 30 days a football ground is used.
- 4) New grounds would increase dependence on car travel.
- 5) The ease of policing in built-up areas where away fans can be kept away from home fans on different streets for the short distance to the rail station. Huge car park expanses have provided the ideal environment for some of the worst football-related crime in Europe.
- 6) Relocation takes the clubs away from its historic support.
- 7) Many grounds are of considerable historical and architectural significance.

In addition to these are many non-planning related reasons, including the loss of the intimidation a ground can present to the opposition. Millwall, moved to a new ground at the beginning of the 1993/4 season and this "may have cost Millwall their biggest asset : The power to intimidate"(Times 1993c).

The seven reasons given by Pat Hayes are to some extent very true, but are in many ways simplistic and at worst untrue. His account of the situation appears to accept the fact that many clubs may choose to relocate. The truth is that many clubs may have to relocate. Whilst many clubs, including Cambridge United are considering Green Belt sites, this is not the only option, and many clubs are considering sites on the periphery of existing development, rather than, or as well as Green Belt development. Football, like the rest of the world around us is changing. Its demands and needs are changing, and whilst relocation may be detrimental to the area a club may move to, it may also help reduce problems and provide opportunities in the area the club vacates. For better or for worse, as noted earlier, the support base for clubs is also changing, and with increasing dependence on money in football this is likely to continue. Hayes, with reference to the historical and architectural significance of grounds makes reference to Highbury stadium (Arsenal) and Hillsborough (Sheffield Wednesday). These are not the clubs that are considering relocation.

Whatever clubs decide is their best course of action they are likely to be met by site constraints. Existing stadia sited in residential areas are often constrained on all four sides. Larger stands, required for the same number of seated supporters as standing supporters in the previous stand therefore cause problems. These problems have been addressed by many clubs who have been able to construct new stands, notably at Elland Road (Leeds United) and Highbury (Arsenal), where the new North Bank stand "blends with local architecture and has a light, airy atmosphere - like an airport concourse or a piece of social engineering "(The Independent 1993).

Those who can't or don't want to develop insitu, must look for new sites elsewhere. Sites must have good access, be available and competitively priced due to the financial constraints on clubs, suitably located, and of an adequate size. In the case of Cambridge United this involves inspecting all sites within 12 miles of Cambridge and over 15 acres in size (for a 13 000-15 000 seater stadium). The main problems faced by clubs in their search are finding large enough sites within the urban area with good access, and planning policies like Green Belt policies outside the urban area. Many of the site constraints are related to planning and planners. Development plans, local, regional and national policies are all obstacles that can reduce the number of potential sites and that clubs have to negotiate, but planning policy and its implementation on the ground by local planners can also provide considerable opportunity for clubs. Planners support is imperative if clubs are to take advantages of these opportunities. Assistance is given by documents like Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) 'Sport and Recreation' (Department of the Environment 1991) which has a section on planning guidance for all-seater stadia, but one of the main problems is the absence of provision in policy documents in relation to developments of this size and nature.

Despite these problems, six clubs have moved permanently to new grounds. Charlton Athletic, Chester, Scunthorpe, Walsall,

Millwall and Wycombe Wanderers. These new stadia are looking to the future, "the bulk of our grounds reflect the days when people worked in sweatshops and lived in houses with outside loos", Reg Burr, the Millwall chairman noted, "we're changing that"(The Times 1993a). At Millwall's new ground "spaciousness is everywhere" (The Times 1993a). Millwall is looking to the future, they have taken bookings for music concerts, boxing and rugby league. However, it is too soon to tell whether Millwall's people will take to moving up-market. Whatever the outcome, the move 400 yards down the road had many site constraints and planning obstacles to negotiate, the simple choice for Millwall was whether to go "into the arms of a property developer, or into bed with the local authority" (The Times 1993a). Reg Burr, the Millwall chairman, chose the latter.

Site constraints can present a huge obstacle for clubs to negotiate, but the lessons from the clubs that have proved successful show that they can be minimised if clubs enjoy local authority support, whereby planning and planners become part of the solution.

4) FINANCE

Whatever path clubs decide to follow, development costs money, and money is in short supply in football. Ground improvements for all four divisions in 1990/1 cost £42.4 million. The first, second and third division clubs (under the control of the Football League) spent £53 million on ground development between January 1990 and December 1992. Expenditure is predicted to be £144.6 million between January 1993 and August 1994, and £70.7 million between August 1994 and August 1999 (Football League 1993). Full implementation of the Taylor report requirements by all 70 Football League clubs, which excludes the 22 Premier League clubs who are under the control of the Football Association, will cost in the region of £600-£700 million (Football League 1993).

Finance has been made available by the Government through the Football Trust, made possible by the Government's decision to channel moneys accruing from the 1990 Reduction in Football Pool Betting Duty into ground improvements. Despite this there will still be a huge shortfall between this contribution and the finance needed by clubs to comply with the Taylor Report.

The Technical Unit for Sport at the Sports Council has made estimates for the development costs of different size stadia (Fig 2).

<u>Fig 2 Costs of the development of a new stadia with full facilities.</u>	
	Total Cost Range (£m 1990)
Small non-league ground - capacity 5000 seated	2.75 - 3.88
Small league ground - capacity 10000 seated	5.50 - 7.75
Medium league ground - capacity 20000 seated	17.50 - 19.50
Large league ground - capacity 40000 seated	35.00 - 39.00
Prestige league ground - capacity 60000 seated	60.00
International stadium - capacity 80000 seated	80.00 - 100.00

Note : Costs include pitch, floodlighting etc, but exclude external works, land charges legal costs, professional fees and VAT.
Source : Sports Council (1991).

For any club these costs would appear daunting, but resources are not spread evenly throughout the four divisions. A look at net transfer income / expenditure in 1991/2 gives an idea of the money backing the top clubs to buy success (Figure 3).

The top clubs can afford to lose money in the transfer market because direct shareholder investment is unevenly distributed in their favour. Four clubs in Divisions 1 and 2 (now the Premier and Division 1) had direct shareholder investment of more than £5 million in 1991/2, Blackburn Rovers, Tottenham Hotspur, Manchester United and Millwall. Another four had direct shareholder investment of between £1 million and £5 million.

Only one club in the bottom two divisions could boast direct shareholder investment of over £1 million (Touche Ross 1993).

**Fig 3 Net transfer income / expenditure for Divisions 1 - 4
1991/2.**

Division	Net Transfer income / (expenditure) (£m)
1	(7.95)
2	(2.49)
3	4.73
4	2.66

Source: Touche Ross (1993).

These inequalities are borne out in the pre-tax profit / loss standings of clubs. In 1991/2 only three clubs made pre-tax profits over £2 million, Manchester United (£5.1m), Aston Villa (£3.5m) and Tottenham Hotspur (£2.7m). Another seven clubs made profits over £0.5 million. All ten of these teams were in the top two divisions. Despite their position in Division 2 in 1991/2, both Cambridge United and Oxford United made pre-tax losses in 1991/2 of £494 000 and £441 000 respectively (Touche Ross 1993).

Opportunities are also unevenly distributed, Aston Villa were hoping to “make £5 million from a successful run (in the UEFA cup) to fund the redevelopment of the Holte End (at their home ground)” (The Times 1993d).

Twenty-seven clubs in the bottom two divisions made pre-tax losses in 1991/2 (Touche Ross 1993). Teams in the lower divisions are playing football to survive. The Taylor Report requirements may put unbearable pressure on many of these clubs. The 70 teams in the Football League (excluding the Premier League) spent £31.5 million on ground improvements in 1992. In the season 1991/2 gross transfer spending was £28 million, but with a net transfer income of £4.9 million (Touche Ross 1993). The requirements of the Taylor Report has brought a new challenge for football, and a new burden for those clubs in the

lower divisions whose financial future is increasingly in the balance.

Willingness of clubs, site constraints and finance are all considerable obstacles to development, but they are neither insurmountable nor fixed. The planning system and the planners who implement this have the discretionary powers to enable or restrain development. Planning support for clubs and positive communication between these actors will aid clubs in their search for improved facilities. Support is likely to increase clubs' willingness to improve their facilities, and planners interpretation of policy can also help restrict site constraints, and enable financial viability through associated development, but planners also have the ability to restrain development.

The aim of the thesis is to recommend the way forward for clubs and local planning authorities whichever path they choose to improve facilities. This chapter has outlined some of the wider issues in this area. Together with the detailed investigations of the Cambridge and Oxford case studies in chapters 4, 5 and 6, this will allow this study to recommend the way forward in chapter 7. To permit meaningful discussion in these later chapters an appropriate research methodology must be adopted, and it is to this that the next chapter will now turn.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Before choosing an appropriate research methodology, the aims of the study need to be identified. What do we need to know and why? The aim of the research is to facilitate discussion and interpretation of the results, in relation to the main questions the thesis poses. In this thesis four main questions are addressed;

- 1) Who's problem is an inadequate capacity and facilities at Cambridge United?
- 2) What are the aims of the proposals for redevelopment and relocation?
- 3) How do the actors in the process interact?
- 4) How does the position in Cambridge relate to the situation in Oxford, and what lessons can be learnt from the Oxford case study?

Within each of these four broad questions lie more detailed questions.

1) WHO'S PROBLEM IS AN INADEQUATE CAPACITY AND FACILITIES AT CAMBRIDGE UNITED?

Within this broad question other questions arise on the role the club plays within the city, and how the local authority see the club. Do the local authorities in the Cambridge area want the club?

2) WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE PROPOSALS FOR REDEVELOPMENT AND RELOCATION?

Research must examine all opportunities that may exist if development was undertaken. Are there opportunities for the shared use of new facilities? Is there any opportunity for a

partnership for development, particularly in relation to leisure provision? Potential partners might include the local authorities themselves, or perhaps more likely organisations like Cambridge University, or Cambridge City F.C. from the Beazer Homes League Premier Division. The club's perceived role in the community is also an issue, how has this, or how should this affect planning decisions on proposals from the club? The nature of the communication within local authorities, particularly between the planning and leisure departments is also very important. Do these departments see themselves striving for the same goals?

3) HOW DO THE ACTORS IN THE PROCESS INTERACT?

Whilst the first two questions are very important, the main aim of this thesis is to examine the relationship between all the main actors involved in the search for improved facilities for Cambridge United Football Club. How have these interactions affected the outcome at present of the club's search, and how might they affect future possibilities?

To examine this interaction, research must be directed towards the investigation of four questions;

- i) What has been done and what decisions have been made?
- ii) Who has been involved in decision-making?
- iii) How have decisions been made?
- iv) Why have these decisions been made?

Subsidiary questions also arise within each of these questions. The role of joint research projects between the local authorities and the club, and their real aim, is particularly important in relation to the first question, what has been done?

The value and importance given to each consultation and input into the decision process is as important as an examination of who has been involved, and this must be studied within the question of who has been involved?

At what stage, and at what level have actors in the process influenced decisions? Has consultation involved representation or discussion, or a mixture of the two? These two questions are important in determining how decisions have been made. Research also needs to be directed towards an examination of whether an overall strategy by the club and the local authorities in Cambridge exists, and how this might affect decision-making.

The fourth question, why have these decisions been made? will consider three issues - What are the perceptions of the role of actors in the process by other actors, and how does this differ from the roles actors see for themselves? What problems have been encountered? and thirdly, is the present local authority structure the most suitable in which decisions of this nature can be made?

4) HOW DOES THE POSITION IN CAMBRIDGE RELATE TO THE SITUATION IN OXFORD, AND WHAT LESSONS CAN BE LEARNT FROM THE OXFORD CASE STUDY?

Research must also facilitate meaningful comparison between the positions in Cambridge and Oxford in order to advocate the lessons from the Oxford case study that will be compatible and helpful to Cambridge United.

These are the questions that need to be answered, and therefore the research methodology that is employed must be able to investigate these questions. To investigate these questions a mixed methodology was adopted, combining secondary and primary data.

SECONDARY DATA.

Secondary data was collected from five main areas, local newspapers, national policy documents, the local authorities, Cambridge United, and the appeal by Oxford United in 1992 (Department of the Environment 1992).

a) Local Newspapers

Local newspapers, and particularly the Cambridge Evening News were used to obtain a broad overview of the current situation and possibilities for the future. Reports were often exaggerated and premature especially in reporting new sites (for example 'Bar Hill United?' Cambridge Evening News 1993a), but were of great value in reporting the main actors in the development process.

b) National Policy Guidance

All planning decisions have to be made with due consideration to national policy guidance. Planning Policy Guidance 17 (PPG17) on 'Sport and Recreation' (Department of the Environment 1991), and Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2) on 'Green Belts' (Department of the Environment 1988) are particularly relevant to this search. PPG17 because it contains a section on planning for all-seater stadia, and PPG2 because both Cambridge and Oxford are tightly constrained by Green Belts, and therefore any proposed development outside the city boundary is likely to be sited on Green Belt land.

c) Local Policy

As well as national policy, planning decisions must also consider local policy, and in particular development plans. Decisions must be made after consideration of policies stated in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan, adopted in 1989, and the 1992 Consultation Draft review, the South Cambs District Local Plan, for the area outside Cambridge, adopted in 1993, and the Cambridge City Local Plan, presently at the Deposit Draft stage of adoption. The decisions made by planners in the Oxford area, in relation to the application submitted by the club in 1992, had to give due consideration to the Structure Plan for Oxfordshire

(Oxfordshire County Council 1987), the Central Oxfordshire Local Plan Deposit Draft (South Oxfordshire District Council 1990), and the Oxford Local Plan (Oxford City Council 1986).

As well as development plans, the local authorities in Cambridge have also produced other policy documents relevant to this study, including the 'Northern Fringe study' (South Cambs District Council 1992a) and the 'Chesterton Sidings Study' (Cambridge City Council 1992) produced by the planning department, and the Cambridge City Council 'Leisure Strategy 93-96' (Cambridge City Council 1993a) produced by the City Council Leisure department.

Three planning decisions by authorities in the Cambridge area are also important. Firstly, the decision on the application for outline planning permission submitted to Cambridge City Council by the club to redevelop the Abbey stadium in 1993 (the club's present ground) (Cambridge City Council 1993c). Secondly, the decision made by South Cambs District Council in relation to the feasibility study for the relocation of Cambridge United football ground to Chesterton sidings (South Cambs District Council 1992b). The third decision relevant to this study was made by the Planning Policy Committee at South Cambs District Council in relation to the proposals for a new stadium for Cambridge United at Teversham in 1991 (South Cambs District Council 1991).

d) Position Statements by Cambridge United

Secondary data produced by the club was also examined. This included position statements by the club in respect to particular proposals, and press releases. The most notable of these is the position statement in respect to the Chesterton Sidings Feasibility Study (Cambridge United Football Club nd.), and the press release on the proposed Football and Leisure Complex at Teversham (Cambridge United Football Club nd.).

e) The Appeal By Oxford United F.C. Plc Against Non-determination by South Oxfordshire District Council 1992.

To help Cambridge in their search, the Secretary of State and Inspector's decisions on this appeal, and the reasoning behind these decisions was also consulted (Department of the Environment 1992).

PRIMARY DATA.

To complement and clarify issues that arose from the examination of the secondary data, and to provide the opportunity for further investigation, a collection of primary data was also undertaken in Oxford and Cambridge. The structure of this primary data collection was based around the interviewing of the main actors in the development process.

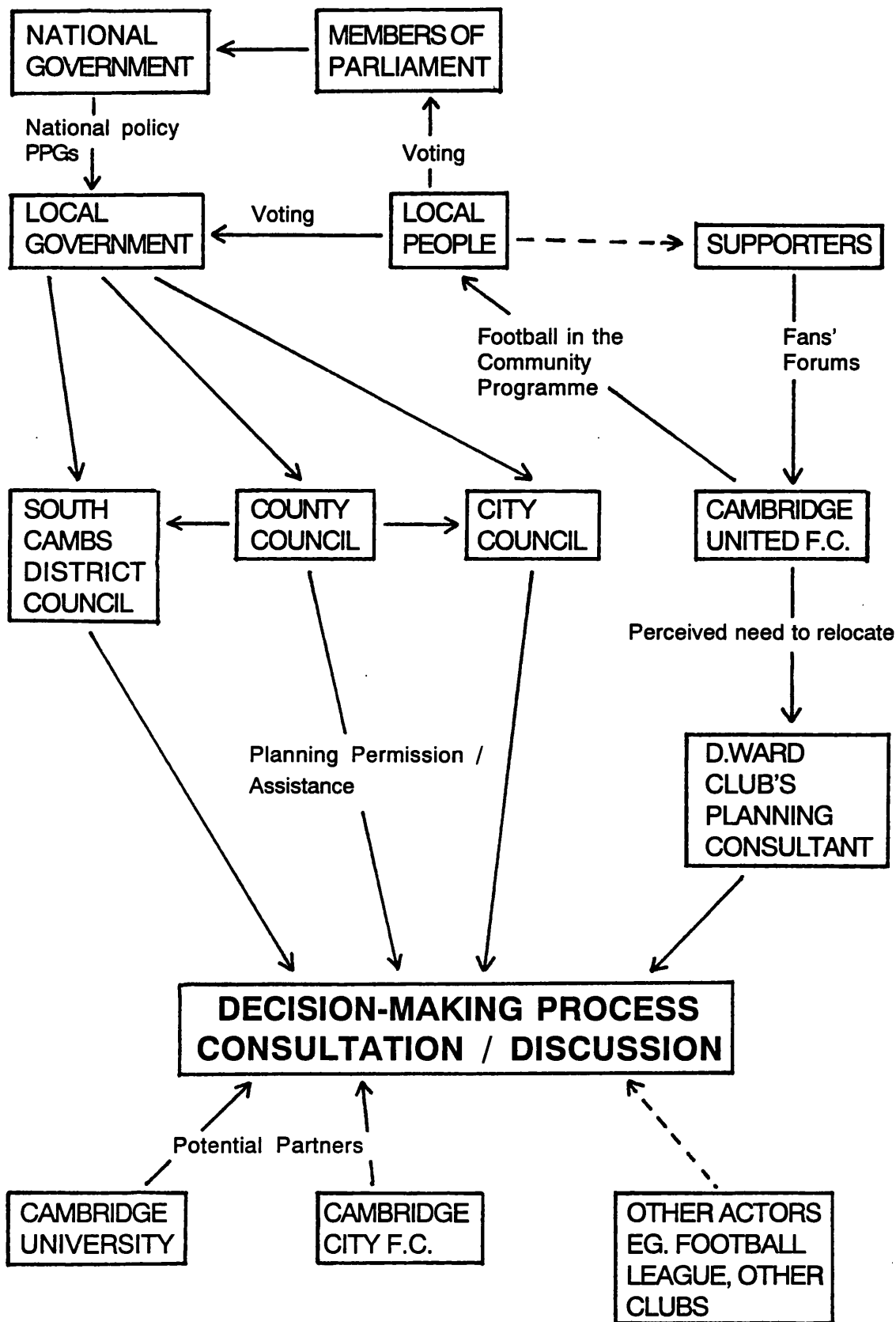
CAMBRIDGE

The emphasis of the collection of primary data was directed towards the interviews of the three local planning authorities and Mr David Ward, a chartered surveyor acting as the planning consultant for Cambridge United. In addition to these actors, the views of Members of Parliament, potential partners for development, and the club's officials and supporters were also collected. Figure 4 shows the structure of linkages between these actors in Cambridge, and the input of secondary data into decision-making.

a) Planning Authorities and the Club's Planning Consultant.

Consultations were undertaken on a personal level to representatives of the planning authorities involved and the club's planning consultant. A formal list of questions was presented to each person (Appendix 2) on their role in the process, and the role they felt other actors should be playing, but the interview was kept informal so that each person had the opportunity to express the issues they felt were important, and this was encouraged.

Fig 4 Structure of Linkages between actors in Cambridge

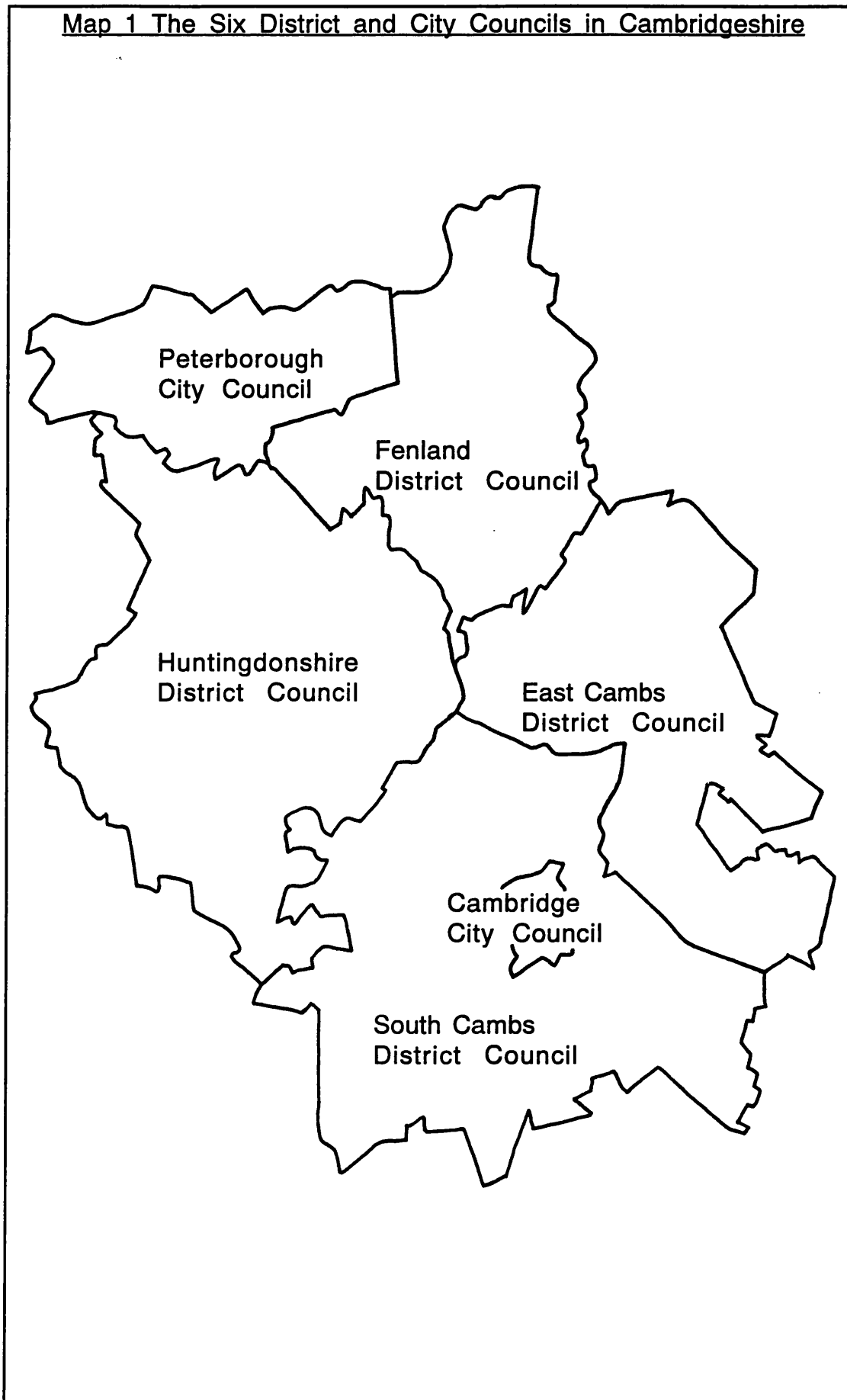


Cambridge City Council is playing a major role in the search for improved facilities, as the existing stadium lies within their area, and also because three of the proposed sites for the relocation of the club lie within the urban area, and within the control of the City Council. South Cambs District Council covers all of the land outside the urban area. This means that any proposal for relocation outside the urban area will require the consent of this local authority, whether the proposal is on land North, South, East or West of the city (Map 1). Cambridgeshire County Council is the strategic planning authority for the county, and is subsequently involved in any policy proposals for the provision of land for a relocated stadium. PPG17 also notes that County Council's "may find it helpful to convene a forum of local planning authorities and the relevant local football clubs to consider the question of a strategic site" (Department of the Environment 1991). The guidance notes that this is important "given the urgency of the moves towards improved football stadia, and the impact that a new stadium may have across and beyond district boundaries" (Department of the Environment 1991). This is clearly an important issue in Cambridge.

David Ward, the club's planning consultant plays two major roles in this process. Firstly, he acts as a negotiator between the local authorities and the club, and secondly, he advises the club on the best possible route to take to meet their aims. Along with the local authorities in the Cambridge area David Ward and the club are the most important actors in the search for improved facilities for Cambridge United Football Club.

Informal interviews were conducted with officers from each of the local authorities and David Ward on the role they have played and feel they should be playing in the process, the extent to which they have communicated and interacted with other actors, including other departments in their own authority, the role they feel other actors should be playing, and lastly, the opportunities they see for the future. These bodies were given an opportunity to raise any issues they felt were important and particularly relevant to a study on the interactions of actors. The informal

Map 1 The Six District and City Councils in Cambridgeshire



nature of the interviews facilitated lengthy discussion and stimulated a two-way discussion.

b) Local Members of Parliament and Potential Partners for Development.

These actors were questioned on their role, or the role they felt they could play. Again, opportunity was given for actors to raise any points on which they felt particularly strongly.

Mrs Anne Campbell MP, MP for Cambridge, and Mr James Paice MP, MP for South East Cambridgeshire (an area that includes much of the area under the control of South Cambs District Council) were both interviewed. Postal interviews with both MP's were conducted, due to the schedules of both people, to discover the extent to which they had been involved in the redevelopment / relocation issue, and why they had followed this path. Did Mr Paice MP agree with the call from Mrs Campbell MP in the Summer of 1993 for South Cambs District Council to help Cambridge United find a home? Does he feel it is his responsibility to play a role? What made Mrs Campbell MP publicly call on a neighbouring local authority to resolve the problems of a football club sited in her own constituency?

Potential partners for development were also interviewed. This was to discover the extent to which they were considering a joint development, what they might want from a partnership, and any conditions that they might impose. Mr Tony Lemons (Director of Physical Education at Cambridge University), and Mr Denis Rolph, (Chairman of Cambridge City F.C.) were both consulted on these issues. As well as these two views, the views of Mr Ian Cooper, (Director of Leisure Services at Cambridge City Council) were obtained through the attendance at a seminar entitled, 'Leisure in Cambridge' held by the Cambridge Forum for the Construction Industry in September 1993.

c) Officials and Supporters at the Club.

These groups were questioned through a mixture of postal and personal interview. The aim of this was to discover the extent of

their satisfaction or otherwise with the other actors in the development process, the role they were playing themselves, and the problems that they have confronted. Consultation with the club's officials was conducted through a postal interview to the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and all five Directors. A postal interview was required due to the pressures on time for all these officials, and while it may provoke a shorter response because of the time to write a reply, it does give the respondents an opportunity to think over their response. Each official was independently questioned on the extent and level of his involvement, the role he perceived for the local authorities in and around Cambridge, the problems the club had faced, and any type of help that had not been forthcoming, but would be particularly useful. Instead of answering these questions themselves, these officials forwarded the letters to the club Secretary, Mr Steve Greenall who suggested a personal interview with him would be the most mutually suitable means of discussing the club's standing and the views of the Board of Directors. The written questions sent to the officials were then directed to Mr Greenall, as the club's representative during a meeting at the club. The representation of the opinions of the supporters was obtained through consultation with the supporters club, and the club's fanzine (a magazine for football fans) 'The Abbey Rabbit'.

OXFORD.

To allow a comparison between Oxford and Cambridge and if appropriate, learn the lessons from the case of Oxford United, Oxford United's secretary Mr Mick Brown and the club's planning consultant during the 1992 appeal, Mr Roger Bullworthy from Titmuss Sainer and Webb were also interviewed. These interviews were conducted over the telephone, and the same questions were put to these people that had been directed to their counterparts in the Cambridge case study.

Together, the research methodology employed and the information obtained have provided considerable scope for the investigation of the main issues highlighted at the beginning of

this chapter. A wide-range of actors was consulted, all of whom were given the opportunity to express the issues that they felt were important, as well as answering a number of structured questions put to each actor to allow meaningful comparison of opinions and aims. This has provided a firm platform upon which the discussion on the relationships and interaction of actors can be based. The balance of primary and secondary data, of background and probing research will allow the main issues to be tackled in the following chapters from a comprehensive and well-informed perspective.

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CHAPTER FOUR **THE PROBLEMS OF AN INADEQUATE** **CAPACITY AND FACILITIES, AND THE** **AIMS OF PROPOSALS.**

The research methodology addressed four main questions. This chapter is devoted to the analysis, interpretation and discussion of the results obtained from the research in relation to the first two of these questions;

- 1) Who's problem is an inadequate capacity and facilities at Cambridge United?
- 2) What are the aims of the proposals for redevelopment and relocation?

The final two questions will be addressed in chapters 5 and 6 respectively.

1) WHO'S PROBLEM IS AN INADEQUATE CAPACITY AND FACILITIES AT CAMBRIDGE UNITED?

THE CLUB

The club and the club's officials are the actors that are most directly affected by the capacity and facilities at the ground. The Taylor Report (Home Office 1990) requires grounds to become all-seater by the start of the 1999-2000 season, or earlier if the club gains promotion from its present position in the second division, to the first division. The club also recognise a need to look beyond this report, and towards the development of a stadium for football in the twenty-first century. At present the ground has only 3 500 seats. If the present terraces were transformed from terracing to seated accommodation, without enlargement of the ground, the maximum licensed capacity would decrease from 9 980 to 7 000. This is because seats require more room than standing spectators.

In the 1991-2 season Cambridge United made a loss of £493 838, and together with the adverse balance brought forward from the previous season of £892 801, the club carried forward an adverse balance of £1 386 639 into the 1992-3 season (Cambridge United 1993). The club is by no means on its own in this respect in comparison to many other league clubs, as indicated in Chapter 2, but it is a problem the club needs to address.

The club's present financial instability, in concert with problems that will arise because of the requirements of the Taylor Report, notably a reduced capacity and therefore a reduced revenue on match days, means the club will face huge problems because of the present provisions at the Abbey stadium.

This shortfall in revenue could be serviced by an increase in prices for the reduced capacity that would be accommodated. However, clubs are dependant on their supporters for revenue, and it is therefore important to address the needs of the spectators. A reduced capacity, and increased ticket prices for those who do go to the games is not what they want, and the club's officials claim that it is not financially viable to operate at a reduced capacity (Greenall 1994 : Personal Communication). The club needs to redevelop or relocate.

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

The Abbey Stadium lies within Cambridge City Council's control, and therefore the city council has a role to play in assisting and responding to the problems faced by the club. Firstly, any proposals for redevelopment or relocation will require the consideration of the council's planning department, whether for the consideration of a new site, the redevelopment of the present site, or the use of the present site if the club relocates. Secondly, the city council is the provider of leisure in the Cambridge area, a responsibility it takes very seriously. The facilities at the club, especially if available for public use therefore become important, and the question of facilities at Cambridge United becomes an issue for the city council.

The aims of the city council's leisure provision, whether for participant or spectator sport, is to service the needs of the Cambridge public. If more people want to watch Cambridge United than the present facilities can accommodate, then this is a problem for the city council. The first objective in Chapter 8 'Recreation and Leisure' of the city council's deposit draft local plan is "to ensure the provision of recreation and leisure opportunities responsive to the changing demands and needs of the city as a sub-regional centre" (Cambridge City Council 1993b). Under the title 'Professional Football' in Chapter 8 of the local plan, policy 8.39 notes that "the city council will wish to see community access to the stadium and its facilities" if the club relocates (Cambridge City Council 1993b). The redevelopment / relocation of Cambridge United provides considerable opportunities for Cambridge, and therefore problems faced by the club in relation to facilities must also be shared by the city council.

SOUTH CAMBS DISTRICT COUNCIL

The club's problems should also be shared by South Cambs District Council (SCDC). Any proposals outside the boundaries of the city council will require consideration by SCDC's planning department. In addition to this the majority of supporters who watch Cambridge United come from outside the city, and many come from the South Cambs area. SCDC should therefore play a role in the provision, and the problems faced by an inadequate capacity and facilities at the ground. This is the view of the city council who feel aggrieved that they are providing and subsidising leisure provision for not only their own residents, but also residents from the SCDC area. Within SCDC, an independent council, the land and property department, and the environmental health department deal with leisure. The council does not have a leisure department. In contrast, the labour controlled city council perceives a role for itself as a leisure provider, and this has caused considerable tension between the city and South Cambs District councils.

The city council has attempted to introduce a leisurecard scheme for Cambridge residents that offers beneficial rates to city residents for leisure, compared to visitors from outside the city. This is a reflection of the city council's belief that city residents who subsidise leisure provision in the city through council tax should pay less than visitors to Cambridge who have not previously contributed to the costs of provision. Recent months has seen considerable conflict at member level between the city council and SCDC on the leisurecard issue. The city council sees the provision of spectator and participant sport within Cambridge, which is used by both city residents and residents from South Cambs as a cost that should be shared by the city and South Cambs District councils, but SCDC does not acknowledge that it should share these problems, including the problems being faced by Cambridge United.

In relation to relocation, both the city council and SCDC say that if a suitable site could be found they would gladly accommodate the club, but both identify planning constraints as being the largest obstacle to negotiate before suitable sites can be found. The city council appears to perceive opportunities for the relocation / redevelopment of Cambridge United that can benefit the city. SCDC in contrast only appears to recognise and associate problems with location in their area.

COUNTY COUNCIL

An insufficient capacity at the Abbey is also a problem that faces Cambs County Council. They are the strategic planning authority in the area, and they produce the county structure plan that all planning decisions in the county must take into account. Discussion needs to take place on the most suitable site for the siting of a football stadium. PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) notes that the county council may find it helpful to convene a forum to consider a strategic site, involving the club and the relevant local authorities when, as in the case of Cambridge, the impact of a new stadium may have an impact across and beyond district boundaries. The county council has a

role to play, and therefore shares the problems that an inadequate capacity and facilities at the club presents.

An inadequate capacity and facilities at Cambridge United is a problem that faces the club and the local authorities in the area, but it is also an opportunity. Redevelopment and relocation provides considerable scope for improved leisure in the Cambridge area. It is an opportunity that should not be missed. The problems facing the club affect the local authorities in the area with respect to both leisure and planning. The club, supporters and local authorities in the Cambridge area are all affected by the problems at the Abbey stadium, and each, through discussion and consultation with these and other actors that may play a role, are responsible for the implementation of a strategy that addresses these problems.

2) WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF THE PROPOSALS FOR REDEVELOPMENT AND RELOCATION?

Each actor perceives different aims and opportunities for the proposals for redevelopment and relocation. The club and its supporters, the local authorities, potential partners and the local community all have an interest in the emphasis and direction of proposals.

THE CLUB AND ITS SUPPORTERS

The primary aim of the proposals for the club is to meet the safety requirements, including the need for an all-seater stadium, laid down in the Taylor Report (Home Office 1990). The club also has the great opportunity to construct a stadium suitable for football in the twenty-first century, and a stadium to reflect the club's recent success and ambition for the future. The club's supporters also recognise and back the opportunity of creating a ground that will make watching games a more enjoyable pursuit.

Unfortunately, as discussed in chapter 2, the redevelopment or construction of a new ground is very expensive, and like many other clubs Cambridge United is under constant financial pressure. The club carried over an adverse balance of £1.4 million into the 1992-3 season (Cambridge United 1993). Because of this the club is constantly considering new ways of financing the development, and / or reducing the costs. All compatible options, depending on the site are being considered by David Ward, the club's planning consultant. He perceives a strong future for the club as a hub and magnet for other sports and leisure activities, and an opportunity to act as a nucleus for development. Opportunities include a partnership with commercial developments like bowling or an ice rink, hotels and theatres, or the option that David Ward perceives to be the ideal, a partnership of all-sport facilities. This may include facilities like a gym, Astroturf pitch, and possibly a sports injuries clinic, using the university connections. This is particularly appealing to a club who acknowledges their role in the community, and responsibility to provide for the local population, wherever possible. At present all of these options are being considered, but the emphasis is being put on the acquisition of a suitable site, and then the consideration of the most suitable partner for development on that site.

The proposed development on Green Belt land at Teversham;

provides an opportunity for a major leisure development of regional or even national importance, with such activities as association and rugby football, cricket, hockey, tennis and indoor sports alongside roller and ice skating, indoor bowling and supporting facilities. One possibility under investigation would also include a sports hall and international standard swimming pool

(Cambridge United Press Release, Undated).

This concept was not supported by SCDC's planning policy committee when it withheld support for the idea in December 1991 (SCDC 1991).

David Ward noted that the possibility of a partnership between the club and the local authorities had been raised to increase leisure provision in the area, but he recognised that local authorities do not have the available cash for extra provision for a joint venture. He also acknowledged that they were a long way from selling off the large amounts of land they own to obtain funds.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Both Cambridge City Council and SCDC recognise the opportunities that a development of this nature can present. The city council supports the concept that an integrated approach would be best, whereby the club shares a site with a mix of sports and recreation, shopping and park and ride facilities, but the city council will investigate the potential of any suggestion by the club. Reference is made to community access to the stadium in the city council's local plan, as recommended in paragraph 49 of PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991). SCDC, when questioned on the role the club might play in improving leisure provision acknowledged that the club could provide community facilities, but didn't attempt to suggest the mix of development that it perceived as most appropriate. The district council also noted that associated development made development more problematic, especially on Green Belt land, and that the scale of the club's needs and associated development would be unsuitable in this rural area, suggesting that urban development of this nature would be more suited to Cambridge.

Cambridge City Council and SCDC take a very different attitude towards leisure provision. Through its leisure department the city council provides leisure facilities for its residents and the surrounding area. The district council in contrast does not have a leisure department, and funds for leisure are provided to villages and parish councils through the land and property, and environmental health departments. SCDC is an enabling rather than a providing authority. The set-up of the leisure department at the city council puts it in a much better position than the district council to take advantage of any opportunities that exist

in relation to leisure provision by the club. Together the city's planning and leisure services departments worked on the leisure strategy for Cambridge, identifying the shortfalls in recreation and leisure facilities in the city (Cambridge City Council 1993a). The goals of the advisory leisure strategy also reflect the overall strategy for leisure set out in the statutory local plan. In contrast to the district council, the city council knows exactly what it needs, and its departmental structure puts it in an advantageous position for discussion with the club.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

As discussed earlier, local authorities do not have the resources to enter a major partnership with the club for improving leisure facilities in the area. However, in the city council's "Cambridge Leisure Strategy 93-96", policy statement CL6 notes that "if Cambridge United Football Club relocated to a suitable site, then the city council should investigate the joint provision and dual use of an indoor sports hall with the club" (Cambridge City Council 1993a). Despite this policy, the main partners for development are likely to come from the university, Cambridge City F.C. and the commercial sector.

The University

Two major questions arise over the potential for a partnership between the club and the university: is a partnership practical, and is it desirable? Unfortunately, Mr Tony Lemons, Director of physical education at the University of Cambridge says no to both questions. He notes that while shared facilities are theoretically attractive they are practically very difficult. The quality of pitches required by a professional football club means that there is a limit to the number of games that can be played on them. With respect to the stadium, the University does not require a stadium with the capacity that would satisfy the aspirations of Cambridge United. The university needs several specialised facilities, and Mr Lemons believes that these could not be accommodated in a shared clubhouse, or any facilities that might be built in the stands. Talks have taken place between the university and those charged with finding land for the club, but

these perceived problems were agreed by all concerned (Lemons 1993 : Personal Communication).

Although a major landowner in the Cambridge area, the university is still anxious to gain more building land for its proposed development over the next ten years, and is attempting to secure this during the inquiry into the proposed new local plan. This means that the club is unlikely to be able to obtain land for development from the university. The university would also be unlikely to help finance any development, because the majority of the money rests with the colleges, and their statutes would not permit this money to be put into a football club (Lemons 1993 : Personal Communication).

Mr Lemons also perceives a partnership to be undesirable. The university sees its general development in the western part of Cambridge, an area well known for its architectural merit and environmental sensitivity. The car parking facilities, road access and floodlighting requirements of a professional football stadium would be particularly problematic in planning terms in this part of the city. Mr Lemons perceives a joint venture with the club causing problems in obtaining planning permission for the development the university requires. Due to the relative lack of funds the university has prioritised its requirements, and some of these are not compatible with a partnership with the club. The top five requirements are a sports hall and swimming pool, indoor tennis courts, racquets and squash courts, ice hockey rink and a 2000 metre rowing course (Lemons 1993 : Personal Communication).

Cambridge City F.C.

The possibility of a partnership with Cambridge City F.C. was first considered in 1990, but despite considerable discussion, including a meeting with the city council, no further headway has been made. Mr Denis Rolph, Cambridge City's chairman has stated his willingness to enter discussions, but to date the idea of groundsharing has been hypothetical, and not site specific.

Commercial Sector

A partnership with commercial, money-making developments like bowling and ice skating would be beneficial to the club. Service and infrastructure costs could be shared reducing the cost of a new stadium. Despite this, the concentration of leisure provision conflicts with the Cambs Structure Plan (Cambs County Council 1989) which puts the emphasis on small-scale local facilities, rather than large-scale centralised facilities. The success to date attracting potential partners has been limited. This is a reflection of the club's strategy to acquire a site and determine the scale and type of associated development appropriate according to the requirements and opportunities that the site provides.

THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The local community is not a homogenous entity, but a collection of individuals and groups who all have different perceptions of what the aims of the development should be, and the opportunities that exist. For many residing around the present stadium, the opportunity exists to get rid of an unwanted neighbour. For those who live around a new proposed stadium they may well be worried about the traffic, parking and noise problems that the siting of a new stadium in their area may create. This was particularly evident when the club announced it was investigating sites in Fen Ditton and Teversham where local people grouped together to campaign against the proposals. For these people, if development does take place, the smaller the better.

As well as this group there will also be those who see a great opportunity for improving community leisure provision in the area. These people will be particularly anxious to see an emphasis towards community provision, a sports hall, swimming pool and sports field rather than a more commercially determined development. Those who live further away may well see an opportunity for development including bowling and an ice rink, facilities that many in the Cambridge area feel the city should attract.

Redevelopment and relocation provides considerable opportunity for improvements for leisure in the Cambridge area. The club and city council hold detailed views on the type of development that they would like to see, and SCDC acknowledge an opportunity for improved community facilities. The practicalities of a partnership are more problematic. The local authorities do not have the finance to enter a joint venture, and there seems little possibility of a partnership between the club and the university. A partnership with the commercial sector is still the most likely, and financially attractive to the club, but this may still encounter problems gaining planning permission, especially if a green belt site is chosen. Despite these problems, opportunities still exist to meet these aims. Close consultation between all those involved in the development process is crucial.

Whatever decisions are made, wherever development takes place, and whatever the emphasis and direction of development, there will be winners and losers. Some people will welcome change, while others will try to discourage it. Some people's aims and expectations will be satisfied, while others will feel their opinions have been discarded. The club and the local authorities cannot satisfy everyone, but it is their duty to take due consideration of the opinions of all those concerned, incorporate these into their own aims, and make informed decisions from this and other information at their disposal on the most appropriate development on any proposed site.

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE INTERACTION OF ACTORS IN THE PROCESS

This part of the analysis and discussion will examine the four questions relating to the relationship and interaction of the main actors in the club's search for improved facilities stated in chapter 3;

- 1) What has been done and what decisions have been made?
- 2) Who has been involved in the decision-making?
- 3) How have decisions been made?
- 4) Why have these decisions been made?

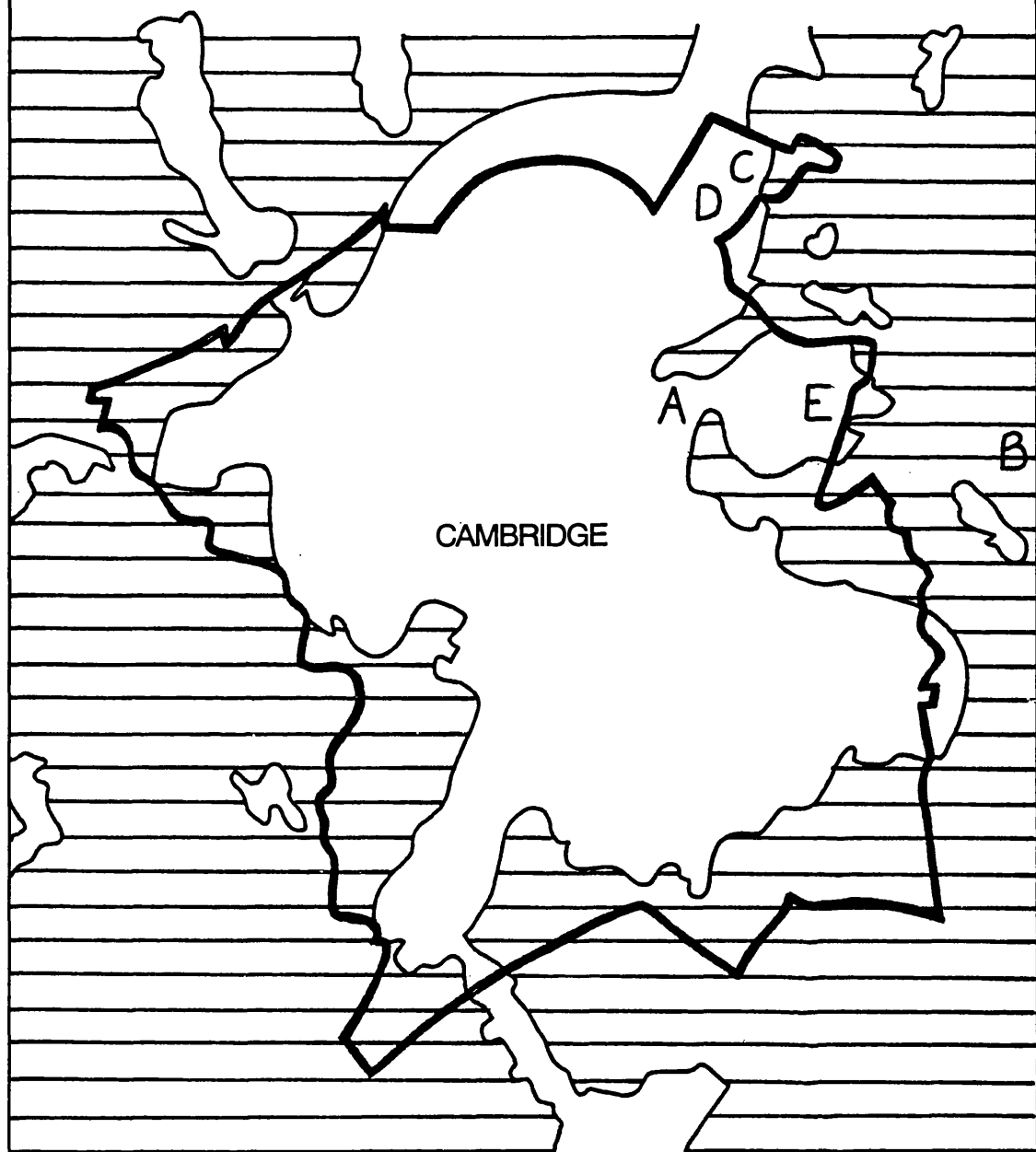
1) WHAT HAS BEEN DONE AND WHAT DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE?

During their search for an improved stadium Cambridge United have made two approaches to local authorities in the Cambridge area for consideration of planning proposals. A formal application for outline planning permission for the redevelopment of the Abbey stadium, and an informal approach to SCDC's planning policy committee regarding a proposed relocation, accompanied by other sports / leisure facilities on Green Belt land at Teversham. In addition to these proposals, the club has also considered relocation to three other sites, the Chesterton sidings, Cowley Road and airport land near Fen Ditton. The location of these five proposed sites is shown on Map 2.

A) REDEVELOPMENT

The proposed redevelopment included the erection of new north and south stands, the extension of the east and west stands, the resiting of the pitch, and the provision of a new supporters club and offices. The application was refused for two reasons. The application proposed an increased capacity from 9 980 to 13 000, which Cambridge City Council felt created unacceptable problems

Map 2 The Location of the 5 Proposed Sites for Development in Cambridge



- A THE ABBEY STADIUM
- B GREEN BELT SITE AT TEVERSHAM
- C CHESTERTON SIDINGS
- D COWLEY ROAD
- E AIRPORT LAND NEAR FEN DITTON

— CITY BOUNDARY

▭ GREEN BELT LAND

because of additional traffic generation, on-street car parking, inconvenience and delay for other road users, and would have an adverse affect on the residential amenity of residents of the locality. This contravened policies in the Cambs replacement structure plan (Cambs County Council 1992a) and the Deposit Draft Cambridge Local Plan (Cambridge City Council 1993b). The second reason for refusal was that the proposed extension of the east stand and the new north stand would create an unacceptable degree of enclosure to the bungalows at 536 and 538 Newmarket road, due to their height, size and siting. This objection was advocated by the Head of Environmental Health and Protection at the council (Cambridge City Council 1993c).

B) TEVERSHAM

In December 1991 SCDC's planning policy committee considered a proposal by the club for a new stadium at Teversham. The committee acknowledged the need for the club to fulfill the requirements relating to the Taylor Report but resolved that the club be advised that the committee could not support proposals for a new stadium, either alone or in conjunction with other sports / leisure facilities on Green Belt land at Teversham (SCDC 1991). The committee also resolved "that a joint approach be made by SCDC and Cambridge City Council to the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Transport, the chairman of British Rail and local MPs regarding the dilemma facing Cambridge United F.C. on the identification of a site for the development of a suitable stadium within the required time limit" (South Cambs District Council 1991).

C) CHESTERTON SIDINGS

A joint research project, led by the city council, was funded by the city council (£10 000 contribution), SCDC (£5 000), county council (£5 000), Cambridge United (£1 000), and two landowners in the area being considered, the British Rail Property Board (£10 000) and Anglia Water (£5 000). The aim of the study was to investigate the possibility of the redevelopment of the Chesterton sidings in the north of the city, including a 15 acre site for Cambridge United, supported by commercial and social

leisure facilities. This reflected acknowledgement of the financial pressures the Taylor Report would put on the club. Despite initial optimism at the possibility of relocation to the Chesterton sidings, several problems have led to the abandonment of the proposal. The two largest problems are that the land is constrained by a lack of additional road capacity at the Cowley Road / Milton Road junction, and even more problematic, the relocation of Anglia Water's sewage works on the site would cost approximately £100 million. Aside from these problems this location was probably the most suitable in planning terms, meeting recommendations in PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) and PPG13 (Department of the Environment / Department of Transport 1994) that the most suitable site for relocation would be on derelict land or vacant land on the urban fringe.

D) COWLEY ROAD

A move to the Cowley Road agricultural machinery sales yard was rejected because a feasibility study conducted by the club showed that a 16 000 crowd would take five hours to disperse, because of the site constraints and access problems that the location faced.

E) AIRPORT LAND NEAR FEN DITTON

This proposal was abandoned after Marshalls (an aircraft engineering firm) who occupy the land on which the stadium was proposed failed to gain planning permission for relocation to an alternative site.

The unwillingness of the local planning authorities to consider relocation to a Green Belt site has meant that at present the club has no perceived options to fulfil the requirements of the Taylor Report and construct a stadium suitable for football in the twenty-first century. The lack of suitable sites in the urban area has led the club to the conclusion that despite the many planning problems with relocation outside the city, a move to a Green Belt site like Teversham, is the only realistic option. A move from the area under the control of Cambridge City Council and into the essentially rural locality under the control of SCDC. However, at

present the club has not been systematic in its search, but evaluated the suitability of each option independently. The club does not have constant criteria by which all options are evaluated.

2) WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING?

The club and the local authorities in the area are the main actors in decision-making. The club submits applications on proposals it feels meet its requirements, and rejects prospective locations that are problematic and unsuitable in relation to the club's aims. The local authorities planning departments consider applications submitted by the club in relation to appropriate national policy, their aims in local policy, and other material considerations.

These two groups make the final decisions, but their decisions are hugely affected by consultations and input from other actors in the process. Decisions by the club are made with respect to site requirements and financial constraints, but also with consideration to other actors, most notably the club's supporters. Fans' forums organised by the club give spectators the opportunity to question the club's officials and present their views. These meetings are taken very seriously by the club, and the redevelopment / relocation issue is always discussed. The club's own perceived role in the community, emphasised by its football in the community programme, means that the opinions of local people are also discussed at the club.

Although it is the local planning authority that makes the final decision on applications for planning permission, a large number of people are consulted during the consideration of a proposal. For the application for the redevelopment of the Abbey stadium neighbours were consulted and an advertisement was published in the local newspapers. In addition to this publicity a public meeting was also held in December 1992. At this meeting representations were made by 58 individuals or groups. In addition to this, five petitions were also received supporting the

proposal, with a total of 376 signatories (Cambridge City Council 1993c). Of the representations received, 40 supported the application, while 13 raised objections. These included support from fans who recognised the benefits the club provides to the city and local community, the need and benefits of an improved ground, and the suitability of the present site. Objections were raised, particularly by local residents who highlighted problems relating to noise disturbance, additional traffic generation from the increased capacity, parking problems and the enclosure of 536 and 538 Newmarket Road.

Consultations were also undertaken with other professionals from within and outside the council. These included the Head of Technical Services, Head of Environmental Health and Protection, Director of Leisure Services, Listed Building Panel, Chief Fire Officer, County Trading Standards, Anglia Water, National Rivers Authority, English Heritage, and the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation. Each of these bodies were given the opportunity to comment on the advantages and problems they perceived the proposed development would create. These consultations appear to form the backbone of the council's objections. The transport problems were highlighted by the council's Head of Technical Services and Director of Leisure Services. Problems associated with the proximity of new stands to housing, the second reason for refusal of permission, were presented by the council's Head of Environmental Health and Protection. The eight external consultees either had no objections, or comments were still awaited (Chief Fire Officer and English Heritage) at the time of the decision.

The decision of the meeting of the planning policy committee at SCDC considering the proposal for a new stadium on green belt land at Teversham noted that the proposal contravened Government advice and county and district planning policy. In addition to this reasoning for the withholding of support, the committee also cited likely opposition at parish level that any proposal would provoke.

The decision by the policy committee also proposed that "this council should write to the Chairman of British Rail, to ministers and to local MP's to alert them to this problem" (SCDC 1991). This proposal related to the council's belief that the most appropriate site for a new stadium was British Rail land at Chesterton sidings.

Despite the widespread consultations that have been undertaken by the city council, the two that have most directly affected the decision to refuse permission for redevelopment have been from internal departments, the Head of Environmental Health and Protection and the Head of Technical Services. This is however a reflection of the problems that the development presented to the council, most notably parking and traffic. In the case of the decision by SCDC on the Teversham proposal, there is no evidence that any external consultation was undertaken. Both councils did however acknowledge the wide support for proposals, and resolved to help the club wherever possible.

3) HOW HAVE DECISIONS BEEN MADE?

One of the major problems faced by the club and the local authorities is the lack of an overall strategy. The club is submitting proposals to each local authority, and these are being considered in isolation. The Chesterton sidings feasibility study conducted by the local authorities in the area, the club and the landowners on the site, produced a proposal that appeared to address this problem. Each actor agreed that this was the most suitable site, adhering to both national and local policy. However, this study appears only to have considered the site in planning terms. Little attention was directed towards site constraints, including land ownership, access and the relocation costs of the present occupiers. It was not until the latter stages of the study that the problems of the relocation of the Anglia Water sewage works, or the fact that the release of land by British Rail could not be guaranteed within the club's required timetable were fully recognised. Now that this proposal has proved to be problematic

the lack of an overall strategy is once again a problem. The club must locate somewhere, and the lack of an overall strategy is giving local authorities the opportunity to pass the responsibility on to a neighbouring authority, rather than addressing the problem together.

PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) notes that the question of a strategic site could be discussed during a forum convened by the county council. PPG17 suggests that this should include the club and the local authorities in the area. Despite the lack of an overall strategy or a strategic site, the county council does not perceive a need for a forum. Both the city council and SCDC acknowledge that a forum would be useful in the determination of a comprehensive strategy, but neither council accepted it as their role to convene a forum despite the county council's reluctance. When questioned on the groups that they feel should be involved if a forum was convened, both the city council and SCDC believed that this should be more widespread than PPG17 advised. Steve Matthews (a Planning Officer at the city council) noted that the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation might also be included (Matthews 1993 : Personal Communication), while Michael Monk (the Principal Development Plan Officer at SCDC) perceived a desire to include the parish council's in which a strategic site was being considered (Monk 1993 : Personal Communication).

The lack of an overall strategy or strategic site, the lack of a forum, and only infrequent discussions between the club and the local authorities has meant that as noted earlier all decisions have been considered in isolation. Decisions have been made through consultations with those involved in the process and with reference to national and local policy incorporated in the local plans for the area. But neither the County Structure Plan (Cambs County Council 1989) or SCDC's adopted Local Plan (SCDC 1993) make any mention of Cambridge United or professional football. The county council notes that this is due to a perceived lack of need. SCDC claim in their defence that their plan was started in 1988 and adopted in August 1993, and that it was too late in the

adoption process for the inclusion of the advice in PPG17 that “the adequacy of existing stadia and the need for improvement should be taken into account in preparing and reviewing the local plan” (Department of the Environment 1991). No review is underway at present, but SCDC recognise that this is an issue that would need to be examined.

The city council’s deposit draft local plan does make specific mention to Cambridge United and professional football, but the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation objected that support for a new stadium should be an uppercase policy. The city council’s response is that it does not believe it is an appropriate matter for uppercase policy because of the lack of suitable sites in the area under the control of the city council, and the objections from local residents close to the present ground to intensification. This is correct - in the absence of an agreed suitable site, as in the case of Cambridge United, local plan provision is not appropriate.

At present, the proposals being considered by the local authorities on the redevelopment / relocation issue are being considered without either an overall strategy for the Cambridge area, or a localised strategy from each authority, despite the advice in PPG17. This has created problems for the club in its search, and will continue to cause problems until each authority acknowledges the role it can and should be playing in the process, and accepts this responsibility. If the club is going to prove successful in its search, an overall strategy by the club and the three local authorities in the Cambridge area must be discussed. The needs and aims of a forum will be further discussed in relation to Oxford United in chapter 6, and in relation to Cambridge United in chapter 7, ‘The Way Forward’.

4) WHY HAVE THESE DECISIONS BEEN MADE?

Local authorities decisions are determined by national and local policy, consultations and where appropriate, reasons for

disregarding established policy and practice. In respect to problems like the one confronting Cambridge United, local authorities make decisions on the level and nature of the proactive help they provide and the reactive determination of proposals that they receive. These decisions reflect the responsibilities that the local authority accepts and the beliefs it holds. The British planning system is both flexible and discretionary. Whilst it lays down requirements which local authorities must fulfil, it also awards discretionary powers to local authorities on the level and nature of involvement with applicants.

The local authorities ideology and perceived responsibilities will determine the level and nature of the assistance that they provide. These perceived responsibilities will also create problems if the responsibilities of one authority do not meet the expectations of another when they consider their own role, especially when a developer is considering relocation across a local authority boundary. This will create gaps in the service that the club receives from the local authorities. This discussion of why decisions have been made will examine the help provided by the local authorities, the reasons for the level and nature of help, the best scale at which help can be administered, and the club's and local authorities expectations for the future. This is the most important part of the thesis, because to understand and influence decisions made by the local authorities in respect to proposals, the reasoning behind them must be fully understood.

THE HELP PROVIDED BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Cambridgeshire County Council is not playing a part in the club's search for improved facilities. No help has been forthcoming and no involvement is likely. This is because despite the council's role as the strategic planning authority, it does not see a need to be involved.

In contrast to this, both the city council and SCDC accept some responsibility for helping the club, but the role each is playing is different. The city council has adopted a proactive role and is

attempting to help the club find a new site. SDC in contrast has adopted a reactive role, and see their responsibility as determining proposals submitted by the club rather than actively helping the club to find a new home.

The city council has tried to be actively helpful, both in terms of relocation and redevelopment. The council conducted the Chesterton Sidings Feasibility Study (Cambridge City Council 1992) and identified this location as the preferred long-term relocation site. Since the abandonment of this location because of cost and landownership problems, the council has appeared willing to consider other alternative locations, but the site requirements by the club have excluded any potential sites to date.

Despite the refusal of planning permission for the redevelopment of the Abbey, the city council's refusal did include an informative statement noting that "the local planning authority regrets that the Football Club has not been prepared to examine the possibility of refurbishing the stadium without increasing the capacity above the existing licensed capacity, and reiterates its willingness to look at alternative ways of satisfactorily accommodating 10 000 seated spectators" (Cambridge City Council 1993c). This statement was made with the understanding from the club that a 10 000 capacity was the minimum size required to break even (Matthews 1993 : Personal Communication). This does not mean that permission would be granted, problems may still exist, including the enclosure of the two bungalows on Newmarket Road because of the extensions to the existing stands that would be required.

This statement will be problematic to the club if as Matthews (1993 : Personal Communication) suggested, the club was attempting to secure a site for relocation by displaying the inadequacies of the existing stadium and the lack of opportunities for redevelopment. This may be the thinking behind the inclusion of this statement by the local authority, who feel that all the

opportunities for redevelopment at the Abbey have not yet been fully explored.

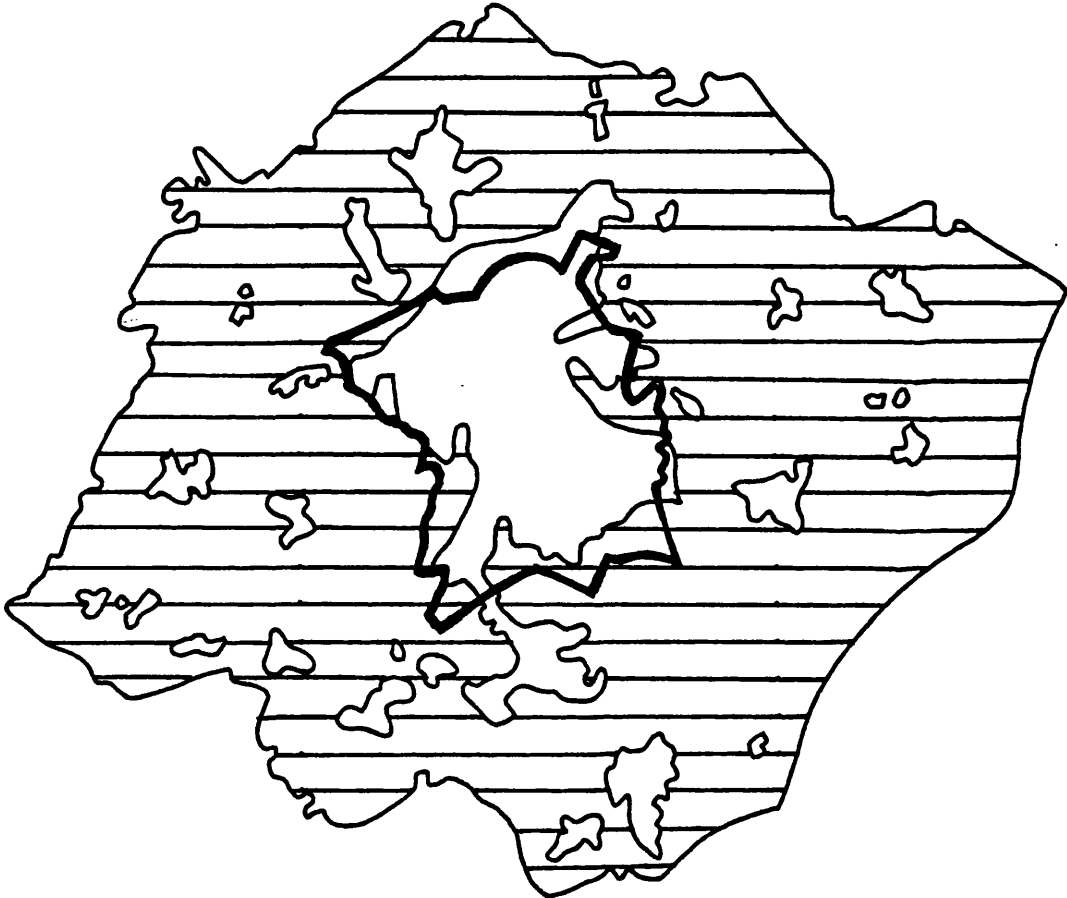
Whilst SCDC expresses its positive attitude towards the club, they also note that there are crucial planning constraints on most opportunities in their district due to the Green Belt (Map 3). Their belief is that Cambridge United must approach the landowner, and the role of the local authority is only to give planning appraisal of the probability of obtaining permission on any site (Monk 1993 : Personal Communication), it does not accept a duty to help the club find a site.

These differing standpoints reflect the different political positions of the two local authorities. The involvement of the Labour controlled city council reflects its political ideology, based on proactive assistance and intervention. SCDC, who's 54 members (prior to the May elections) included 26 Conservative and 20 independent councillors describes itself as independent, but its ideology is conservative based. It believes on placing greater emphasis on the market place. It is an enabling, rather than a providing authority, awarding money to groups to provide services rather than providing the services itself.

David Ward, the club's planning consultant summarises the problems he has encountered in a very concise manner. He notes that his search has been constrained by political posturing at the city council, lethargy at SCDC and a general lack of interest at the county council. He cites the lack of a forum, an opportunity for positive dialogue aimed not only towards the search for improved facilities for Cambridge United, but directed towards recreation and leisure in the Cambridge area, as the biggest problem that hinders his search. This would provide an opportunity for the local authorities in the area to discuss the roles that they should play, the needs of the club and the opportunities of development.

Local authority boundaries have also proved to be an obstacle

Map 3 The Cambridge Green Belt



- Cambridge City Boundary
- ▬ Green Belt Land

Source : Cambs County Council (1992b)

for the club. David Ward recognises this problem. At present there is considerable antipathy between the city council and SCDC, particularly in relation to leisure. This has been highlighted by the debate on the city council's leisurecard scheme, where city residents can buy the leisurecard for £1, and receive considerable reductions on the price of leisure facilities in the city. This scheme reflects the city council's belief that city residents should not have to subsidise leisure facilities used by residents from outside the city. Leisure users do not abide by administrative boundaries. City residents pay for leisure through the council tax, but residents from outside the city presently enjoy the use of these facilities at the same rates. In 1992/3 Cambridge City Council spent £62.44 per head on leisure, SCDC in contrast spent only £7.78 per head. The average for all authorities in England was £30.00 in this year (Cooper 1993).

This antipathy is particularly evident at member level. At present it is the leisurecard issue which is stirring them up, but their attitudes towards each other means many issues reported in the local press stir up controversy. These disagreements reflect the different political positions of each authority. Members of SCDC think that Cambridge should be a car park and services. City Councillors, whilst acknowledging the role the city plays as a regional centre, emphasise their duties to the local residents and perceive a need to protect the environment. In contrast, relations at officer level are good between the two councils. Many officers have worked for both of these authorities.

The lack of an overall strategy from the club and the local authorities in the area, and the antipathy between them has resulted in no-one taking responsibility for the problems the club faces, and a feeling from the club that nobody wants them. Both the city council and SCDC are fulfilling their statutory planning duties, but the discretionary nature of the planning system and the limited resources available to local authorities has meant that at present there is no coherent strategy for the club. The problem faced by the club and the local authorities is alike, nobody wants a football club in their back garden.

The Abbey Rabbit, the club's fanzine launched a campaign in their November 1993 issue (Abbey Rabbit 1993a) to change the club's name back to Abbey United, the name used prior to 1951. The campaign noted that in 1991 when the club reached the quarter-finals of the F.A. Cup, and narrowly missed out on promotion to the Premier League, the club enjoyed the support of the whole city. "Unfortunately, the dream ended, we were no longer seen as an asset to the city (no TV, no radio, no newspapers), and we were dropped like a hot potato. Now we need the help from the city to prepare for a future in top English football, where are they? Back on their bureaucratic behinds carefully ironing out the red tape should another proposal hit their desks" (Abbey Rabbit 1993a). The campaign suggested that if the city didn't want the club, then the club should consider dumping the city by erasing the city's name from the club's. At present the support for this campaign is being evaluated.

The campaign also considered taking this campaign one step further, by following the examples set by the fans of Charlton Athletic F.C. and Bristol Rovers F.C. and taking on the sitting councillors at the May 1994 elections, particularly those sitting on the planning committee (Abbey Rabbit 1993b). A Bristol Rovers supporter who wrote a letter included in the December / January Abbey Rabbit noted that since the threat of putting up candidates, the local council has started to come up with proposals (Abbey Rabbit 1993b).

This campaign is a result of football fans craving for success. Players, boards of directors, and now planners have come under verbal attack from supporters. Often, these fans do not understand, or choose to ignore constraints to success, and loyalty and emotion dominate their views.

The search by Cambridge United provides an opportunity for the local authorities to look beyond their formal planning duty and administrative boundaries, and convene a forum to discuss the problems and opportunities facing the club, in the context of

leisure provision in the Cambridge area. At present this has not occurred.

PERCEPTIONS BY ACTORS OF THEIR OWN ROLES AND THE ROLES OF OTHERS.

Planning and planners in the Cambridge area should communicate and work together in order to provide a cohesive and comprehensive planning service for the local area. This requires agreement by the local authorities on the responsibilities and duties each authority should assume. Unfortunately, this has not happened in Cambridge. Political and ideological disagreements have resulted in local authorities not accepting the roles other authorities believe they should. This has been to the detriment of the club.

Cambridge City Council believes that they have now investigated all possible options open to the club in their area, and because of the problems associated with the Chesterton Sidings site, have concluded that at present there is no suitable location for the club within the city. The city council therefore suggests that a location within South Cambridgeshire might be the most appropriate. They acknowledge that they will still play a role in the determination of the use of the existing site to enable relocation, but believe that a move to South Cambridgeshire would be the best option in the long-term.

Despite this, SCDC does not accept that a stadium would be an appropriate development in its area. It does not accept that it has a responsibility to help the club find a suitable site, but only to determine applications if and when the club submits them. The city council does accept a responsibility to help the club find a home, but has concluded that this is not practical within the urban area. It therefore sees a role for SCDC to help the club.

The local Members of Parliament for the area are also in conflict over the role they feel they should play, and the role they feel other actors in the process should play. Anne Campbell MP, Labour MP for Cambridge has publicly called on SCDC to accept

responsibility for helping to find a new home for Cambridge United (Cambridge Weekly News 1993, Cambridge Evening News 1993b). This call is based on the belief that SCDC has a role as the provider of leisure and amenities to its residents, and three out of every four supporters of Cambridge United come from outside the city, many from the South Cambs area. Because of this, SCDC should play a part in securing the club's future (Campbell MP 1993 : Personal Communication).

In contrast to this view, SCDC believes that it has a role to play as an enabler of leisure provision, rather than as a provider of leisure. This enabling ideology does not precludes the opportunity to help the club, and as the planning authority for the area, SCDC possesses the discretionary powers to help the club. SCDC has as yet decided not to exercise these discretionary powers to help the club.

James Paice MP, Conservative MP for South East Cambs, including SCDC's area, supports the view of SCDC. He suggests that the responsibility for finding a new home lies fully with the club, and SCDC or the city council should only be involved in advising on the possible planning suitability of individual sites (Paice MP 1993 : Personal Communication). He also notes that in his view this is not a matter for MP's to become involved in as it is primarily a matter for the club itself (Paice MP 1993 : Personal Communication). Campbell MP disagrees with this, and noted that she believed it was her role "to try and bring various agencies together and to intercede with ministers if necessary to ensure that the timetable for implementation of the Taylor Report does not have any damaging long-term consequences for the club" (Campbell MP 1993 : Personal Communication).

These standpoints reflect the MP's political persuasions. Labour administrations act on the belief that they have a duty to interact and intervene in discussion and actions. In contrast, Conservative involvement is traditionally reactive rather than proactive, and kept to a minimum.

David Ward acknowledges that the majority of the responsibility for finding a suitable site falls on the club. However, because of the club's role in the area as a leisure activity, and supporter of leisure in the area, including its football in the community programme, he feels that the local authorities in the area should also assist in the club's search.

The role the county council should play has also aroused much discussion. The county itself does not see a role to play, but as David Ward noted, the recent change to a Labour / Liberal control of the county has suggested a willingness to increase assistance, but at present this has not been forthcoming. Both the city council and SCDC believe that the county council should exercise its duty to convene a forum, but neither see it as their own duty even though to date the county has been unwilling to convene a forum. David Ward also perceives a role that the county can play as a major landowner in the Cambridge area.

The main problems being faced by the club are that whilst it has received support from the city council, there appears to be no potential sites in the city to meet the club's aims at present. A move to SCDC has been met with considerable opposition because the council perceives a need to preserve the rural nature of the district, and also recognises the opposition from local people in the district to a relocated stadium. The leisurecard issue has also stirred up these councils at member level, increasing the tension between these two councils. Until discussions take place between these local authorities neither the problems of leisure provision in the area nor Cambridge United can be fully addressed.

IS THE PRESENT LEVEL OF DETERMINATION THE MOST APPROPRIATE?

At present, despite the regional influence and importance of a football club, individual applications for planning permission are considered by the local authority in which the development is proposed. Each application should be considered on its merits and demerits. To overcome problems associated with boundaries, as in the Cambridge case study, and the lack of an overall strategy

by groups of adjacent authorities, the Football League called for a "UDC-style body" with "the power to over-ride local councils" (Shepley C 1990a). The club, and the three local authorities in the Cambridge area were asked whether they perceived a role for a county or regional-wide authority to determine applications like this that are of county or regional significance.

All four actors argued that the present structure was the most appropriate. David Ward noted that the present emphasis on grass roots, with a large amount of regional and national input is the best scale for determination. Despite this he did note that a unitary authority, including Cambridge and 5-7 miles around would be better than the present structure. This is presently under consideration by the local authority review, and has been considered along with a number of other options.

The three planning authorities also agreed that a local emphasis was the most appropriate. Steve Matthews at the city council noted that local determination was the most suitable, but that other authorities and other bodies should be involved through a forum (Matthews 1993 : Personal Communication). Michael Monk from SCDC suggested that a county or regional authority would not be appropriate. He noted that in the 1970s counties had the power to call-in large applications, but this was removed as it was perceived as being inappropriate. He sees no reason why this perception should have changed (Monk 1993 : Personal Communication).

It appears that determination by a local authority is the most appropriate scale at which to consider proposals. A local emphasis, with considerable input from neighbouring authorities, and regional and national bodies. This does however increase the need for co-operation between authorities.

HELP FOR THE FUTURE?

Whilst the county council has never accepted any responsibility, the city council and SCDC both feel that there is no scope for future help. The city council are still expressing a desire to help,

but because of the lack of appropriate sites, the council feels that there is no opportunity for helping the club find a new home. It can determine the use of the existing site to facilitate relocation, and put pressure on SCDC, but at present the leisurecard issue appears to be employing all the councillors time and local newspaper space.

With respect to the redevelopment of the Abbey stadium, the city council did inform the club that it would consider an application for an all-seater stadium that does not increase the capacity. The additional traffic and parking problems associated with an increased capacity has meant that the council is unwilling to consider an application for expansion above the present 10 000 capacity.

Steve Matthews from the city council's planning department now perceives that the most suitable location for a new stadium would probably now be outside the city, and beyond the outer-edge of the green belt, perhaps on one of the sites that has received refusal for an out-of-town retail complex (Matthews 1993 : Personal Communication).

SCDC still maintains that they are willing to work with the city council and the club's agents when the club makes an application for planning permission. Michael Monk, noted that a proposal for a new stadium would "need to be well-related to the urban area" in order to gain permission (Monk 1993 : Personal Communication). Like the city council he cited the Chesterton Sidings as an example of the type of location that might be deemed acceptable.

With regards to a Green Belt location, he stated that this could only be considered if it was absolutely clear that there was no alternative. At present he does not consider that this is the case. South Cambs is a rural district, and development of this nature would conflict with the area's characteristics. If it was proven, then he suggested that perhaps a stadium alone could be sited in the Green Belt. However the scale of associated development that

the club says it requires would still prove to be an insurmountable problem.

The way forward will be discussed in more detail in chapter 7, but with both the local authorities in the area independently concluding that there is nothing further that they can do, the emphasis must be put on a joint meeting, and the discussion of an overall strategy for the club.

The four problems that the club has faced, as noted in Chapter 1, are still evident. Site constraints, finance, planning and planners, and the willingness of the club. All four have played their part, and have proven to be interrelated.

Site constraints have continued to be the most visible constraint to development. Size, location, access and ownership requirements have precluded many potential sites, including the Chesterton Sidings and the Cowley Road agricultural machinery sales yard. Finance and planning have also played their part through their effects on site requirements and constraints and the availability of potential locations.

Cambridge United has lost money for the last three years, and like so many football clubs is constrained in its search for a new stadium. If the club decides to relocate, the site must be reasonably priced, preferably either a derelict site or land bought from a local authority, as in the case of Millwall F.C. The inability to pay commercial rates reduces the number of possible sites.

The associated development required for financial viability also adds to the site constraints. Not only does a potential site need to accommodate a new stadium and parking, it must also include space for the accompanying development. The site requirements of this enabling development may also limit the number of sites available.

Together, the site constraints, financial viability and planning obstacles will influence the willingness and determination of a club to fulfil its ambitions. Essentially, a club's finances and site requirements are fixed. Planning and planners are the variable in the development equation. This is why this thesis has concentrated on the role of planners, and this is why it is the responsibility of planners to help the club meet the statutory requirements of the Taylor Report.

Planning should be based on judgement and discretion. It is not an absolute science. As finance and site constraints become increasingly problematic, planning has a larger role to play. When finance and suitable sites are aplenty, planners and planning present little opposition. But when finances are stretched and suitable sites limited, planning presents an increasing problem for development.

This is particularly evident in the case of Cambridge United with regard to the Green Belt. Finances are stretched and no suitable sites have been found within the city. Potential sites at Teversham and Fen Ditton have been precluded on planning grounds, and the redevelopment of the Abbey met with considerable opposition. The club has therefore been forced to look towards Green Belt land, and has run into conflict with SCDC. It is right that sensible planning policy should not be ignored, but it is of equal importance to establish the council reasoning and ideology behind the implementation of this policy, so that suggestions can be made on the direction that the club and the local authorities should follow in their search for an improved stadium for Cambridge United Football Club.

Chapter 6 now examines the lessons that we can learn from the Oxford United case study, and these, together with the lessons from this chapter are then applied to the Cambridge case study in chapter 7, 'The Way Forward'.

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CHAPTER SIX

OXFORD UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB -

LESSONS TO BE LEARNED.

In October 1990, Oxford United F.C. submitted an application to South Oxfordshire District Council for outline planning permission for the construction of a 20 000 capacity stadium and associated commercial leisure development on Green Belt land at Blackbird Leys. Titmuss Sainer and Webb, the club's planning consultants, have attempted to justify the need to relocate by emphasising the inadequacies of the present stadium and the need to implement the requirements of the Taylor Report. They have also directed attention towards the benefits of a move away from the present location in a residential area, with poor access and a complete lack of other facilities, particularly off-street parking.

The club have been actively considering relocation from the Manor Ground in the Headington Park area of the city for the last thirty years. During this period, twenty-four different locations have been considered, both within the city and in the surrounding area. Some of these have been tested with planning applications, but the club has rejected all of these for a variety of reasons.

The club's perceived need to relocate, and the absence of any other potential sites led to an examination of a move to a Green Belt location. The proposal was based on the assumption that the club could demonstrate the "very special circumstances" required for a Green Belt location as noted in PPG17, and show that "all other possible locations had been exhausted and other considerations had been fully addressed" (Department of the Environment 1991). The club didn't propose to de-Green Belt the site, but show the necessary exceptional circumstances for location (Bullworthy 1992).

Due to the financial constraints on the club, the proposal included associated commercial development to help finance the

development. The application included the stadium, 4 000 car parking spaces, space for 100 coaches and overflow car parking facilities, multi-screen cinema, bowling alley, discotheque, health and fitness centre, restaurant, bingo and social club, and an hotel, on a 17 acre site. Retail development was not considered because of nearby provision (McGeough 1992).

South Oxfordshire District Council failed to determine the application within the prescribed period. The club's planning consultants appealed against this non-determination, and a local inquiry was held in 1992. After all interested parties had made their representations at the inquiry, the Secretary of State accepted the conclusions and recommendations made by the Inspector, and dismissed the appeal for three reasons;

- 1) He believed that the stadium would be inappropriate because of its adverse impact on the landscape setting of Oxford and wider Green Belt functions.
- 2) He was not satisfied that all possible sites and options for the club's relocation had been examined properly.
- 3) The absence of sufficient justification for the scale of commercial development proposed (Department of the Environment 1992).

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE CASE STUDIES.

A) PRESENT LOCATIONS

Both Cambridge United and Oxford United are intent on relocating away from cramped city locations, where development is perceived to be undesirable by the clubs.

B) ALTERNATIVE SITES

Both clubs have considered a number of alternative sites, although the investigation by Oxford has been considerably longer and more detailed.

C) RELOCATION ACROSS LOCAL AUTHORITY BOUNDARIES

In their search, Cambridge United have confronted problems when proposals required relocation across local authority boundaries. The tensions between Cambridge City Council and SCDC, particularly in relation to leisure, and the apparent reluctance of SCDC to help the club find a site in their district is mirrored by the Oxford case study. Roger Bullworthy, Oxford United's planning consultant in 1992 from Titmuss Sainer and Webb, noted that South Oxfordshire District Council opposed a move to their area, because they "didn't want the club" (Bullworthy 1994 : Personal Communication). They viewed the accompanying development as even more problematic.

D) ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT

As noted in chapter 2, both clubs are currently running at a loss, with pre-tax losses of between £400 000 and £500 000 in the 1991/2 season (Touche Ross 1993). To enable development both clubs perceive a need to include associated development to make relocation financially viable.

E) GREEN BELTS

With the perceived absence of any other suitable sites for relocation, both Cambridge United and Oxford United see Green Belt locations as being the most suitable, despite local authority opposition.

The details surrounding the proposals submitted by each club and the planning environments in which they will be considered are not homogenous. Oxford submitted an application for a 20 000 seater stadium, the proposal by Cambridge United considered by the planning policy committee at SCDC envisaged a 15 000 seater stadium. Although now superseded and the policy removed, the 1982 Oxford Fringe Local Plan allocated 17 acres of the proposed site for the relocation of Oxford United. Provision has never been made for a site for Cambridge United in any local plans for the area. Another major issue is the timetable for the

implementation of the Taylor Report. Cambridge United have to comply by the 1999 deadline for second and third division clubs. Oxford United, from the first division in 1993/4 must comply by the start of the 1994/5 season.

Despite these differences, the Inspector's and Secretary of State's comments, particularly regarding the special circumstances required for a green belt location, and the relationships between the local authorities in the area, will give a clear insight into the Secretary of State's interpretation of the policy relating to this issue. This will suggest the circumstances that Cambridge United will have to demonstrate if they continue in their hunt for a green belt site. It is to these lessons that the remainder of this chapter will be devoted.

1) THE ADVERSE IMPACT ON THE LANDSCAPE SETTING OF OXFORD AND WIDER GREEN BELT FUNCTIONS.

Central to the consideration of this appeal is the impact of the scheme on the Green Belt, especially in relation to the character and function of the Green Belt in this locality and the effect of the development on the landscape setting and wider historic character of Oxford.

(Department of the Environment 1992).

Policy EN5 of the Oxfordshire Structure Plan (1987) notes three purposes of the Green Belt;

- 1) to protect the special character of Oxford and its landscape setting.
- 2) to check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and sprawl.
- 3) to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

The inspector also noted in his conclusions that a firm Green Belt policy is a vital element in protecting the particular character

and landscape setting of Oxford (Department of the Environment 1992). The site on which the development is proposed serves all three of the Green Belt purposes that the structure plan identifies.

The area in which the stadium is proposed is in a largely undeveloped condition in the south-east of the city. At present it provides a significant contribution to the south-eastern approaches to Oxford and creates an impressive setting for the city. The granting of permission would dramatically alter the character and appearance of this south-eastern fringe of the city on two counts. Firstly, even without the 22 000 sq-metres of commercial facilities proposed, the stadium alone would be visually prominent in this open stretch of countryside, particularly from surrounding higher ground and the approach roads to the city. Secondly, the introduction of large volumes of traffic and activity into this undeveloped area would affect the character of the area and act to the detriment of the landscape setting of Oxford. Unless a site can be found within, or well-related to the urban area, a relocated stadium is likely to have this impact wherever it is sited.

The Grenoble Road presents a well-defined boundary to the city, but the proposed development is outside this boundary. The scale and nature of the development proposed would be in conflict with the second purpose of the Oxford Green Belt, to check the growth of Oxford and prevent ribbon development and urban sprawl. The proposal would represent a major expansion of urban development beyond the city's boundaries and into the countryside.

Despite this, a report by Rural Planning Services Ltd in association with URBIS planning design group (1979) was used by the club in support of their case. This report, entitled 'The Oxford Green Belt - A Study for the Oxford Preservation Trust' considered that this area was of relatively poor quality, dominated by such features as the Cowley Industrial Complex, a gas holder, sewage works and a main electricity sub-station. Views of collegiate Oxford are also severely limited from this

sector. Bullworthy (1992), on behalf of Oxford United noted that "whilst the quality of the Green Belt is not relevant to the designation of Green belt I would submit that their quality is relevant where such a large development is being considered and where it is accepted that a Green belt location is unavoidable". Unfortunately for the club, the result of the appeal was that the Secretary of State and the Inspector agreed with South Oxfordshire District Council that there is insufficient evidence to suggest that a Green Belt location is unavoidable.

The proposed development also confronts problems in relation to the third purpose of the Green Belt, to prevent the coalescence of settlements. The appeal site acts as an important gap between the Grenoble Road, the boundary of the built area, and the village of Garsington. This expanse of countryside helps provide the separate identity and preserves the rural character of the village. The development of the appeal site between Garsington and Oxford will result in an expansion of the urban area of the city and the inclusion of Garsington as part of the urban environment.

The Inspector concluded that development on this site would seriously undermine the overall integrity and basic functions of the Green Belt in the Oxford area. This would be contrary to national planning policy displayed in Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Department of the Environment 1988) as well as the recently adopted Oxfordshire Structure Plan (Oxfordshire County Council 1992). South Oxfordshire District Council's local plan (1990) does not include an allocation or a policy for the relocation of the club despite objections from the club. The local plan inspector recommended that no policy or specific site should be included in the plan because the club wanted to include substantial commercial development in the proposal for the site. The appeal scheme would therefore be contrary to the recommendations of the local plan inspector and the local plan in general. Based on this reasoning the inspector noted that in the absence of any special circumstances, the appeal scheme would conflict with existing planning policies and harm the character and landscape setting of the city, and the appeal should therefore be dismissed.

The aim of the club was to justify these very special circumstances and show that all other practical options for location had been exhausted, but this belief was not shared by either the Inspector or the Secretary of State.

2) THE EXCLUSION OF ALL OTHER PRACTICAL OPTIONS FOR LOCATION.

When discussing the appeal by the club, the officer directed by the Secretary of State to represent him noted that;

in view of the fact that all possible sites for the club's relocation do not appear to have been properly examined, he (the Secretary of State) has concluded that the circumstances are not sufficiently special to justify allowing inappropriate development in the Green Belt (Department of the Environment 1992).

In relation to the need to relocate, the Secretary of State accepted in principle the desirability of relocation, because of the size and surroundings of the existing ground (Department of the Environment 1992). If Oxford United converted their present stadium to an all-seater stadium without expansion, the capacity would be reduced to 7 500, the same number that would be accommodated if Cambridge United converted their ground to all-seater. In his conclusion, the Inspector noted that whilst the conversion of the existing ground might represent a short-term solution to the club's problem, it would appear to be uneconomic at the present time and would not solve the problems of operating from a poorly sited ground (Department of the Environment 1992). He also acknowledged the environmental, amenity, traffic and public safety reasons for relocating, and also the benefits for the club and the community at large. These principles are also accepted in the case of Cambridge United. The question that arose was whether this need justifies the release of the appeal site.

Over the last thirty years the club has considered and rejected twenty-four different locations for a new stadium. However, the Secretary of State was not satisfied that all practical options had been exhausted, as required by PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) to meet the very special circumstances for the release of a Green Belt site. The Inspector's report, recorded three main problems with the club's claim that all potential sites had been fully investigated: the type of associated development that was considered on these other sites, the timing of the examinations, and the possibility that all possible sites had not been evaluated.

When the club considered the twenty-four potential sites for development, the majority of these involved a stadium supported by retail development. "It does not appear that a stadium combined with commercial leisure facilities, as in the case now, has ever been considered" (Department of the Environment 1992). In order to justify the exclusion of all other sites in favour of the proposed site the club would need to show that it has considered all types of associated development on other sites, especially the type of development that was being proposed for the appeal site. In his report the Inspector concluded that whilst sites including retail development had been excluded, this does not preclude the possibility that a proposed stadium supported by other types of associated development could be accommodated on these sites.

The twenty-four sites considered were evaluated over a thirty year period. Since the 1970s both the club's needs and the condition and suitability of sites have changed. Sites that were excluded in 1971 may now be more suitable due to improved access, landownership changes, dereliction or improved potential for accompanying development. This was supported by Richard Whitlock, Assistant Chief Planning Officer for South Oxfordshire District Council at the appeal, when he noted that in September 1982 the club indicated to the city council that its clear preferences were first Marston, second Botley Road, and last Watlington Road (the appeal site) or staying at the Manor Ground (Whitlock 1992). Preferences and the perceived suitability of

sites changes over time and therefore sites rejected thirty years ago may provide little support for a claim to meet the very special circumstances for a green belt site.

Each of the twenty-four sites are not even comparable to each other, as their examination was strung out over a thirty year period. The greatest number of sites examined in detail at any one time was ten in 1971, and the last "proper examination" of alternative sites was undertaken in 1987 (Department of the Environment 1992).

The lack of a strategic forum in Oxford has also presented problems. The Inspector stated that he was not satisfied that all possible sites had been evaluated. Without a strategic forum comprised of all the local authorities in the area the most suitable site cannot be identified. This was the conclusion of the Inspector and the reasoning behind the call in his report for the establishment of a forum. This would facilitate the examination of sites in relation to each other rather than in isolation, and permit the club and the local authorities to agree on the most suitable. At present the Inspector felt that other land exists on the periphery of the city, and without a forum to consider the size of the stadium required, the scale and nature of any supporting development, the possibilities of shared and multiple-use of a stadium, all sites cannot be evaluated or excluded.

If Cambridge United are to be successful in obtaining a green belt site by the exclusion of all other practical options there are three lessons from the Oxford United appeal;

- i) A comprehensive and constant evaluation must be made of all possible sites for relocation.
- ii) Consideration of sites must be made at the same time.
- iii) The same type of associated development must have been considered on all potential sites.

3) JUSTIFICATION OF ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT.

As in the case of Cambridge United, Oxford were confronted by the assumption in PPG17 that even if a stadium did meet the very special circumstances required for a Green Belt location, associated development might still prove to be an insurmountable problem. One of the three main reasons why the Secretary of State dismissed the appeal was that he felt there was insufficient justification for the scale of commercial leisure development proposed.

During the appeal, a financial appraisal by Conrad Ritblat and Co of the costs of the proposed stadium and financing was submitted. This noted that the cost of construction of the entire development would be in the region of £23.65 million, while financing, including the leases from associated leisure premises could raise £19.52 million, a shortfall of £4.125 million (Conrad Ritblat and Co 1992). However, during the appeal doubts were raised on the reliability of these figures. South Oxfordshire District Council reported that these figures excluded three other costs that the club would also have to bear, a perimeter road costing approximately £2.6m, off-street car parking for residents of Blackbird Leys costing approximately £750 000, and interest charges (Whitlock 1992).

South Oxfordshire District Council also cast doubts on the demand for the proposed associated leisure development. Oxford does not have a bowling alley, but the council disputed the need for many of the other proposed developments. The Oxford City Local Plan (1986) allocates three other sites for hotels, and the plan review is expected to include nine sites within the city where hotel development would be acceptable in principle (Whitlock 1992). The council does not accept that there is evidence to suggest that there is any need or demand for further cinemas and discotheques in Oxford. The appeal site is also close to the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre, probably the best example of a modern leisure centre in the country, Temple Cowley pools, and a large number of social clubs.

The Inspector noted that;

financial matters are not normally a central consideration in planning applications, but in this case, where Green Belt land is being sought for inappropriate development, the justification for further commercial development to support the stadium is of some relevance.

(Department of Environment 1992).

He acknowledged the usefulness of the financial appraisal by Conrad Ritblat and Co as a starting point, but because of the questions about the assumptions of land values and stadium costs, a lack of detail, and the £4m shortfall between expected costs and estimated finance he did not feel this evaluation enabled a complete evaluation of the need and level of associated development required. It could therefore not justify the inclusion of the scale of development included as part of the stadium proposal.

If Cambridge United are determined to pursue this path, co-ordination with the city council's leisure department is essential to establish the level of provision and needs in the area. This will need to be supported by a comprehensive financial appraisal.

HOW TO NEGOTIATE THE PLANNING HURDLE.

Whilst acting as planning consultants for Oxford United, Titmuss Sainer and Webb produced a seven page document entitled 'Planning for all-seater stadia' (1992). Its aim was to provide advice for other clubs on how to negotiate the planning hurdle. Like the decisions during the appeal by Oxford United, this general document could be valuable to clubs like Cambridge United who are considering redevelopment or relocation.

The document noted five points that clubs would need to demonstrate when submitting proposals for redevelopment / relocation;

- 1) The extent to which the existing ground is outdated and lacking in amenities and facilities.
- 2) That the seating capacity proposed can be justified.
- 3) The improvements in public order and safety and the provision of improved facilities / amenities at the ground the proposals will achieve.
- 4) The community benefits of multiple use and non-football leisure facilities incorporated in the proposals.
- 5) That the environmental impact will not be materially worse than currently exists.

In addition to this the document commented on the problems associated with Green Belt locations and supporting development. It emphasised the need to justify the very special circumstances to obtain a Green Belt site, and the need to demonstrate that all other practical options had been fully exhausted. The document also noted the need to provide financial justification for the proposed commercial element to support a stadium, and recorded that "Government advice in effect accepts that leisure related uses are appropriate and acceptable particularly where they will be of benefit to the public as a whole" (Titmuss Sainer and Webb 1992).

The conclusions to the document, subtitled 'The Way Forward' stressed the importance for football clubs to ensure that their plight was considered during the preparation of both structure plans and local plans. Whilst PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) also suggests this, both Cambridge United and Oxford United confronted considerable opposition when attempting to secure development plan provision. The document concludes that the firm's planning unit considered that Government policy contained in PPG17 is a positive and helpful response by the Government to the problems faced by football clubs.

A seven-page document of this nature can never fully examine and advise on the planning hurdles that clubs might face, and

because of this its recommendations and conclusions are general and unsubstantiated. The document was produced by the consultants prior to the appeal to introduce themselves to the subject, and while it does provide a good general guide for those new to the field, it is unfortunately only of limited use to clubs and planning consultants in their search for sites, and provides few suggestions and new information for those attempting to secure a suitable site for Cambridge United.

THE LESSONS THAT OXFORD UNITED HAVE LEARNT.

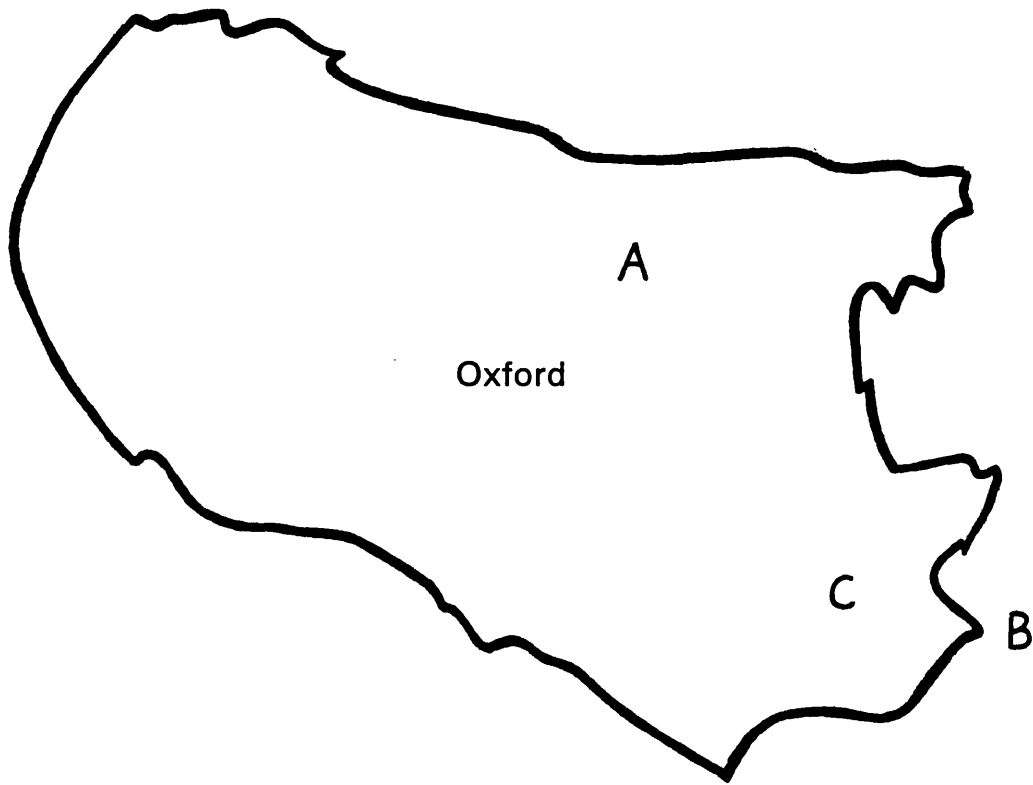
In March 1994 Oxford United made another application, this time for a scaled-down stadium, 15 000 seater, opposed to the 20 000 seater proposed on Green Belt land, to the city council.

THE NEW SITE

The new proposal is on land within the boundary of the city (Map 4), and not designated as Green Belt, but still in the Blackbird Leys area. The site had not been considered previously because until recently it was landlocked. One hundred acres of the Rover works car storage area was sold to the development arm of British Aerospace, and the development of this area will permit access to the application site.

This raises significant questions over the ability of clubs to demonstrate the very special circumstances needed to secure a Green Belt location. This site was excluded during the 1992 appeal because of perceived price and access constraints, but two years later it has become available. Even if a club can demonstrate that no other sites are available at present, is this sufficient, or should clubs have to demonstrate that no other sites are likely to become available in the near future? How far into the future should speculation extend? If an alternative site to a Green Belt location is determined, but is presently unavailable, should this have an affect on the present application? Is the possibility of the Chesterton sidings becoming available in the next few years relevant to calls from Cambridge

Map 4 The Locations of the Present Stadium, 1992 Appeal Site and the New Proposed Site



- A The Present Ground
- B 1992 Appeal Site
- C New Proposed Site

— Oxford City Boundary

United for a Green Belt site? The time-scale of the club's needs should be an important consideration in relation to these sites.

ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENT

Mick Brown, Oxford United's secretary noted that the new stadium would be self-financing, despite the claims at the 1992 appeal that the club needed associated development to enable development. Since 1992 however, there has been a change of the Board of Directors, which might explain the change in situation. He did not outline how the stadium would be financed, but noted that other leisure facilities were still being considered, including a conference centre and a bowling alley (Brown 1994 : Personal Communication).

The club has been canvassing local residents and fans for their views on what they would like to see in the new centre other than football. Around a quarter would favour a bowling alley, 21 per cent an indoor athletics track, 19 per cent a centre of football excellence and 18 per cent a fitness centre. (Planning 1994).

The club hopes that a proposal reflecting local needs will be looked on favourably by the city council.

CONSULTANTS

This proposal was constructed by a new consultancy firm. Titmuss Sainer and Webb were employed for the 1992 application because they undertook a large amount of work for the Maxwell empire who controlled the club at the time, but the new board decided to choose a more local consultant, Niger Moor and Associates (Brown 1994 : Personal Communication).

LOCAL AUTHORITY SUPPORT

The new application proposes a relocation within the city boundaries, from the old Manor Ground to the new site in the Blackbird Leys area. Brown (1994 : Personal Communication) noted that this is more advantageous to the club than a move across a local authority boundary because the affects of local authority tensions are removed, and one authority can evaluate

the problems of a new stadium against the advantages of a move from the present ground. There are also planning gain possibilities. Brown (1994 : Personal Communication) noted that Oxford City Council acknowledged both problems and opportunities of this development, and the present proposal is the "least worst scenario" for the council.

The lessons from this application suggest that it is ideally in the club's interest to remain within the city, and gain the support of the city council through negotiation. The council can then work with the club to fulfil the opportunities and minimise the problems associated with both the new and the old sites. However, as discussed in chapter 5, there is not always opportunity for development within the urban area, and therefore the following chapter discusses the way forward, whichever path to improvements is chosen.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE WAY FORWARD

Despite the requirements and timetable of the Taylor Report (Home Office 1990), many league clubs have not yet converted their grounds into all-seater stadia. The lack of finance and particular site requirements have been important, but the biggest problems that clubs have faced have been posed by the planning system, and those who work within it. The flexibility of planning can help overcome the problems posed by finance and site constraints. The ease or otherwise that planning enables the implementation of the Taylor Report by redevelopment or relocation will be strongly related to the willingness of clubs to build stadia that look beyond the Taylor Report, and towards football in the twenty-first century.

Planners ability to help clubs in their search for improved facilities despite the financial and site constraints that they face is the reason that this thesis has investigated the assistance offered by local planning authorities to clubs, and the problems that clubs have faced because the planning system has been unable or unwilling to help them in their search.

The aim of this section of the study is not to suggest where or how Cambridge United should implement the Taylor Report, but to show the way forward for whatever route the club decides. The study has examined many of the problems that the club had faced, and this section will demonstrate how many of these lessons can be applied to enhance the club's future chance of successfully finding a home suitable for football in the twenty-first century.

Whether the club decides to follow a path towards redevelopment or relocation to implement the Taylor Report requirements, the Taylor report deadline is not negotiable. If the club wants a capacity over 7 500, the number that could be accommodated if standing terraces were simply replaced by seats, extensive development will be needed, and the club will have to try and negotiate the planning hurdles that have presented

problems to date. Despite the problems that the club has faced, whether the attempts to redevelop insitu, relocate within the urban area or relocate to the Green Belt, opportunities are still available for planners and the club to work together in order to fulfil the club's goals.

REDEVELOPMENT

In 1992 the Cambridge United made an application to Cambridge City Council to expand the existing stadium, so that it could seat 13 000 spectators. This was refused because of the enclosure of two bungalows on the Newmarket Road, and the traffic and parking problems associated with an expansion in capacity from its present level of 9 980. Despite this, the city council did inform the club that it would be willing to consider an application that did not increase the licensed capacity of the ground.

If the club did decide to redevelop the Abbey stadium it is likely to have to settle for a 10 000 capacity. The enclosure problem may be overcome by redesigning the stadium, but the limited potential for increased parking provision in the area is likely to exclude the opportunity for expanding the capacity beyond 10 000.

One way that expansion may be possible is if the club promotes, and the supporters increasingly use public transport. This is unlikely because the majority of supporters come from outside the city and from rural areas relatively poorly served by public transport. The journey into the city would be unattractive to these supporters. The wide catchment area of the club means that for every 100 spectators attending games, 35 come by car to watch Cambridge United, compared to the national average for all clubs of 15 (Greenall 1994 : Personal Communication).

Another possibility might be a car park away from the ground where car drivers could park, and board organised transport to the

ground. This is also problematic because of the demand from other drivers for parking in the city, particularly on a Saturday afternoon, and the high costs of transfer from the car park to the ground.

During the determination of the application, the club's planning consultant attempted to justify that a 13 000 capacity would not actually be an increase to the present capacity in planning terms. He argued that in recent years the licensed capacity had been reduced from 13 000 to just under 10 000 due to stricter safety requirements, but because during this time the ground was not developed, the capacity was still 13 000 in planning terms. The city council, rightly, did not accept this, noting that the maximum capacity that the Abbey stadium can hold would increase by over 3 000 people if permission was granted, and therefore for sell-out games 3 000 extra people would put pressure on the already stretched traffic and parking problems in the area.

If the club decides to refurbish or expand the present ground to 10 000 to meet the short-term requirements of the Taylor Report, it is likely to face stronger financial pressure if it relocates at a later stage. The Government money made available through the Football Trust is made available to clubs to assist in the implementation of the Taylor Report. If the club uses this money for short-term refurbishment, it will not be available for relocation at a later date.

Redevelopment is likely to be the least expensive option, but the club must decide whether a 10 000 capacity will fulfil the club's needs and aspirations for the future. Redevelopment of the existing stadium might prove to be a missed opportunity for improved leisure provision for the club and the local authority alike, and does not solve the basic problem of operating from a poorly sited ground.

RELOCATION

Whether the club wants to relocate within the urban area or obtain a Green Belt site, the way forward is very similar. The club and all three local authorities in the area, the county council, SCDC and the city council must get together and discuss an overall strategy. The county council must accept the responsibility noted in PPG17 and emphasised by the Secretary of State in his decision made on the appeal by Oxford United, and convene a forum. This strategic forum should examine the full range of possible sites, the size of the stadium required, and the evidence for the level of need and demand for associated development.

The convention of the forum also needs to be met with enthusiasm. The local authorities have to want to succeed and identify the most suitable strategic site. The forum needs more than lip service if it is to succeed. It is likely to require considerable time and resources from both the local authorities, and in particular the club, but if time and resources are not applied success is unlikely.

A forum convened and directed by the county council will remove the possibility of local authorities suggesting that a location within the others' area would be the most suitable. A forum where agreement is made on the needs and potential of the club's relocation can consider all sites with reference to agreed criteria. This will facilitate the identification of a number of preferred sites classified in accordance with the club's needs and planning considerations. Local authorities will no longer be able to withhold support on a particular site because of the perceived advantages of other locations.

The identification of the criteria for considering each site is likely to be a long and tedious process. The councils' differing viewpoints and beliefs are likely to bring them into conflict, but it is the duty of the club to forward its perceived needs, and through discussion and compromise negotiate these requirements

with the local authorities. Local authorities might attempt to include criteria they believe will exclude sites that they perceive as inappropriate. Agreed criteria by all actors will ensure that this does not happen, and provide a gauge by which all sites can be compared and considered against each other in order to identify the most appropriate site. The needs and environments in which clubs are proposing development are very different, and therefore because of this, the criteria by which sites are considered will be different for clubs in different cities. No general criteria should be applied. The criteria for each club should ask the same questions, but the answers are likely to be different.

It would also be of considerable assistance to clubs if strategic sites were included in development plans. At present, both in Oxford and Cambridge no development plans include provision for new stadia despite the call in PPG17 that "the adequacy of existing football stadia and the need for improvement should be taken into account in preparing and reviewing local plans" (Department of the Environment 1991). This is quite understandable. Until a forum has been convened and a strategic site has been identified and accepted, local plans should not include provision for new stadia. A forum is needed to consider the relative merits of all options in order to identify the most suitable. Local plan provision is important, but it must reflect decisions made at the forum.

RELOCATION WITHIN THE URBAN AREA.

A number of sites within the area have been considered during the search for a new ground for Cambridge United, but they have all been excluded because of access and landownership problems, high costs of the relocation of the existing occupant, or the present occupant being unsuccessful in their attempt to relocate to a new site and away from a potential site for the club.

At present both the club and the city council accept that there is no suitable site for relocation within the urban area. Despite this, the club should not exclude this option. Urban areas are

dynamic, landownership and land-uses are constantly changing, and future opportunities are not impossible. A forum may find a suitable site for the club within the time period designated by the Taylor Report. This opportunity is highlighted by the case of Oxford United who submitted a new application in March 1994 on a site in the city that had been unavailable until recently.

A potential opportunity also exists for the club to refurbish the Abbey stadium to meet the short-term requirements of the Taylor Report, and then relocate to the Chesterton sidings in the early years of the twenty-first century, when the present landownership and relocation problems may have subsided. This possibility would require further study to establish the feasibility of a move in the twenty-first century.

Location on a derelict site or on the urban fringe is likely to receive considerable local authority support. Walsall F.C. submitted concurrent applications for a 12 000 capacity stadium, 140 000 sq-ft retail park, a business park and 150 homes on derelict land adjacent to the M6, and a 70 000 sq-ft superstore on their old ground to help fund the move. This application was met with little opposition (Robertson 1992). Development on these sites provides the biggest opportunity for partnership, as in the case of Millwall F.C. and Lewisham Borough Council and the Chesterton sidings in Cambridge, which received support from both the city council and SCDC. These are the sites which reflect national policy in PPG13 (Department of the Environment / Department of Transport 1994) and PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) and where planning applications are likely to be greeted with the greatest amount of local authority support.

RELOCATION TO THE GREEN BELT.

In contrast to this, proposals for development on Green Belt are confronted by many problems. Planning Policy Guidance 2 (Department of the Environment 1988) on Green Belts reflects the need to preserve the Green Belt and restrict development. Development plans in the Cambridge area and PPG17 also reflect

this belief. Unlike in other areas, there is a general presumption against development within designated Green Belts.

PPG17 notes that;

it would be most unusual for a stadium proposal to meet the very special circumstances (needed to justify a Green Belt site) unless all other practical options for location had been exhausted and other considerations had been fully addressed.
(Department of the Environment 1991).

There is no clear indication on how clubs can meet these very special circumstances, but the Secretary of State's position in relation to the appeal by Oxford United, who share many of the same needs and constraints as Cambridge United, gives the best indication of the circumstances that will have to be met if the club decides to pursue a Green Belt location.

If Cambridge United want to secure a Green Belt site they must show that all possible sites and options have been properly examined, and justifiably excluded. If associated development is also proposed this is likely to cause further problems. If this supporting development is to have any chance of gaining local authority support, the proposal must include sufficient justification for the need and the scale of the facilities proposed. These are the two grounds on which the Inspector and Secretary of State agreed that Oxford United did not meet the very special circumstances, and are therefore the areas on which a proposal by Cambridge United must focus.

Cambridge United must demonstrate both the unsuitability of redevelopment of the present ground and the lack of any other suitable options for relocation. In 1992 the club submitted an outline planning application to expand the present stadium as part of their planning consultant's strategy to exclude all other sites. Despite the refusal of the application, the informative note by Cambridge City Council (1993c) that they would be willing to consider a proposal that did not increase the capacity means that

the redevelopment of the present stadium cannot be excluded at present as a practical option. In order to justify relocation to the Green Belt the club must demonstrate that a 10 000 capacity is not feasible on either financial or planning grounds. A 10 000-seater stadium is likely to put considerable financial pressure on the club, and whilst it would overcome the parking and traffic reasons for refusal, the expansion may still create problems relating to the two bungalows on Newmarket Road. The club should also stress the opportunities of relocation, particularly in relation to the opportunities of incorporating multi-use and non-football leisure facilities of benefit to the local community. PPG17 notes that local planning authorities should have regard to the extent of community benefit that proposals provide.

The club will also have to demonstrate that there are no other practical options for relocation on other sites. This search for other possible sites cannot be complete without a forum, where all the local authorities can discuss the requirements and potential sites. Sites cannot be excluded without this comprehensive discussion.

Comments made by the Inspector during the Oxford United appeal raise two points relating to the exclusion of potential sites. In respect to the search by Oxford United, he noted two major shortcomings, firstly the timescale of the search, and secondly, the associated development considered. The sites excluded by Oxford United were considered over a thirty year period at differing scales of detail. It is clear that a site that was considered unsuitable in the 1970s will not necessarily be unsuitable today, and more importantly in relation to securing a Green Belt site, it cannot be excluded as a practical option twenty years later. If Cambridge United want to show that all practical options have been exhausted, a forum is imperative, and all sites suggested as potentially suitable must be considered in detail at the same time, and immediately preceding an application.

The other problem that the Inspector raised was the associated development proposed on sites that had been excluded. The application in 1990 by Oxford United included a stadium and associated commercial leisure development, but many of the other 24 sites the club had considered included retail, rather than leisure development. The exclusion of a site where only retail based development was proposed cannot be justifiably used to secure a green belt site for a stadium with associated leisure facilities. If Cambridge United need associated development to facilitate the construction of a new stadium, they must justify the need for the supporting development and consider all other potential sites supported by this type of development. Associated development reflecting local needs is the most likely to receive local council support, and a survey of local needs, as in the case of Oxford United's 1994 application (Planning 1994), would support a claim by the club.

Associated development is unlikely to receive support from local planning authorities on a green belt site. PPG17 notes that a club would need to demonstrate the very special circumstances to secure a Green Belt site for a stadium. No mention is made regarding any conditions in which associated development might be permissible. Its inclusion in a Green Belt proposal would contravene national (PPG2) and local policy (development plans), and SCDC's ideological view of the Cambridge Green Belt and appropriate development. Monk (1993 : Personal Communication) at SCDC noted that if no other options were available to the club, SCDC would consider a green belt location for a stadium alone, but associated development is likely to prove to be an insurmountable problem.

However, if Cambridge United continue in their pursuit for a stadium and associated development they would have to justify the scale and range of associated development proposed. The Inspector in the Oxford United appeal, with respect to the financial appraisal submitted by the club noted, "I do not consider that it can provide a proper basis to judge whether the scale and range of commercial development proposed would certainly be

necessary to finance the stadium" (Department of the Environment 1992). A comprehensive appraisal must address the shortcomings of the financial assessment submitted by Oxford United, the £4m shortfall, the lack of detail, and the questions raised about the assumptions of land values and stadium costs. These were the three reasons cited by the Inspector for withholding support for the scale and range of associated development proposed. Cambridge United must demonstrate how they are financing the whole development, and include an accurate, comprehensive and detailed breakdown of all the costs and financing of the development.

If Cambridge United are determined to secure a Green Belt site they must examine;

- i) all potential sites in the same level of detail,
- ii) at the same time,
- iii) with the same supporting development,
- iv) immediately prior to the submission of an application.

This is centred around the assumption that a site should be found to accommodate the associated development proposed, rather than the policy previously used by the club to find a site and then determine the most appropriate development that can be accommodated. They must also justify the associated development proposed, its costs and the proposed financing. Only then will the club be in a position to meet the very special circumstances for a Green Belt location. Pre-application discussion with SCDC, probably at the forum, should make the club aware of the local authority's position, particularly in relation to associated development. Together with the lessons learnt from the case of Oxford United this will put the club in the best position to follow planning guidance and succeed in its search for a Green Belt site.

RELOCATION TO RADIALS AND CORRIDORS.

This is an option that has received little attention from the club or the local authorities. Possible sites have included the 4 out-of-town retail sites, outside the Green Belt, where applications

for shopping complexes were rejected in 1993 (Planning 1993b). The club feels however, that these sites do not meet the club's desire to remain close to the city.

Whichever path the club follows to implement the Taylor Report, and provide a stadium for football in the twenty-first century, the emphasis from all the actors in the process must be placed on discussion rather than confrontation if the club is going to prove successful. A forum must be set-up where the city council and SCDC can discuss their differing views under the direction of the county council, and enable the club to benefit from the planning system, rather than feel continually constrained. The planning policy in this area provides a positive contribution, but further discussion and negotiation is needed to allow all the actors in the process to take advantage of the help it offers.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to investigate and analyse the options available, and come to conclusions about the means by which local planning authorities and the other actors in the development process can assist in the improvement of facilities for football clubs. Despite widespread discussion and central Government financial assistance, administered through the Football Trust, a large number of clubs, particularly from the lower divisions have not yet complied with the Taylor Report recommendations or provided a stadium that will attract supporters in the twenty-first century. Clubs have been confronted by 4 main problems in their search for improved facilities: willingness by club officials and supporters, site constraints, finance, and the planning system and those who work within this system. The combination of these 4 problems has hindered many clubs in their search for a solution.

The willingness of club officials to pursue improvements is related to the perceived benefits of changes, and the likelihood of proposals to reach fruition. This is affected by site opportunities, finance available to the club and the assistance or otherwise offered by the planning system.

Site constraints are also affected by the other 3 problems. Site constraints and opportunities are a reflection of the club's needs and locational requirements, and the flexibility of the club officials in relation to these requirements. Finance is also important. Clubs with greater resources are better able to compete with other demands for land, whereas clubs dependent on associated development to facilitate improvements are further constrained by the locational needs and preferences of this development. The planning system also plays its part. Constraining policies like Green Belt designation further reduces the number of potential sites available to clubs.

The issue of finance is best understood by clubs themselves. The publication by Touche Ross 'Survey of Football Club Accounts' (1993) has thrown considerable light on this area, but the nature of the industry means that the resources backing many clubs are kept within the boardrooms 4 walls. Reg Smart, Cambridge United's Chairman notes that "in dealing with other clubs United always have to bargain from a position of strength. If other clubs were aware of United's financial position then our bargaining position would be weakened" (Abbey Rabbit 1994). The opportunities to raise finance are affected by the sites and associated development considered, the willingness of planners to grant permission for associated development, and the willingness of clubs to pursue this path.

The fourth problem faced by clubs, and the basis of this thesis has been the constraints and assistance provided by the planning system and the planners who implement policy within this system. There are direct linkages between the constraints presented by site constraints and finance and the importance of planning. As the constraints presented by these problems increase, where site opportunities are limited and finances are stretched, the proposals submitted by clubs to local planning authorities are likely to be more challenging and problematic for planners. A relocated stadium is likely to require considerable associated development, often in conflict with established local planning policy. Success in these areas will require considerable co-ordination and co-operation between clubs and local authorities.

Two clubs were chosen to investigate the role planners have played and their relationship and interaction with other actors in the development process, Cambridge United and Oxford United. These are two of the most challenging clubs for planners, as they are clubs with a proven enthusiasm and willingness to improve facilities, but have a very constrained resource base and site constraints associated with their location in two of the most prosperous areas in the south of England. Despite continued determination, neither of these clubs has yet been successful in

their search for improved facilities for football in the twenty-first century.

The majority of the thesis has been devoted to Cambridge United, to facilitate a detailed examination of this case study in chapters 4 and 5, but reference is continually made to Oxford United, and chapter 6 is devoted to the lessons that Cambridge United can learn from the Oxford United case study.

THE PROBLEMS

Chapters 4 and 5 of the thesis focused on the examination of the problems, opportunities and the interaction of the main actors in the process in the Cambridge area. Who's problem is the lack of adequate facilities at the club, and who should accept the responsibility for helping the club improve its facilities? Each of the actors viewed the situation from different standpoints, and accepted different responsibilities for themselves and for others. These perceptions were inevitably in conflict. The club, while accepting its responsibilities as the developer perceived a larger role for the local authorities in the search. Steve Greenall, the club's secretary notes that the club is looking for two things from the local councils: identification of a site and a partnership between the club, local authorities and a third party to enable development. At present "it's all tea and sympathy" (Greenall 1994 : Personal Communication).

The local planning authorities response, under considerable resource and planning policy constraints has not fulfilled this perceived role from the club. The Labour controlled city council accepted a proactive role to help the club, but believed it had considered and dismissed all possible options within its area. SCDC, an independent council, only accepted a reactive duty to determine applications submitted to the authority, and did not accept a responsibility to actively assist the club in its search. Cambs County Council did not see a need to be involved at any level.

Local MPs in the area were also in conflict over the role they felt they should play, and the role other actors should play. Anne Campbell MP, Labour MP for Cambridge called on SCDC to help the club find a new home, because of the lack of opportunities within the city, but James Paice MP, Conservative MP for South East Cambs did not share this belief. He believed that the responsibility for finding a suitable site for development lay completely with the club, as the developer.

The strength of the British planning system is its flexibility and discretion, but this is also one of its major weaknesses. The system provides the framework for local authorities to provide a comprehensive, cohesive service, but it is left to the discretion of authorities as to how they implement this system at ground level. The city council perceive a need to actively help applicants for planning permission. SCDC in contrast only perceive a reactionary duty. Both of these councils are fulfilling their responsibility to the public required by the planning system, but the lack of cohesion and co-ordination between the two authorities has left gaps in the service provided to the public in the Cambridge area. The necessary discretionary nature of the planning system has enabled authorities to use the system as an excuse for limited assistance, and a shield to hide behind.

One of the aims of this thesis was to investigate the claim by Chris Shepley, outlined in the introduction, that "there are few indications of hostility or bitterness between planners and clubs" (Planning 1993c). This appears to be the case in Cambridge and Oxford. The planning problems faced by both clubs in their search are a result of tensions between neighbouring authorities, rather than hostility directly aimed at the clubs.

The main problems that the clubs face is that unlike many of its northern rivals, like Sunderland, who have just received local authority support for a large sports complex on Green Belt land outside the city, Cambridge United and Oxford United do not possess the necessary political clout to provoke action. There are

relatively few votes in assisting these clubs. Cambridge has “never been a football town traditionally, and probably never will be, and therefore (football) has not got the same clout as the arts” (Greenall 1994 : Personal Communication). Cambridge also benefits from a world renowned heritage based around the University and the arts. Sunderland in contrast, saw proposed development as an opportunity “to provide a major new regional facility and significantly enhance the image of Sunderland and the region” (Financial Times 1994).

As well as the implementation of the planning system at ground level in their areas, all local authority departments have a duty to supply the best possible service to the local population. This has not happened in the Cambridge area. Ideological conflicts exist between the city council and SCDC on a large number of issues, particularly leisure, and an apparent lack of interest at county level have all been to the detriment of the club. Political beliefs may result in different levels of involvement from different authorities, and this should reflect the beliefs of the voting public, but local authorities have a duty to the local population to provide a comprehensive service. At present the conflicts between the city council and SCDC are acting to the detriment of the people of Cambridge and the surrounding area. It is not the sole responsibility of the present individuals holding office, the conflict goes back many years, but these are the people who are in a position to change this situation. If Cambridge United are to prove successful in their search for improved facilities, the local authorities in the area must place the emphasis on co-operation rather than conflict.

THE WAY FORWARD

At present the position in Cambridge is stalemate, but three main opportunities exist, local Government restructuring, a forum, and a new Planning Policy Guidance note on leisure and recreation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING

During the interview with David Ward, Cambridge United's planning consultant, he noted a need for a unitary authority including Cambridge and 5-7 miles around the city. This would help Cambridge United because they would be in a same position as Oxford now find themselves, where the present site and the proposed site are under the control of the same authority. This authority can consider the benefits from relocation and any problems associated with the proposed site together. This would overcome any problems associated with conflicts between neighbouring authorities in who's areas development is proposed.

The 7 local authorities in Cambridgeshire considered this as part of their restructuring plan, but rejected the idea on 2 counts. Firstly, due to "the distinct nature of the rural and urban communities and issues" (Cambs County Council 1994), and secondly, because "there is a well-established framework of co-operation between Cambridge City Council and SCDC in dealing with the location of new houses and jobs, shopping facilities and transport issues" (Peterborough District Council et al 1994). This co-operation does not appear to extend to leisure provision.

The local authorities have proposed a plan to create 4 new unitary authorities, based on Cambridge, Peterborough, Huntingdon and a combined SCDC and East Cambs District Council. This would involve the abolition of the county council and Fenland District Council, which would be divided into extended Peterborough and Huntingdon authorities. This appears to be the most appropriate division, and despite the potential advantages to Cambridge United of an extended Cambridge authority, this should not be encouraged. This does however emphasize the importance of a forum.

A FORUM

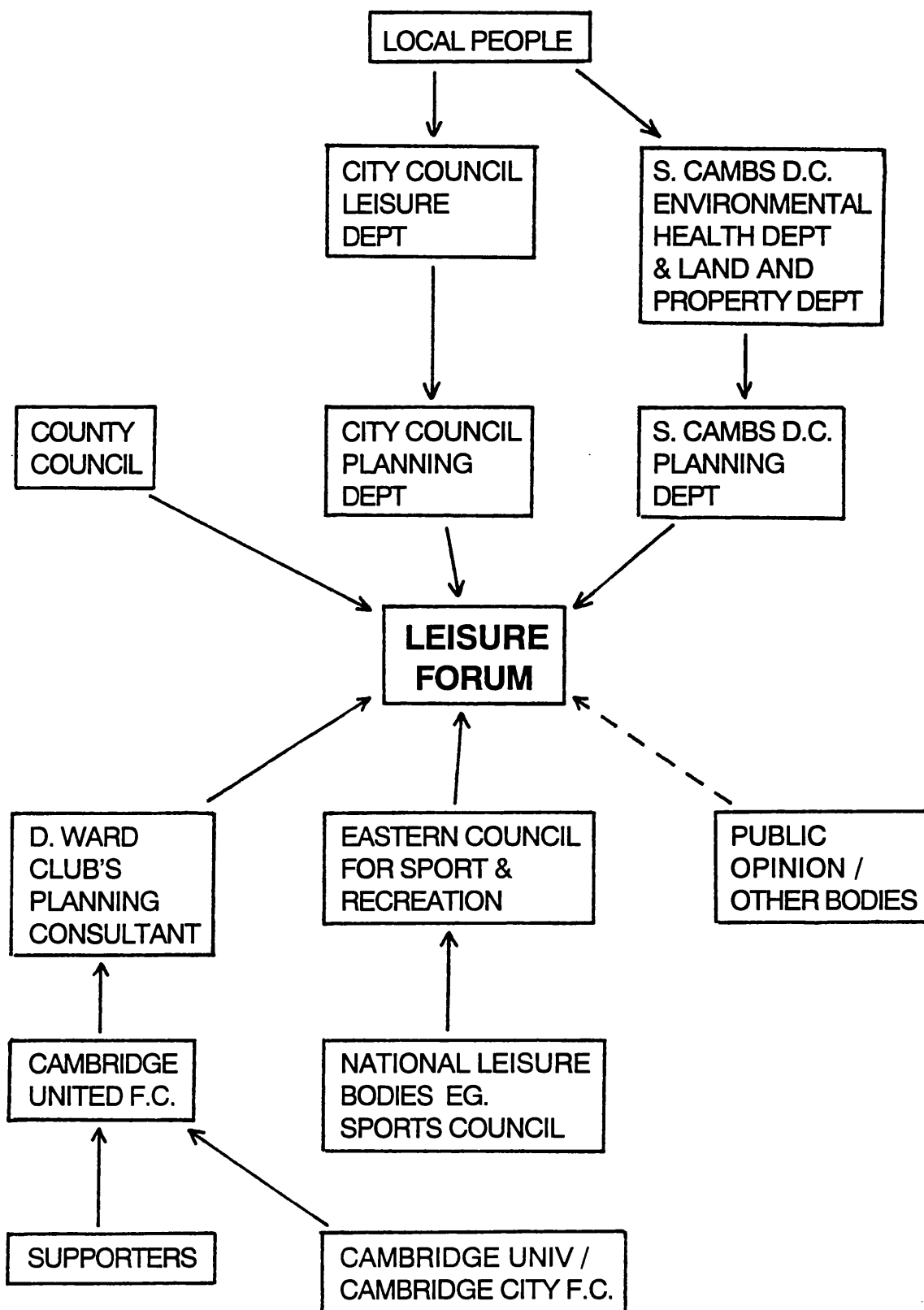
Local authorities resources are being increasingly stretched, and proactive help to all applicants may not be financially viable, but the case for football clubs is particularly fervent. PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) notes the desirability of a

forum convened by the county council and including local planning authorities and the relevant local football clubs. This is the way forward. The local authorities in the area, under the guidance of the county council must take the initiative and look beyond their basic duties. Football clubs are integral parts of the history and culture of cities, they have the ability to unite whole sections of the population, and with the financial pressure on clubs like Cambridge United, they provide an opportunity for increased leisure facilities in the area as associated development. These are opportunities that should not be missed.

Sensible planning policy should not be ignored in the case of Football League clubs, and that is why a forum, where all issues concerning the club's search can be discussed is essential. Stadium developments are likely to have far reaching effects in the local community. Local authorities and clubs must get together and discuss an overall strategy and a strategic site. Only then will the problems of development be limited and the opportunities maximised. This is particularly important in relation to a Green Belt location. Chapters 6 and 7 suggested the way forward for the club, and the conditions that would have to be met, but the exclusion of all other potential sites at a forum is essential before a Green Belt application can be successful. A Green Belt location is a 'last resort', and requires a comprehensive evaluation of all other opportunities prior to an application.

The forum should include the club and the three local authorities in the Cambridge area, and perhaps also the Eastern Council for Sport and Recreation. Figure 5 shows the proposed structure of linkages between actors in Cambridge with a forum. It should be convened by the county council as the strategic authority, but look beyond the needs of Cambridge United, and consider leisure in the area. This appears to be the biggest area of conflict between the city council and SCDC, and the opportunities that development by Cambridge United must be considered as part of an overall leisure strategy for the area. To address the present problems, and establish a framework for

Fig 5 Proposed Structure of Linkages Between Actors With a Forum



co-ordination, the forum could meet on a regular basis until agreement is made on the Cambridge United issue, and a structure for future leisure provision, and then less frequently after this to discuss the implementation and success of the present structure. The forum could be financed on similar lines as the Chesterton sidings feasibility study, with contributions from all 3 local authorities and the club. The sidings study was financed by Cambridge City Council (£10 000), SCDC (£5 000), Cambs County Council (£5 000), Cambridge United (£1 000), and two landowners in the area, British Rail and Anglian Water.

The forum would consider all the opportunities open to the club, including redevelopment and relocation. Recent Government policy promotes the advantages of urban sites well-served by a variety of means of transport. This view is supported by PPG17 (Department of the Environment 1991) and PPG13 (Department of the Environment / Department of Transport 1994). PPG17 notes that "considerations of particular importance to the relocation of football clubs will include the possible use of reclaimed or derelict land, especially in the urban fringe" (Department of the Environment 1991). PPG13 'Transport', published in March 1994 complements this standpoint by noting that;

in promoting policies for tourism and recreation, local authorities should ensure that major new attractions (such as sports stadia or leisure parks) are readily accessible by a range of means of transport and where possible use sites in existing urban areas.
(Department of the Environment / Department of Transport 1994).

This should not exclude redevelopment nor relocation outside the urban area, particularly in Cambridge, where vacant sites are scarce, but suggests that co-ordination and discussion are particularly important between clubs and local planning authorities if the most suitable site does not comply with this established Government policy.

A NEW PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE

Leisure and recreation are becoming increasingly important as part of our lives, and considerable pressure is being exerted on local authorities. In the South of England particularly, there is very limited space within our cities. Development outside urban areas confronts environmental and transport problems, particularly from huge developments like theme parks. The answer may be a new planning policy guidance note, to complement PPG13 'Transport' (Department of the Environment / Department of Transport 1994), and PPG17 'Sport and Recreation' (Department of the Environment 1991). This note could address these problems, and give guidance to local authorities when discussing provision with developers at forums or other meetings. This is the area to which further work could be directed. An opportunity to examine the possibility of additional guidance to local authorities in respect to siting for large leisure development, and provide a structure upon which discussions between local authorities and developers on future leisure needs and opportunities could be based at forums.

This study, whether considered in isolation or along with other literature in the field cannot provide the solutions to all the problems being faced by clubs up and down the country. Each case study is different, and whilst generalisation is often the aim of the case study approach, this is particularly problematic in relation to Football League stadia. All football clubs are not equal, as emphasised in chapter 2, resources are not equally divided between clubs, supporters are not equally divided, and power is not equally shared. Locations are also different, local economies are different and local planning constraints are different, but the dream for all clubs is the same. The dream is success on and off the field. This thesis has examined in considerable detail the problems faced by Cambridge United and Oxford United, and the conflicts and interactions between different actors. It then suggested the way forward for Cambridge United, the local authorities and the other actors in Cambridge. At present the local authorities in the Cambridge area

are restraining development, but the implementation of the recommendations in chapter 7 of this thesis will help the local authorities to aid Cambridge United in their search, and enable development. This thesis has put the ball at the feet of the striker of clubs like Cambridge United, it is now up to him to put the ball in the back of the net.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

CLUBS WHO HAVE MOVED OR WERE CONSIDERING RELOCATION AT THE TIME OF THE 1993 ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE SURVEY.

CLUBS WHO HAVE MOVED PERMANENTLY TO NEW GROUNDS:

Charlton Athletic
 Chester City
 Millwall
 Scunthorpe
 Walsall
 Wycombe Wanderers

MOVED TEMPORARILY:

Bristol Rovers
 Wimbledon

OTHER PROBABLE MOVES:

Derby County
 Huddersfield Town
 Luton Town
 Northampton Town
 Portsmouth
 Reading
 Sunderland

OTHER MOVES STILL BEING CONSIDERED:

Bournemouth	Manchester City
Cambridge United	Oxford United
Doncaster	Shrewsbury Town
Fulham	Southampton
Gillingham	Swansea
Grimsby Town	

Source: Shepley A (1993).

APPENDIX 2**QUESTIONS PRESENTED TO ACTORS DURING CONSULTATION.****DAVID WARD - CAMBRIDGE UNITED'S PLANNING CONSULTANT.**

- 1) Why are sites already examined unsuitable?
- 2) Where else are you looking?
- 3) What is the present club strategy? Why?
- 4) To what extent have the city council, South Cambs District Council and the county council helped you in your search for a better stadium? Has help been reactive or proactive?
- 5) How do you see their role in your search?
- 6) What problems have you encountered from local authorities?
- 7) What type of help would be particularly useful that has not been forthcoming?
- 8) Do you see a role for the club in improving facilities in the Cambridge area?
- 9) What type of associated development are you presently considering to help finance an improved stadium? Have the local authorities suggested what they perceive as appropriate?
- 10) Has the possibility of a partnership between the club and a local authority to increase leisure provision in the area been raised?
- 11) Have you found the lack of provision in any of the development plans an obstacle?
- 12) Why has a forum not been convened? Who should be involved?
- 13) Have you faced any problems because of the boundaries between authorities, including any reluctance from them to have a new stadium in their area?

- 14) Do you perceive a role for a county or regional-wide authority to determine applications like this that may be of county or regional importance?
- 15) What is the present local authority response to the possibility of a green belt site?

STEVE MATTHEWS - PLANNING OFFICER, CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL.

- 1) To what extent are you helping Cambridge United in their search for a better stadium?
- 2) Does the council perceive a need to move? Why?
- 3) How do you see your role in their search?
- 4) How does the local authority view the club? Do you want the club in your area?
- 5) Does the authority perceive a role for the club in improving facilities in the area and an opportunity for community benefit? Will the authority play an active role in promoting this when the club pursues a particular site?
- 6) Do you perceive a possibility of a partnership between the local authority and the club to provide improved facilities in the Cambridge area?
- 7) Do departments communicate to develop mutually beneficial objectives? Does planning policy attempt to meet leisure needs in the city?
- 8) What scale and type of associated development does the council think might be appropriate and / or acceptable?
- 9) Why is there no provision in the local plan despite advice in PPG17?
- 10) To what extent have you had discussions with South Cambs and the county council on this subject?
- 11) How do you see the role of a forum as suggested in PPG17? Who should be involved?

- 12) Do you think the county council has a role to play as the strategic authority?
- 13) Do you perceive a role for a county or regional-wide authority to determine applications like this that may be of county or regional significance?
- 14) Which site/s does the authority perceive to be the most suitable for the location of a stadium, in and / or outside the city?
- 15) Are there plans for any future help / provision?

MICHAEL MONK - PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN OFFICER, SOUTH CAMBS DISTRICT COUNCIL.

- 1) To what extent are you helping Cambridge United in their search for a better stadium?
- 2) Does the council perceive a need to move?
- 3) How do you see your role in their search?
- 4) How does the local authority view the club? Do you want the club in your area?
- 5) Does the authority perceive a role for the club in improving facilities in the area and an opportunity for community benefit? Will the authority play an active role in promoting this when the club pursues a particular site?
- 6) Do you perceive a possibility of a partnership between the local authority and the club to improve facilities in the district?
- 7) Do departments communicate to develop mutually beneficial objectives? Does planning policy attempt to meet leisure needs in the district?
- 8) What scale and type of associated development does the council think might be appropriate and / or acceptable?
- 9) Why is there no provision in your local plan despite advice in PPG17?

- 10) To what extent have you had discussions with the city council and county councils on this subject?
- 11) How do you see the role of as forum as suggested in PPG17? Who should be involved?
- 12) Do you think the county council has a role to play as the strategic authority?
- 13) Do you perceive a role for a county or regional-wide authority to determine applications like this that may be of county or regional significance?
- 14) Which site/s does the authority perceive to be the most suitable for the location of a stadium, in and / or outside the city?
- 15) Under what conditions might it be possible for the club to secure a green belt location? What scale and type of associated development would be seen as appropriate?
- 16) What do you think of the club's present strategy of showing the inadequacies of other sites to secure a green belt site?
- 17) Are there plans for any future help / provision?

MARK VIGOR - CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

- 1) Are you helping Cambridge United in their search for a better stadium?
- 2) How do you see your role as the strategic authority in their search?
- 3) How does the county council perceive the role Cambridge United can play in the improvement of leisure facilities in the county? What role can the county council play to ensure this potential is realized?
- 4) Why is there no provision in the county structure plan despite advice in PPG17?
- 5) Do you perceive the need for a forum as suggested in PPG17? Who should be involved?

- 6) Do you perceive a role for a county or regional-wide authority to determine applications like this for developments of county or regional significance?
- 7) Under what conditions might a relocation to the Green Belt be perceived as acceptable?
- 8) Are there any plans for future help / provision?