

Who should pay for the policing of football? Evidence-based progressive change for Special Police Service football policing in England and Wales.

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Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text.

No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.


Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.


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Signed  Richard Hester..... Date ...8th March 2023.....

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Abstract

This thesis provides an original contribution through analysing the interplay between Special Police Services (SPS) and the policing of football in England and Wales. A 2017 ruling from Ipswich Town Football Club Co Ltd v Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary restricted the area that police forces can cost recover through (SPS) from the policing of events. According to data produced in 2019 by South Yorkshire Police, the cost of policing football in England and Wales is £48 million, with only £5.5 million cost recovered by police forces through SPS. With seemingly no scrutiny, this figure was accepted in Parliamentary debate as factual. This thesis utilised Freedom of Information (FOI) data to establish the true cost of football policing, as well as semi-structured interviews with police officers, football club representatives and other key stakeholders linked to football policing in England and Wales. This research shows that the existing data on the cost of policing football is inaccurate, with £48 million likely being an overestimate, and the amount being recovered through SPS averaging around £10 million over recent seasons. Furthermore, SPS negotiations between football clubs and police forces are shown to cause hostility and create difficult relationships between football clubs and police forces, potentially compromising safety. Stewarding of football was found to need greater professionalisation. Whilst, police resourcing of football was found to be risk averse, with fixtures being over resourced with public order policing assets and a lack of utilisation of specialist football resources. This research calls for more liaison based policing of football, using fewer but more specialist resourcing. It is argued that the catalyst for change should be the abolition of SPS, as the police service role in policing football needs reframing.

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Glossary of terms

APP – Authorised Professional Practice

DFO – Dedicated Football Officer

EFL – English Football League

FIO – Football Intelligence Officer

FOI – Freedom of Information

FSA – Football Supporter’s Association

FSOA – Football Safety Officer Association

HMICFRS – Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service

NPCC – National Police Chiefs’ Council

PCC – Police and Crime Commissioner

PLO – Police Liaison Officer

PSU – Police Support Unit

SAG – Safety Advisory Group

SIA – Security Industry Authority

SGSA – Sports Ground Safety Authority

SPS – Special Police Services

UKFPU – United Kingdom Football Policing Unit

Chapter 1 – Introduction

1.1 Research context and author positionality

This research examines the processes, relationship and problems of the current way police forces charge football clubs for providing Special Police Services (SPS) for the policing of football matches in England and Wales. Football is a multibillion-pound industry, with the Premier League estimated to have contributed £7.6 billion to the UK economy in 2016/17 (Slater, 2019). A straightforward argument, and one which is proposed by senior police officers (see Sky Sports News, 2019) is to say that because of this income, the football industry should be paying the full cost of policing football matches. This research demonstrates that the situation is far more nuanced and complex, with any reform needing to be in the interest of all parties: the police; football clubs and the public. The wider context of the research is considering how football and football clubs can and should be viewed within society, and by policing. Football clubs are clearly operating as businesses, some on a much larger scale than others, but they can also be regarded as a key partner within the local community. With 92 football clubs across the English Football League, and hundreds of thousands of people attending football matches on any given week, football can also be regarded as a community event. On a weekly basis, these are the largest gathering of people across towns and cities, so could also be regarded as a key opportunity for the police to engage with the communities that they serve.

Broader considerations for this research concern the role of the police in society, and the role that private organisations have in performing policing functions, and the

public-private partnerships involved. Whilst historically the police have played a dominant role in the policing of football (Frosdick & Marsh, 2005), the proliferation of stewarding and private security at football matches is likely to continue (Frosdick & Marsh, 2005; O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020), particularly against the backdrop of increased cost pressures on the police service. Even though this thesis focuses on a very narrow aspect of policing, it is important to consider the interplay between the public and private partnerships that are present not just in relation to policing, but much wider aspects of the criminal justice system. This does not mean that the findings from this research can be extrapolated to wider areas of policing, but this does serve as a useful case study which considers how policing activity can be progressively changed in the future.

I have entered this thesis as not just a researcher, but someone with extensive experience of working at the front line of policing football matches. For twelve years I was a police officer with Thames Valley Police, and I became a specialist in policing football, having extensively policed seven football seasons between 2010 and 2016. Initially I was working at Reading Football Club matches as police spotter, before becoming a Dedicated Football Officer (DFO) covering all clubs within the Thames Valley jurisdiction, with responsibility for Reading and Wycombe Wanderers Football Clubs (see section 2.4 for more information on spotter and DFO roles). I consider myself to be very fortunate in having worked all across England and Wales, with a vast range of police forces and at a large number of football grounds from the Premier League through to the National League. One of my roles as a DFO was engaging with football clubs over match day safety by categorising the risk of the

fixtures that were to be played at their football grounds (see section 1.2 for more information on match categorisation). I would work with representatives from the football clubs, typically the safety officer, to agree the category level and number of police resources that would be allocated to the fixture. Although I was not the ultimate decision maker in terms of resourcing, which was a silver commander of a more senior rank than me, the resourcing decisions would usually be based on my recommendations and experience of policing football matches in terms of the threat and risk to that fixture. The safety officers that I worked with were also experienced in terms of match day safety and football policing.

Often, we would agree over the level resources as well as the threat and risk, but it was also commonplace for the club and I to perceive the threat and risk differently. I also had a threat and risk consideration for an entire town, whereas the club only had to focus on the stadium environment. Over the years of working closely with these football clubs, I built up very positive and professional working relationships, so much so that I am still in professional contact with these clubs now. When we as the police and the football clubs disagreed over the category and resourcing of a fixture, I always endeavoured to work closely in a positive manner with the clubs to resolve these issues through dialog. I was acutely aware at the time of being a DFO, that this was not the same for my police colleagues up and down the country, and that some relationships had broken down so badly that at one football club I was not allowed to enter the football ground in police uniform.

The process of negotiating with football clubs over match categories and resourcing was often fraught and felt at times more akin to a chess match than a professional discussion about public safety. I couldn't help but feel that the current SPS arrangements were not fit for purpose, and the financial aspect was clouding the safety issue for the police and perhaps more so the football clubs. I felt that there has to be a better way than the current system and upon discovering that very little academic literature has examined SPS, I decided to do a comprehensive study into this issue for my thesis. Despite my policing background, I do not approach this from the stance of being on the side of the police (see section 3.6 for more information about my positionality as a researcher), I have simply formed the view that the current system of SPS is not fit for purpose and needs significant review and reform. This research goes some way to providing a comprehensive review, as well as making clear recommendations for reform of not just SPS, but football policing as well. The progressive change identified is based on the evidence-base from this research, it is acknowledged that there are multiple potential solutions to this issue. A detailed explanation of SPS is required to fully understand the issues that are present.

An unforeseen event that occurred midway through the PhD process was the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected the research process as well as the field of study from March 2020 onwards. A key part of this research was conducting semi structured interviews with police and football club practitioners. Although these were initially planned as face-to-face interactions, all interviews were conducted online via Microsoft Teams. This may have seemed an unusual research approach in

a pre-pandemic world, but as is discussed in section 3.5, this seemed a normal way of interacting with other people at the time, so did not adversely affect the results.

What cannot be ignored is the impact of Covid-19 on football and the subsequent effect on how football is stewarded as well as policed, including the impact on SPS arrangements. The 'ubiquitous, seismic shock throughout the football industry' (Deloitte, 2021a) has had a clear impact on football finances. For a period from March 2020 to August 2021, football clubs across England and Wales have either had matches cancelled, played matches behind closed doors, or had a limited number of fans in attendance. Deloitte (2021a) warn that lower league clubs who are more reliant on matchday revenue will be the worst affected by the pandemic, whereas bigger clubs may be able to absorb some of the financial losses. In any discussion about how SPS may be reformed because of this research, this new financial landscape within football needs to be considered so that any SPS reform is not to the detriment to either the football industry or police forces.

1.2 Contextualising Special Police Services?

The research study examines how police forces in England and Wales implement the legislation (S.25 Police Act 1996) which allows them to recover certain costs of the policing of football matches in their force areas. The legislation states that:

'The chief officer of police of a police force may provide, at the request of any person, special police services at any premises or in any locality in the police area for which the force is maintained, subject to the payment to the local policing body of charges on such scales as may be determined by that body' (S.25 Police Act 1996).

Special Policing Services (SPS) is the provision of police resources that must be requested by the event organiser, which are additional to the regular duties of the police force (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018; 2020). In relation to football matches, this would translate as a football club requesting the presence of the police inside their stadium as club officials anticipate that their safety and stewarding arrangements may not sufficiently meet the threat and risk associated with the fixture. A key term here is 'additional to the regular duties of the police force', because establishing what the role of the police is and therefore what would fall outside of this role would help to inform the concept of what the police are for.

One may think that this recovery of costs would cover all the resources that are deployed to a football match, however the police are only able to cost recover a small proportion of the total costs. The police can only charge for police resources which are within the 'footprint' of the football event. Footprint is a key term, and what constitutes as the footprint for a football ground has been developed through various legal cases. This is discussed further in detail in section 2.6, as although the footprint will always include the inside of the stadium, the specific layout of an individual club will determine the extent of the footprint beyond this.

The police not being able to recover the costs of the entire policing operation has led to criticisms of the current legislation from senior police officers and politicians. Chief Constable Mark Roberts is the national strategic lead for football policing, he previously stated that "there needs to be a re-think about the funding of policing football matches, to reach a fairer balance between what police are able to recoup

from a multi-billion-pound football industry” (Wilde, 2018). This was echoed by Labour MP Gill Furniss (2019b), who contends there needs to be a fairer system of cost recovery for the policing of football. These criticisms have followed the most recent legal case ruling on this issue of Ipswich Town v Suffolk Constabulary (2017) (this is discussed in detail in section 2.6). In the appeal of this case it was found the police cannot charge for services provided in the immediate environs of the ground where a road closure is in place, and the football club operates a degree of control over the road closure area. The implication of this ruling was that the police are only able to cost recover for the resources deployed within the confines of the stadium, or the immediate environs if it is owned by the football club (National Police Chiefs’ Council, 2018; 2020). This is not a new argument though, with the increased wealth associated with football at the start of the twenty-first century came calls from police chiefs for the football industry to pay more for policing (Harvey, 2001). Therefore, this process of how agreements are reached between football clubs and police forces to pay the relevant amount of SPS will be influenced by the organisational cultures of these disparate institutions, as discussed in section 2.3.

The police have a range of options for the methodology with which they can charge event organisers for deployment of resources, as explained by the National Police Chiefs’ Council (2020, p. 12):

- **Employable Cost**
This represents the basic actual cost of the service providers, including on-costs but with no allowance for the recovery of overheads;
- **Direct Cost**
This is the cost of an officer including a standard overtime recovery element;
- **Operational Resource Cost**

This represents the cost of the resource employed in the provision of the service. Here, the direct costs and the direct overheads are included;

- **Full Economic Cost**

This calculation includes all properly attributable costs, including contributions to administrative and general overheads. However, this indirect overhead recovery must relate to the relevant overhead base.

There is some element of discretion for the police service in how much they charge event organisers for the police resources that are deployed, for example at a charity based event the police may only charge the employable cost. For all commercial events, the NPCC guidance is that the police service should be charging the event organisers the Full Economic Cost and the guidance (s. 2.6.8) specifically says that the Full Economic Cost should be recovered for policing of professional football matches. The way that the Full Economic Cost is calculated includes pension and National Insurance calculations, unsociable hours costs as well as direct overheads such as training and uniform costs. This results in a per hour cost of over £70 for a Police Constable and nearly £120 for a Police Superintendent. These calculations are summarised in Figure 1 from the National Police Chiefs' Council (2020).

The amount that football stewards will cost clubs will vary depending on experience, role and location across the country, but is not going to be costing upwards of £70 per hour per steward. This makes employing stewards, as opposed to requesting police resources, a much more financially appealing prospect for football clubs. It is not just football matches that SPS applies to, it applies to any event which requires the provision of policing services that are beyond the routine operational capacity of a police force. Other events that would typically require the provision of SPS can

include music festivals as well as other sporting events such as horse racing, rugby and cricket.

FIGURE 1 NPCC (2020) POLICE OFFICER COSTS

Rent/Housing (S/E) Allowance	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Employable Cost	41,043	49,387	60,478	64,141	84,900
National Insurance	4,500	5,600	7,100	7,600	10,500
In Year Pension Cost Net	12,100	14,700	18,200	19,300	26,400
Holiday Pay Adjustment	843	1,021	70	73	0
Apprentice Levy (0.5%)	162	204	259	278	381
Employable Cost	58,648	70,912	86,107	91,392	122,181
Overtime Premium	14,447	17,556			
Total Direct Cost	73,095	88,468	86,107	91,392	122,181
Direct Overheads					
Uniforms	327	327	327	327	327
Insurance	118	118	118	118	118
Transport	3,214	3,214	3,214	3,214	3,214
Training	1,672	1,672	1,672	1,672	1,672
Call Handling	5,742	5,742	5,742	5,742	5,742
Comms Infrastructure	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234	1,234
Total Direct Overheads	12,307	12,307	12,307	12,307	12,307
Resource Cost	85,402	100,775	98,414	103,699	134,488

Each Force can choose to update the above calculation to reflect their Force position for the current financial year. The special policing services guidance describes a standard method for the calculation the charges and their application. The actual rates charged can differ for each force, but you may wish to use the above as a basis, whilst reflecting any effect of Regional Allowance(s).

Productive Hours and Hourly Rate Calculation EXAMPLE ONLY

Employable Cost	58,648	70,912	86,107	91,392	122,181
Overtime Premium	14,447	17,556			
Total Direct Cost	73,095	88,468	86,107	91,392	122,181
Total Direct Overheads	12,307	12,307	12,307	12,307	12,307
Resource Cost	85,402	100,775	98,414	103,699	134,488
Indirect Overhead @ 34%	24,125	28,294	33,461	35,258	45,726
Full Economic Costs	109,527	129,069	131,875	138,957	180,214
Productive Hours	1,508	1,508	1,508	1,508	1,508
	£ Per Hour	£ Per Hour	£ Per Hour	£ Per Hour	£ Per Hour
Employable Cost	38.89	47.02	57.10	60.60	81.02
Direct Costs	48.47	58.67	57.10	60.60	81.02
Resource/Operational Cost	56.63	66.83	65.26	68.77	89.18
Full Economic Cost	72.63	85.59	87.45	92.15	119.51

While music festivals and horse racing tend to be one off, annual four or five day events, football is unique in terms of SPS as it is a continual process across a football season that is subject to change based on factors such as the significance of a game. The police may also be required to provide a policing presence at other events such

as royal celebrations, protests and religious parades. These are not however subject to a cost recovery process under SPS, as the police will only seek full cost recovery under SPS for commercial events that are run for profit (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018; 2020), such as football matches and music festivals.

All professional football matches from the Premiership to the National League are assigned a police match category based on the threat and risk of the whole operation and not just within the stadium itself (College of Policing, 2018b). This category is determined through discussion between the police and the football club, which links into the necessity for SPS. The College of Policing (2018b) list the match categories as follows:

- PF – Police Free – no risks identified that require police officers to be deployed to the event (e.g., 999 or 101 response only)
- SO – Spotters Only – no specific risks identified but police spotters deployed in a club and supporter engagement role
- A – low risk of disorder
- B – medium risk of disorder
- C – high risk of disorder
- CIR – increased risk of disorder due to specific concerns.

The guidance does stress that the category does not denote the level of resourcing, but that the resourcing should be commensurate to the threat posed. When the fixture list is released in mid-June each year, the football club and police are advised to meet and establish match categories for the forthcoming season (College of Policing, 2018b). This pre-season categorisation will typically be based on historical knowledge of the threat and risk posed by individual fixtures and will be subject to change as the season develops.

The College of Policing (2018b) provide guidance on how the policing of an individual football match should be planned, with a minimum of three intelligence assessments being required prior to a fixture:

- Initial – approximately 4 weeks prior to the fixture
- Interim – approximately 2 weeks prior to the fixture
- Final – approximately 2 days prior to the fixture

The guidance does not provide detail on what intelligence needs to be considered in relation to this, but a range of factors would constitute this such as recent behaviour of home and away fans, mode of travel for away fans, magnitude of fixture, kick off time, historical issues linked to the fixture as well as any specific intelligence. Pearson (2012, p. 93) and Stott (2014, p. 249) suggest that football related disorder is often spontaneous as opposed to organised, with supporters reacting to events as they occur. From my own experience, it is common to not have any specific intelligence in relation to a fixture regarding disorder between groups of supporters. This makes the planning process reliant on professional judgement and the College of Policing (2018b) highlight the importance of the DFO role in helping to establish the level of police resourcing required for a particular fixture.

Following the pre-season categorisation, a further planning meeting between the police and the football club is required to firmly establish the match category, police resourcing and operational plan for the fixture. It is during these meetings that for the police to be able to charge the football club for SPS, the club must request the support of the police within their footprint. Once the request has been made, it is at the discretion of the police over the level of resource that is provided to the event

and therefore chargeable to the football club under SPS. It is also during these meetings where disagreements can occur between the police and the football club over the match category, police resourcing and the SPS charged to the club. It is this process which this research seeks to address and improve, by implementing the aim and objectives as detailed below.

1.3 Aim & Objectives

The aim and objectives of the study are:

Aim

To develop evidence-based progressive change for Special Police Service (SPS) football policing in England and Wales.

Objectives

1. To critically review current SPS policy for policing football events
2. To critically evaluate the cost of policing football in England and Wales
3. To critically assess the suitability of current SPS practices, evaluating views from key police and football club practitioners that are engaged in the SPS process
4. To identify opportunities for progressive change to SPS arrangements for football policing in England and Wales

This was achieved as follows:

- *Objective 1:* reviewing existing material pertinent to SPS in England and Wales, as well as consideration of how this process is managed in foreign jurisdictions. Through interviews with key participants, such as football police officers, football club participants and other stakeholders, identifying and analysing issues that are pertinent to current SPS practice.
- *Objective 2:* collecting primary data through a series of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to police forces and local authorities regarding the cost of policing football and other associated football related income.
- *Objective 3:* collecting primary data through semi structured interviews with police and football club practitioners who are engaged in the process of SPS negotiation, Interviews with other key stakeholders also identified perspectives from a more strategic level in terms of how SPS operates.
- *Objective 4:* synthesising this data to formulate new meaning and exploring alternative ways of managing the SPS process as well as the policing of football.

This thesis provides a novel data set on an issue that has not been given due consideration within the academic literature. Much of the research into football policing (as discussed in section 2.4) examines ways in which the policing of football can be improved, but this research takes the unique approach of examining in detail how the policing of football is planned and financed and how this can impact on the match day policing itself. The data set that has been generated through both the interviews and FOI requests is also unique and provides an original contribution to

this field of research. There is currently no research which examines in detail SPS through a football policing lens, which provides two different outputs which are intrinsically linked. Namely, the cost approach to the policing of football and how football is policed. This research therefore makes an original contribution to how football is policed as well as the cost of football policing.

1.4 Thesis structure

Chapter 2 'The policing of football and Special Police Services (SPS)'

This chapter examines theory and research that is relevant to SPS. Academic literature which explores the role of the police service is considered, along with the fundamental question of what the police are for, as well as the specific role they should be doing in a football policing context. Furthermore, College of Policing guidance is examined in terms of understanding the stated role of the police in policing football, so that this can later be contrasted with the reality of practice. Academic literature and research into the policing of football is examined, as this links to the key focus of this thesis regarding how football policing can be modified as the evidence-base grows regarding this topic. Concepts and literature relating to occupational and organisational culture is explored, as this is pertinent to understanding how both police forces and football clubs operate, particularly with regards to their approach over SPS negotiation. There is a rich amount of previous literature which explores police culture, and elements of this are key to understanding issues that have arisen in previous disputes between football clubs and police forces over SPS. The policing and public order issues associated with other

sports are considered, as this demonstrates the unique nature of football as a sport and as an event that requires regular high levels of policing, both in England and Wales and internationally.

There is a detailed overview of the history and context of SPS arrangements in England and Wales. It examines key case law that has shaped SPS legislation as well as policy and practice, many of these cases have involved football clubs such as Sheffield United, Wigan Athletic, Leeds United and Ipswich Town. The prevalence of SPS media stories is charted chronologically as well as examining the political narratives that have emerged, with SPS appearing on political agendas and the subject of discussion within the House of Commons at various points in time. Current SPS policy and guidance is reviewed including the guidance for the police service as well as event organisers. Specific academic research and literature specifically relating to SPS is explored. This is somewhat limited, and tends to be in response to the stated cases, which further demonstrates the original contribution of this thesis. The approach to SPS from foreign jurisdictions is considered, to provide a more holistic examination of how SPS can be managed so that the situation in England and Wales can be contrasted against the international picture.

Chapter 3 'Methodology'

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the methodology and methods used in the thesis. The chapter establishes the methodological underpinnings of the research, through an interpretivist phenomenological approach. My positionality as the researcher is considered, as this is particularly relevant due to my previous police

occupation when researching within the police service. The methods used to gather data using FOI requests and semi structured interviews is explained, including the considerations and adaptations that were required due to Covid-19 as well as the ethical aspects. The analysis is explained, with the FOI data being presented as descriptive statistics covering both the cost of football policing and the amount received through SPS, interestingly there are a number of data gaps here in police force records. The interviews were analysed utilising a thematic analysis approach, with a colour coding system in place to identify more pertinent participant quotes that are used in the research. Finally, any issues that arose from the methods used are considered and reflected upon how this may have impacted on the data that was gathered.

Chapter 4 'Critical analysis of the cost of policing football'

This chapter is the first of three chapters which explore the results and analysis of this thesis. The first part of this chapter, section 4.2 has been partly published in October 2022 in *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal* with an article entitled 'The true cost of policing football in England & Wales: Freedom of Information data from 2015 to 2019'. The results from the FOI data are presented which demonstrates that the data already in the public domain and discussed in parliament, which puts the costs of football policing at £48 million, is not reliable. The lack of calculating the cost of football policing by police forces is discussed, and the research calls for greater clarity in terms of how existing data has been calculated and how an effective calculation method can be created moving forwards. Data from the research participants is explored, which highlights a range of inconsistencies in

terms of how SPS is applied to football events. Finally, it is discussed how both the police service and football clubs are under financial pressure over the policing costs associated with football events.

Chapter 5 'Critical assessment of police, football club and key stakeholder perspectives on SPS and the policing of football'

This chapter is the second of the results and analysis chapters, and is key to exploring the research participant views around SPS and the issues associated with this. It considers football club, police and key stakeholder perspectives. The data collected shows that there is a disconnect between what is happening in practice and SPS policy and guidance, and that there is a desire for greater training on this topic. The issues that have led to a range of legal disputes between football clubs and police forces are explored. It is evidenced that police cultural traits, as well as financially driven approaches within football clubs has resulted in relationships between the two parties being undermined and public safety potentially being compromised. The results of this chapter, also highlight barriers that may be present in terms of identifying progressive change that is workable for all parties to improve public safety and reduce the taxpayer burden over the cost of policing football.

Chapter 6 'New frameworks for SPS and football policing in England and Wales'

This chapter is the culmination of the thesis, where different potential options of SPS are critiqued, utilising the evidence-base from this research in terms of both the FOI data and participant perspectives. What is clear is that reform of SPS is required, and that the status quo is not a viable option for the future. The extent of reform is

framed in four proposed models of how SPS can or should be implemented in the future. The models range from a series of revisions to SPS policy, through to complete abolition of SPS and major reforms to how football is policed. The reality is that due to SPS and the method of football policing being so intrinsically linked, that the neither can be extensively reformed in isolation of one another. Therefore, the thesis concludes with recommendations for far reaching reform of both SPS and police approaches to football policing, which ensures more sustainable use of police resources in the future.

Chapter 2 – The policing of football and Special Police Services (SPS)

2.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter explores objective 1 of the thesis, by examining current SPS policy and arrangements for the policing of football in England and Wales and reviewing current SPS policy and arrangements for the policing of football in England and Wales. In addition, this is viewed through a legal and historical lens to establish the strengths and weaknesses of the current SPS system. A fundamental question of what the police service is actually for is considered, because in turn that helps us to examine what the expectation of the police is in terms of policing football. This also considers different models of policing; the role that private organisations have in terms of policing more broadly; the policing of football by the public police. The organisational culture of the police service, as well as football clubs, is examined, as this is relevant to their approach to SPS negotiations. There is a detailed examination of academic literature as well as police policy and guidance on football policing, including College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice guidance. This seeks to question and consider what police officers do when policing football, as well as the role that football clubs play in this. Academic literature examining key historical context and theory into football hooliganism is explored. This is contrasted with how football differs from other sports, namely rugby, cricket and horse racing, in terms of policing and crowd behaviour.

This chapter also explores a range of specific issues relating to Special Police Services (SPS), the background and development of SPS, examining the development of 'paid for' policing in England and Wales. There is an in-depth analysis of legislation and case law pertinent to SPS. This consideration looks at historical cases of the policing of coal mine strikes through to contemporary cases that have shaped policy, where case law has been borne out through legal challenges between police forces and football clubs. This examination of legislation and case law dating back over the past 100 years means the current position can be understood through the journey that has been taken.

There has been a limited amount of academic research that has considered SPS, making this study relevant and timely as it will add to existing knowledge on this topic. This chapter will critically analyse previous research and academic debate on the issue of SPS and cost recovery processes for policing. The issue of SPS has been the subject of media as well as political discussion recently. This chapter considers the media reporting of SPS, with a focus on understanding not only the debates that are being considered but also any underlying agendas that may be present. To this end, political discussion of this topic will be explored with an analysis of why this is being discussed and considering the long-term political direction of SPS as a policing process.

2.2 Policing & Society

2.2.1 Concepts of policing

The role of the police service has undoubtedly changed over time and will continue to evolve in line with the changing expectations of policing. The Peelian Principles of policing originated when the police service was formally created in the 19th century, although there is debate around their exact origin, they formed the key roles for policing of 'preventing crime' and 'preserving public order' (Bowling, Reiner & Sheptycki, 2019, p. 103). These core roles are reflected in current College of Policing (2018a) guidance which state that the core principles of policing are:

- Protecting life and property
- Preserving order
- Preventing the commission of offences
- Bringing offenders to justice

Future roles intended for policing bear similarities in the Policing Mission and Values 2025:

'to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice' (National Police Chiefs' Council, 2016).

The terms listed above are those that one would consider are roles that the police would routinely perform, and even expect them to be doing so. Therefore, these roles would not necessarily be considered as being 'additional to their regular duties', as they appear to be a key part of regular policing duties. Bowling et al. (2019, p. 102) discuss that it is not straightforward to identify exactly what the role of the police is, as it is particularly broad and difficult to make sense of. They provide a list of core functions (public reassurance; crime reduction; crime investigation; emergency

service; peacekeeping; order maintenance; state security; road traffic control) which they claim are common threads amongst policing literature.

1829 is considered as a key date within policing where the police service changed following the introduction of the Metropolitan Police Act 1829, into a more coherent and organised institution, regarded as the development of the 'New Police' (Emsley, 2008, p. 72). This came about due to a developing rhetoric, from the more privileged classes, about London being ravaged by crime and poverty, and needing organised police to ensure the protection of property in particular (Silver, 1967). However, Rawlings (2002; 2008) suggests that far from being a rapid change in 1829, the public police have been subject to a process of slow evolutionary change, and that radical reform of policing is subject to revisionist history. This is supported by Styles (1987), who suggests that in the early nineteenth century the watchmen and constables who were previously paid to perform a policing role within their local area, were still performing the same role albeit were simply employed by a different organisation in a still piecemeal fashion.

Although very little academic research considers SPS, Williams (2008) shows that SPS has also been prevalent in policing history. This establishes that the concept of paid for policing is not a new one, and did not suddenly come about following the implementation of the Police Act 1964. Examples of this include police officers in the nineteenth century being paid for to perform security roles in venues such as theatres, but historically it was the case that the police service was used to perform

a variety of roles that would now be the preserve of private security. Williams (2008) does suggest that it may have been (or could even still be) the case that the police service provide resources simply because someone will pay for them, as opposed to there being a necessity for them. This necessity of resourcing based on a comprehensive threat and risk assessment is a key aspect of this research and explored further in chapter 5. If policing by the public police is occurring just in case, a reasonable question to ask is whether this can be done instead by private policing. As we move into the middle of the twentieth century, public policing started to become more professionalised, but also became the subject of greater scrutiny and accountability from central government (Newburn, 2003; Brain, 2010).

Furthermore, as policing developed throughout the twentieth century, the models of policing changed to reflect the needs of the police service, as well as society. Broadly, these models are summarised in Table 1.

TABLE 1 MODELS OF POLICING

Model of policing	Summary
Hot spots policing	An approach which focuses on place and time, as crime is unevenly distributed within a geographical area, as well as occurring at clustered times. This model ensures officers are in the correct place at the correct time, to deal with a very specific crime issue (Bryant, 2008; Sherman, 2009).
Problem oriented policing	Aims to prevent reoccurrence of crime and anti-social behaviour by adopting a problem solving approach to treating the causes of the problem by focusing on broader crime patterns, as well as repeat offenders, victims, suspects and locations in order to reduce the future demand on policing (Goldstein, 1979; 1990; Tilley, 2008c; Bullock & Tilley, 2009).
Community policing	A decentralised approach that emphasises working in partnership with members of the local community to remove criminogenic conditions, create trust and promote feelings of safety, a major focus being on policing with the community as

	opposed to of the community (Alderson, 1977; 1979; Tilley, 2008a; Fleming, 2009).
Plural policing	Concerns the ‘social system that surrounds policing itself’ and refers to the increasing role of the non-police in policing (Rogers 2017), see section 2.2.3 for further discussion.
Zero tolerance policing	An assertive form of policing which seeks to enforce laws on all low level offending as a means of preventing more serious offending, where police discretion is very limited. Although acknowledged as having a reductive impact on crime, criticisms of this approach are that it alienates disadvantaged populations and strains relations between the police and the community (Mawby, 2008c; Gilmour & Punch, 2009).
Predictive policing	Predictive policing is the application of analytical techniques, asking when, where, what and who to identify targets for police intervention and prevent crime or solve past crimes by making statistical predictions, which require large datasets (Perry et al., 2013).
Reactive policing	This is sometimes referred to as ‘unit beat policing’, which is based on specific teams of officers being responsible for responding to incidents within a geographical area, involving mostly random patrolled with the objective of arriving at an incident, doing something and then leaving again. Criticisms include it being a barrier to building trust between the police and the public. (Reiss, 1971; Mawby, 2008b).
Intelligence led policing	A policing approach that seeks to reduce and prevent crime by directing resources based on credible information from a range of sources (including through covert means), to produce intelligence which allows for actionable police activity and provision of resources in the correct time and location to deal with crime incidents (Tilley, 2008b; Ratcliffe, 2009; Ratcliffe, 2016).
Evidence-based policing	This refers to using the best available scientific evidence that analyses the outcomes of police work, to inform policing policy and practice, with a particular focus on collaboration with academic institutions to produce that evidence (Sherman et al., 2002; Lum & Koper, 2017; Mitchell & Huey, 2019). This approach also requires policing to challenge previous conventions and norms, but this needs to be balanced against a criticism that it devalues experience (Braga, 2009).

Elements of these models can be applied to football policing, as discussed in section 2.4. However, it is necessary to understand within these specific models, what exactly the police are supposed to be doing to fulfil their role in society. The topic of the role of the police has been subject to academic research for a long time, however older works are still pertinent to modern day policing. Banton (1964, p. 132) considers that

the police are only a very small contributor to the 'complex system' (McLaughlin, 2007, p. 48) of policing. Most policing is conducted by members of society creating social norms which are mostly followed and prescribed to, resulting in an effective form of social control without the need for a law enforcement agency (Banton, 1964, p. 133). In this context Banton (1964) regards police officers as reinforcing the existing societal values as 'peace officers', as opposed to enforcing the law upon society. In relation to the policing of football, the concept outlined by Banton (1964) could manifest in football fans self-policing and police officers working to facilitate this process. However, Banton suggests that there are differences in the makeup of communities that can impact on the process of policing, meaning that tailored policing styles are required to best serve these communities.

Bittner (1974) suggests that the role of the police is particularly broad and is not just a case of performing a prominent role in reinforcing societal values. Bittner (1974, p. 249) contends that police work ranges from the preservation of life, to dispersing crowds, to catching criminals and everything in between. This is neatly summarised in his statement that people call the police because a problem involves 'something-that-ought-not-to-be-happening-and-about-which-someone-had-better-do-something-now!' (Bittner, 1974, p. 249). Despite this work being produced over 40 years ago, this is reflected in current data which shows that 83% of calls for service to police forces are recorded as 'non-crime related' and includes incidents such as missing persons and mental health crisis (College of Policing, 2015a). Based on their analysis of roles carried out by the police, the College of Policing (2015a) consider that demand for the police falls into the categories of 'public demand' (such as calls

for service) and 'protective demand' (such as proactive work to safeguard the public). The policing of football (see Table 3), can be considered as meeting both functions. This is through the reactive nature of responding to football related calls for service, and through preventative work to ensure that matches have sufficient resources thus reassuring the public and reducing crime.

Brodeur (1983) provides seminal work on the concept of 'high' and 'low' policing, in which high policing is concerned with the control of society, whereas low policing is concerned with street level enforcement of disorderly behaviour. High policing protects the interests of the state, and encompasses intelligence led policing and utilisation of often covert surveillance. Low policing utilises high visibility policing, to enforce laws and maintain social order. High policing may be subject to influence from powerful parties with vested interests, making it challenging for political neutrality (Brodeur, 1983; Bowling et al., 2019). To some extent, this concept is reflected in policing's Gold, Silver and Bronze command structure (see College of Policing, 2013), where Gold and Silver level resources are more performing high policing functions, and Bronze level resources are performing low policing functions.

Bayley (1994) provides a key chapter on this topic entitled 'What Do the Police Do?'. In this work Bayley contends that the police perform a variety of functions which are not necessarily related to crime. Additionally, they are not effective at preventing crime as they tend to only deal with crimes that have already occurred. Bayley (1994, p. 34) categorised the bulk of police work into two major roles: 'authoritative intervention' and 'symbolic justice'. Authoritative intervention is described as the

police responding to incidents in a manner that restores order but does not deal with the underlying causes. Whereas symbolic justice is described as the police dealing with a crime that has already occurred in a way that demonstrates to the public that the law is being effectively enforced (ibid). Although Bayley apportioned these two main functions to patrol and traffic officers, these could be extrapolated to policing in a more general sense as well as specifically to the policing of football. Resources involved in the policing of football will often be exercising authoritative intervention in terms of responding to disorder between supporter groups and restoring order. Symbolic justice can be achieved using prosecuting offenders who commit football related offences and by the issuing of football banning orders. Although Bayley (1994, p. 35) suggests that policing is not aimed at the prevention of criminal events, national guidance suggests that the specific role of a dedicated football officer is to 'minimise the impact of criminality' in relation to football matches (College of Policing, 2018b). It is necessary to examine further the role of the police in terms of policing football to consider how it fits with the role of the police more broadly.

In 2010, the Government announced public sector austerity measures, resulting in a real term 20% cut in police funding from 2010 to 2017 (HMIC, 2013; BBC, 2018b). Millie (2013) and Innes (2013) suggest that the post austerity landscape requires a realignment in framing what the police are for. Innes (2013) suggests that the role of the police can be given more specificity by gaining a greater understanding of community intelligence, in terms of the policing priorities a community has. This would result in more efficient, targeted and localised policing. However, the role of the police can then differ based on location, so would be hard to frame nationally

exactly what they should be doing. Millie (2013) regards austerity as an opportunity for policing to step back from wider policing functions that have been carried out previously, and redefine what is considered as front line policing. This means that the police focus shifts to crime control functions, allowing other agencies to manage aspects that previously the police service has engaged in.

Despite proclamations of opportunities for the police service in terms of austerity, empirical research (see Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020) suggests that the reality is that austerity measures are acutely impacting on front line policing, which is struggling with resourcing and are having to cover a range of non-policing functions. The struggle for policing to maintain their role in light of austerity measures, merits a consideration of non-police actors, including those from private agencies, to perform a number of policing roles. Plural policing has an important role in what policing looks like in the future, as discussed in the following section.

2.2.2 Policing and risk

Buurman et al. (2018) contend that the public sector more broadly is risk averse in their decision making, and the police service can be regarded as being a key part of that. The police service will manage risk in a variety of forms on a routine basis, both dynamically and regarding pre planned matters, such as the policing of football or other events. Section 2.4.1 explores the planning of football events in more detail, and the police approach to managing risk will form a key part of this. The Flanagan (2008) report identified that unnecessary bureaucracy within policing was a contributory factor which generated risk averse practices. This was supported by a

Home Office report (Berry, 2010), which also considered that a blame culture was prevalent in policing. Heaton (2011, p. 84) highlights that policing needs to balance 'the level of risk against the volume of business'. Furthermore, Heaton (2011) contends that the warnings around risk aversion were not necessarily heeded by the police service, and that risk averse practices are likely to continue within policing. A potential reason for risk aversion is the desire to protect oneself and their career, despite tacit acknowledgement that there is a degree of risk in every occurrence of police decision making (van Dijk et al., 2015).

Outside of football policing, it has been evidenced that risk aversion occurs within policing within a range of context. Constable & Smith (2015) found that acculturation was occurring as early as within initial police training, and that this included traits around risk aversion. Crawford & Cunningham (2015) explored the how relationships manifest in partnership working between the police and other agencies, such as local authorities. It was clear that there was evidence of risk aversion in all agencies, but that the police risk aversion would impact on effective processes being developed, due to concerns over a loss of control.. Black & Lumsden (2020) conducted ethnographic research in a police control room, and found that in particular the police response to domestic abuse was overly bureaucratic, risk averse and lacking in any form of discretion. Despite the concerns raised by Heaton (2011), risk aversion continues in policing, and has been evidenced by more recent studies. This shows that the recommendations from Flanagan (2008) and Berry (2010) have not been implemented, as policing continues to be risk averse. Despite limited

research specifically addressing risk aversion and football policing, Stott et al. (2019) demonstrated that policing operations for football fixtures were over resourced, and lacking in an effective, intelligence led risk assessment process to inform the level of resource.

2.2.3 Plural Policing

Pluralisation of policing can be regarded as ‘a perspective within police studies observing the expanding role of non-police service providers in policing, and the variety of different public, private and voluntary bodies now engaged in the activity’ (Wakefield, 2009, p. 227). Far from being a new concept, Bayley & Shearing (1996) suggest that pluralisation of policing has been occurring since the 1960s, and that by the 1990s private policing functions outnumbered those of the public police in most developed countries. Given the role of private policing within football (Button, 2002, p. 36) (see section 2.4.2), a discussion of plural policing is highly relevant to this thesis, but firstly it is necessary to consider the role that private organisations have been playing within the broader criminal justice sector, and issues that occur in these public-private partnerships.

The privatisation of prisons is a complex area of public-private partnerships, with the first fully privatised prison being HMP Birmingham in 2011 (Liebling & Ludlow, 2016). Prison privatisation at HMP Birmingham was considered to be a failure, with increased violence, drug use, high staff turnover and poor morale being evident (Liebling & Ludlow, 2016), leading to the G4S contract to run the prison being

terminated in 2019 (Ministry of Justice, 2019). Liebling & Ludlow (2016) suggest that one of the reasons for the failure was ineffective staffing, poor staff conditions and treatment which adversely affected the prison culture. Furthermore, Hamerton & Hobbs (2023) raise concerns about other examples of prison privatisation and how contractors such as G4S continue to operate without Government sanction despite their high profile failings. The probation service underwent a similar process to the prison service, with privatisation of some functions, although with concerns about performance the Government ended contracts early (Beard, 2019). Research indicated that the transition of probation functions to private providers had been particularly problematic, destabilising (Burke & Collett, 2016) and adversely impacting on staff morale within the sector (Burke, Millings & Robinson, 2016; Millings, Burke & Robinson, 2019).

As well as systemic issues with public-private partnerships, there is also concerns around conflict, tension and asymmetry between different partners too. Mandatory safeguarding partnerships, such as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASH) have experienced difficulties in effective partnership working (Shorrocks, McManus & Kirby, 2020). Examples include issues over management structures, lack of communication and information sharing between agencies, organisational culture impacting on joint working, and a lack of consistent and shared information technology systems (Shorrocks et al., 2020). Further research (Stanley et al., 2010; Stanley & Humphreys; 2014) supports this, with a specific focus on how a lack of information sharing can impact on safeguarding, and the police service do not always share appropriate levels of detail with other agencies. Much of the conflict and

tension that occurs between the police and partner organisations arise from the negotiation of conflicting agendas and objectives between different organisations (Willis, 2012; Crawford & L'Hoiry, 2017). Instead of seeing these conflicts as problematic, Willis (2012) suggests that conflicts should be explored further between the different parties to bring resolution. Crawford & L'Hoiry (2017, p. 636) term this as 'boundary work' and suggest that although individuals may wish to innovate more across boundaries in partnerships, they are often constrained by their own organisation. This evidences that the police service are not always effective at working in partnership with other public bodies, so it is expected that partnerships between the police and private organisations will likely be the same. Another issue identified in partnerships between the police and private organisations, is that the police service are not as technologically capable as private organisations in particularly regarding crime prevention capability (Laufs & Borrion, 2022). To avoid conflict and tension between public and private policing, and to ensure clarity, Button, Kapend & Stiernstedt (2023) emphasise the importance of informed debate about the transition from public to private policing. They raise concerns around how this has happened by stealth with fraud investigation which is almost exclusively the domain of private policing currently.

More specific to policing, Gans (2000) considers that private security has advantages in terms of costs saving, in comparison to the provision of police resources under SPS, and provides a commentary on the Sheffield United and Glasbrook cases (see section 2.6). Gans (2000) also suggests that there is ambiguity in what can be considered as 'special' policing for the purposes of SPS and what can be considered as public

policing. An alternative is suggested that preventative policing, where police resources are deployed to a football match, can be considered as special policing as it is not reactive. This could then imply that all resources allocated to a football match can be considered as 'special', but in the Sheffield United case, it was held that only on private land would they be considered special, even though they are performing the same preventative role. Gans (2000) goes on to suggest that the motivation of the police to charge for services is more borne out of the necessity to recoup costs for the extra policing that is required, as well as the perception of fairness due to football clubs organising an event that can bring disruption to a community. It is also highlighted that the event organisers need to be taking reasonable steps to ensure that they are acting in a way that minimises disorder and therefore the requirement for extra policing. Gans (2000) also explores the motivations of event organisers to have a police presence, and finds that it often may be a result of a lack of alternative options. For example, a football club may be facing a choice of a match being cancelled and the associated costs and reputational damage that may go with that, or simply paying for the police services to ensure a game goes ahead. This may give the illusion that organisers are exercising free choice in requesting the police, but are actually just attempting to avoid repercussions. This is something that can be explored further as part of this study, particularly with the views from club safety officers. Overall, Gans (2000) argues that paid policing is necessary, in order to prevent police resources being directed away from other areas of the community to police events such as football matches. The debate around the necessity of payment aspect is explored further in this research, as one could argue that robust risk

assessment leading to a proportionate policing response is more effective than simply paying for preventative policing.

Rogers (2017) suggests that pluralisation of policing that is visible today, was partly a result of the provisions from the Crime & Disorder Act 1998. This mandated partnership working and other agencies, such as local authorities, taking a more prominent role in crime prevention activities, as projected by Button (2002, p. 31), who also cautions about issues of accountability. The advancements has seen pluralisation within the police service itself, with the introduction of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) to perform a number of community based policing functions, with some funded by local authorities (Rogers, 2017) or even private organisations such as universities (Wilkinson, 2010; BBC News, 2013). Moreover, a greater number of policing functions are carried out by private companies who employ individuals who are Security Industry Authority (SIA) accredited. The SIA functions should help to professionalise the security industry, ensuring that individuals are suitably trained and qualified to perform their role (Button, 2002; Rogers, 2017). This applies to professions such as security guards and door supervisors (Button, 2002; Rogers, 2017), but as discussed in section 2.4.2, this can also apply to some football stewarding roles.

As previously discussed, austerity measures have led to policing needing to reconfigure the roles they are doing. Such examples are the introduction of public-private partnerships. One of the biggest cases in a policing context was the partnership between Lincolnshire Police and G4S from 2012, and was valued at over

£200 million (G4S, 2011). This was ground-breaking for policing in terms of scale, and led to the outsourcing of a range of civilian roles within the police, such as force control room and custody staff. White (2014) provides an analysis of the Lincolnshire Police G4S partnership, and concludes that there a range of positives and negatives to the partnership, but due to the novelty of this it may not be repeated. There were concerns around blurred lines of responsibilities, and this can result in accountability issues. White (2015) followed up this work with considerations of the political implications for public-private partnerships, and suggests that public opinion is a major factor in how much political appetite there is for the development of further privatisation. For example, the chaos associated with G4S and the 2012 London Olympics led to hesitation from police forces to engage in such contracts (White, 2015).

A key theme that can be associated with public-private partnerships is concerns around accountability. Writing shortly after the implementation of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, Loader (2000) talks about a focus on 'policing' as opposed to the 'police' and how regulation and accountability is key to ensure legitimate policing from both public and private actors. However, this can be difficult to achieve when there is such a varied range of interests concerned with the business of policing. Stenning (2009) suggests that there is not an effective method of governance and accountability for private policing provision, furthermore this becomes more contested when private policing is performing a public policing function. This raises questions about what is or is not, private policing. For example, if a member of the public attends an event that they must pay to enter, that is also attended by large

numbers of other people, this will have a very public appearance even if it is privately owned (such as a football stadium). As such, there is likely to be an interplay between both public and private policing, and public and private spaces without a straightforward delineation between these entities. Boels & Verhage (2016) highlight concerns that a lack of regulatory framework for private actors in public policing may result in a lack of professionalism and misconduct, although stress that these may still occur even with a framework. While this can also occur with the public police, there is a clear process for managing such issues (see Independent Office for Police Conduct, 2020). White (2016, p. 188) goes further in explaining that although accountability of private-public policing can be problematic, there are multiple accountability mechanisms which are utilised: criminal and civil law; market self-regulation; critical public discourse; statutory regulation. However, it is noted that these can often compete with one another, which results in a complex picture of accountability for which there is no straightforward solution. Lister & Jones (2016) support this, suggesting that there is inherent market complexity which needs to have democratised accountability to fully embrace the potential benefits that plural policing can offer. Berg & Shearing (2022) offer a slightly different angle (whilst still acknowledging the complexities), by suggesting that the market forces do have an influence in ensuring accountability of private providers, as it is in their interest to operate effectively to ensure their business proliferates.

Plural policing should be regarded as an opportunity, as opposed to a threat to the function of the public police. There are clear issues which need to be overcome and monitored in terms of accountability of those that provide private-public policing.

However, austerity measures have created a situation where the public police are having to reconsider their role in a broad range of functions which private policing can also meet the demands of. There is an ideological aspect to this, with concerns that fewer public police is eroding safety and democracy. What is evident, is that plural policing is increasing to the point of now being more commonplace, and is likely to continue to do so over the coming decades. However, Zedner (2006) points out that plural policing is far from a new concept and that the monopolisation that the public police has had on policing is a moment in time, and that private policing has had a pivotal role historically and will do so in the future. As such, the role that both the private and public police have in policing football is key in this thesis, and will be discussed further in the next section.

2.3 Examining organisational and occupational culture of police forces and football clubs

Given that SPS requires an element of negotiation (and potentially compromise) between the police service and event organisers, it is necessary to explore the cultures of these different organisations. Firstly, it would be appropriate to define what is meant by organisational culture. However, providing a definition is problematic as there is much debate about what the term constitutes (Schein, 2004; p. 12; Brooks, 2009, p. 264), but it is considered to encompass shared norms, values, behaviour patterns, rituals and traditions (Schein, 2004, p. 14). Brooks (2009, p. 276) highlights that conflict between different organisational cultures is commonplace and often relates to power or control over something.

The process of an SPS agreement being reached between a football club and a police force will be the subject of a negotiation and the organisational culture of the club and the police will have an impact on how these negotiations are conducted, as well as any conflicts that may occur. In most circumstances the police will be providing resources to football clubs and the football clubs will be remunerating the police force either fully or in part for those resources. As a commercial enterprise, one may expect a football club to want to maximise the number of police resources that are made available to them but to minimise the cost of this to their business whilst fulfilling their safety obligations. With the police, one may expect that the main focus would be around safety and less around the overall cost to the football club or the tax payer. However, this approach is likely to be too simplistic and not account for the variability between football clubs and police forces.

2.3.1 Football club culture

Finances within football more broadly have come under scrutiny, with media sources roundly criticising the role of football's regulatory bodies over the expulsion in 2019 of Bury Football Club from the football league for financial reasons (Ronay, 2019; Stone, 2019). The expulsion of Bury may prove to be a watershed moment in football regulation, as it is something that has been broadly predictable for a number of years, and the Covid-19 pandemic has pushed football clubs closer to financial insecurity (Hammerschmidt et al., 2021). Even prior to Covid-19, Williams (2012) highlights a financial crisis within football, with the wealth gap increasing rapidly between the clubs at the top of the Premier League against those at the bottom of the Football

League. Research (see Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019) concurs with this, claiming that there is a 'crisis of legitimacy' within football that has been caused by capitalism, commercialisation and globalisation. As such it may be concluded that football clubs (particularly larger clubs) operate less as an entity that is an essential fabric of the local community, but more as a commercial enterprise. The implications of this on the process of SPS negotiation are unclear and so far, unstudied in academic research. One may infer from this that a club's main objective in terms of negotiating costs with the police will be to pay the minimum amount and get the maximum number of resources, as they will be seeking to boost their profit margins. The cost of police resources under SPS are not graduated throughout the football pyramid, so a police officer for six hours costs a Premier League club the same amount as it does for a League 2 club. Some clubs at the lower end of the football pyramid live a hand to mouth existence financially (Williams, 2012; Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019), so police costs may put considerable strain on some clubs but be more readily absorbed by wealthier clubs. The financial status of a football club and attitude towards being profit driven will form a key discussion for this research in terms of how the club's approach SPS negotiation. Szymanski (2021) suggests that historically football clubs have sought to ensure profits are maximised by increased business costs being passed onto the consumer, also known as cost pass through (see Walters et al., 2014), but this has not been universal across clubs in terms of how they have applied this.

Another key consideration is to understand what football clubs' views are towards safety within stadia and how this manifests in their relationship and subsequent SPS

negotiations with the police. There is a clear formal process which all football clubs go through to obtain a safety certificate under s.1 of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975, which is issued by the local authority. The safety certificate covers a range of facets, from food safety to building design. More specifically in relation to policing the guidance does state that where required the decision over the level of police resource rests with the police (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 2018a). In order to achieve and maintain these standards the football clubs have to adhere to strict safety guidelines, however Frosdick (1995, p. 55) suggests that this may not be a priority for football clubs:

“Clubs give priority to commercial rather than safety risks, resulting in operational conflicts between safety and commercialism.”

This highlights the financial pressures that football clubs are placed under to satisfy various obligations such as sponsorship and television deals. This may manifest in the football club agreeing to play a high risk fixture at a later kick off time on a Saturday because that is when the television company wants to broadcast the game. This could be despite the police, and perhaps the football club as well, considering that it would be safer to host the game at an alternative time. Based on this assertion by Frosdick (1995), one may expect that football clubs enter into SPS negotiations seeking to pay the minimum of policing costs for commercial rather than safety reasons.

2.3.2 Police culture

Determining exactly what police culture is can be problematic, and O'Neill, Marks & Singh (2007) highlight that different authors have a variety of interpretations on the issue. Chan (2009, p.72) provides a definition:

“police culture refers to the values and assumptions shared by police officers as a group or as an occupation. These underpin how officers see the role of the police, their judgement about people, how they relate to each other and how they interact with the public”.

Bowling et al. (2019) summarise the core characteristics of police culture as follows:

TABLE 2 POLICE CULTURAL TRAITS (SUMMARISED FROM BOWLING ET AL., 2019)

Cultural trait	Manifestation
Mission	Policing being regarded not as a job but as a way of life.
Action	The recounting of exciting and worthwhile endeavours, such as a pursuit or disorder and overlooking mundane activities.
Cynicism	Despairingly regarding social trends and deriding those who do not conduct themselves in a manner that is in keeping with the policing mission.
Suspicion	Sceptically regarding others who may challenge their authority, which may lead to problematic stereotyping.
Isolation / Solidarity	Partly caused by suspicion of others, police officers may seldom trust people outside of the policing circle.
Machismo	Policing tends to be dominated by male officers, particularly in the higher ranks, with female officers having to do more to prove themselves.
Pragmatism	Police officers will focus on processes they know will work as opposed to experimenting, and only tend to accept changing methods if it has proved to have worked elsewhere.

Much of this theorising about police culture places the role of the police officer against the back drop of dealing with criminals and criminality. The interplay between the police and an agency they are supposed to be working in partnership with, the football club, could still be subject to some of these cultural traits.

Skolnick (1966) provides a key study into the topic of police culture and argues that the police officer has a 'working personality'. This personality is fundamentally influenced by danger and authority, and as a result the police officer is suspicious of members of the public, leading to isolation and solidarity amongst other police officers (Skolnick, 1966). Whilst the partnership working with a football club cannot be considered as a conventional 'danger' for a police officer to face, this could be interpreted as a danger to the officer's authority through dispute with football clubs over SPS. The authoritative conditioning becomes a cultural norm for police officers, who may respond by seeking to exert their authority over the football club who has challenged them through the SPS process.

A common theme of literature on police culture is the 'them versus us' concept, which links into a sense of solidarity amongst police officers (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017). This solidarity is formed from a number of factors such as the tensions of the job, shift work, camaraderie and the hostility the police routinely receive from the public (Bowling et al., 2019, p. 173). Cockcroft (2012, p. 58) argues that this solidarity creates and exacerbates the notion of 'them and us' where the police feel that they are in conflict with various sections of the public. The 'them versus us' concept then manifests in a number of ways such as the police versus criminals, the public, other organisations and so on. The 'them versus us' concept is specifically relevant to this research and may be apparent in terms of the police viewing an SPS negotiation with a football club as a specific battle that needs to be won as opposed to a collaborative process. Supporting this notion of the SPS negotiation being a battle is the prevalence of a series of case law where police forces and football clubs have been in legal

conflict over the payment of SPS. The nature of the relationship between the football club and the police force will be a key factor in how collaborative the SPS negotiation will be, and the more fractured the relationship is, there is potential for the 'them versus us' culture to prevail and the police to seek to control the situation.

van Maanen (1978, p. 284) argues that the nature of policing is such that the police are expected to take control of all situations they deal with, resulting in this becoming a cultural norm for police officers. As such, van Maanen (1978) states that the police are then expected to direct all encounters they have with members of the public. This could also include the police taking a leading role in the negotiation (or even dictation) of SPS arrangements. Current guidance for the police is for the match commander for a football event to allocate appropriate resources, but at the same time to ensure an ongoing discussion with the clubs (College of Policing, 2019). This may appear on the surface as a paradoxical position for the police to be in. Both current guidance and cultural norms suggest that the police, and not the football clubs, should be directing the process of allocating resources to football.

Loftus (2008, pp. 112-117) also discusses ways in which the police look to exert their dominance and authority over members of the public who challenge officers, this was typically observed through encounters such as traffic stops or during the night-time economy. Although these are disparate sets of circumstances to an SPS negotiation, there are some fundamental similarities in how the police culture of dominance may emerge. If the process of negotiating SPS is fractious and this in turn affects the relationship between the football club and the police force, then there is

potential for the police cultural trait of dominance to occur. Challengers can be considered as individuals that conduct work with the police and can use their position to challenge the control the police have (Holdaway, 1983), leading to the police trying to minimise their influence (Bowling et al. 2019, p. 175). Football club officials involved in the SPS process, such as safety officers or stadium managers, can be considered as challengers when negotiating or indeed disputing SPS arrangements. If a football club is routinely challenging the police over how they allocate resources to football and the amount they charge for those resources, the police may resort to their cultural trait of dominance in order to establish their authority over the resourcing of football matches. This interplay of challenge (by the football club) and dominance (by the police) will be a key consideration in how the SPS negotiation process manifests in this research.

2.4 Policing football

This section considers the developments and academic research that examines how football is being policed currently, as well as within an historical context. Guidance from the College of Policing as well academic research which considers what football hooliganism is, and the policing methods used to combat this are discussed here.

Football can be considered as unique compared to other sports in England and Wales in terms of the impact it has on the police service as well as the wider community. The College of Policing has devoted an entire section of the publicly available Authorised Professional Practice website to 'policing football' (see College of Policing, 2018b), which is not something that is present for any other sport. The

College of Policing (2018b) lists five key roles that are important in the process of football policing: police commander; dedicated football officer, football spotter, safety officer and stewards.

2.4.1 Police roles

The College of Policing (2018b) suggests that the police commander is responsible for assessing the threat and risk for fixtures and deciding the match category. They are required to build a positive working relationship with the football club and to ensure cost recovery occurs through SPS. Whilst the police commander should have experience of policing football, they will likely be reliant on the lower ranked DFO as a source of information to inform their decision making. Given the commander is non specialist in terms of football, there is potential for entrenched police risk aversion (Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) when deciding on resource levels, which are often considered over policed in the context of football (Stott, Pearson & West, 2019).

The DFO role is a key element of planning for football events, as they collate information and intelligence relating to a football club in order to produce a threat assessment for each fixture. The College of Policing (2018b) have produced a comprehensive list of responsibilities and activities that DFOs should be performing, of note is developing positive working relationships with both football clubs and supporters in order to enhance safety and minimise the risk of disorder. This is key with regards to SPS, as the DFO will be in regular contact with the football club and is integral in building a relationship that will help with conducive relations between

both the police and football clubs. Limited research actually explores the role of the DFOs, although Frosdick & Marsh (2005, p. 180) note that the predecessor Football Intelligence Officer (FIO) role was key in managing the risk associated with football events. Based on interviews with DFOs, Hester (2020) found that they demonstrate a partnership approach with football clubs that aims to reduce offending behaviour, however they face additional pressures such as pursuing banning orders that lead to funding. DFOs are expected to be operationally deployable, and often on match days will also be engaged in the role of a football spotter.

Football spotters are listed as having two main roles (see College of Policing, 2018b). Firstly, the gathering of information and intelligence to aid match day planning and deployment of resources, and support the application of football banning orders. The second role is community engagement, by building a rapport between the police and football supporters. Football spotters, including those from the visiting police force, should be deployed to all home and away games that are graded as spotters only (College of Policing, 2018b), however Hester (2020) found that spotter deployments are being limited due to austerity. The College of Policing (2018b) guidance suggests a balance between engagement and enforcement for the spotter role, however there is no acknowledgment that these approaches can be conflicting, limiting their effectiveness. Research (Stott et al, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019; Hope, Radburn & Stott, 2023) recommends more encouragement for spotters to focus on engagement with supporters, and they advocate the use of Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) to take a more prominent role in supporter engagement in conjunction with spotters. This potentially offers two strands of football policing, with spotters

focused on enforcement and evidence gathering, whilst PLOs focus on engagement. This is a key consideration for football resourcing. Another key aspect, despite not being mentioned in College of Policing (2018b) guidance, is the deployment of football spotters inside stadia, where they are expected to work closely with football stewards to maintain safety within the event footprint. However, research (see O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) indicates that there are concerns from the police about the ability and powers of stewards, leading to challenging working relationships. The role of stewards and other football club safety officials, is discussed in the next section.

2.4.2 Football club roles

The College of Policing (2018b) outline that safety officers should be 'occupationally competent', with Level 4 NVQ in Safety Management (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 2018b, p. 43), crucially having overall responsible for safety during the event from their command and control point within the stadium. It suggests the police commander should be co-located in the stadium, to facilitate effective communication between the police and the football club. Practically, this does not always happen with the police commander being located elsewhere in police premises. This was evident in a short documentary by *The Guardian* (2017) following the policing of Birmingham City v Aston Villa, which showed the police commander separate from the stadium in a police control room. The role of the safety officer has become more professionalised (Frosdick & Marsh, 2005), and is a source of expertise regarding safety and knowledge of the supporter base of the football club. Frosdick & Marsh (2005, pp. 181-182) discuss that historically retired senior police officers

performed the role, but it has become commonplace for people with a health and safety background to be safety officers at football. The Football Spectators Act 1989 is crucial for effective licensing and safe running of football events (Melrose, Hampton & Manu, 2011; James, 2017, p. 210), in which safety officers play a key role. Despite liaison and communication between the safety officer, police commander and DFO being key to policing football matches safely, no academic research considers this.

The College of Policing (2018b) guidance provides minimal detail regarding the role of a steward, just bullet pointing some key tasks around ensuring safety. The Sports Ground Safety Authority (2018b) offers much more detail, with an entire chapter (c. 4.0) dedicated to the role of the steward. Section 4.3 provides a convoluted definition of a steward, in essence stewards are regarded as either employed or contracted to perform a range of roles such as car park attending, turnstile operating, hospitality, static or mobile safety, security and supervision. The Sports Ground Safety Authority (2018b) highlight the importance of training, as well as adhering to the code of conduct. However, it could be further emphasised that there is a need for stewards to work closely with DFOs and police spotters in order to minimise disorder and facilitate liaison between the police, football club and supporter groups. Research (see Frosdick, 2005; O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) suggests that the utilisation of stewards can be more effective than the deployment of police officers in football grounds. However, concerns remain about the professionalisation, effectiveness, accountability and inconsistency of stewarding (O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) in comparison to the police. As stewards are the football

club representatives that are coming into direct contact with supporters, the importance of their role in setting the tone for how an event is policed cannot be underestimated.

Overall, the College of Policing (2018b) guidance is somewhat limited in terms of being prescriptive towards how the police should be policing football, but tends to provide more overarching guidance. For example, with the guidance for engaging with football supporters suggesting police forces should seek to be:

- excluding risk supporters
- engaging with and including non-risk supporters
- influencing those supporters who are not currently understood to be a risk but who may, under specific circumstances, become involved in anti-social behaviour and/or spontaneous disorder.

Interestingly, the first and second point suggests that the police service should not be engaging with those supporters that are posing a risk to public safety and that they should only be trying to exclude them. Some of the academic research that is discussed below, is generally critical of this position. In order to explore this further, it is necessary to examine academic research relating to hooliganism and football policing.

2.4.3 Understanding the role of the police in policing football

Table 3 examines the core functions of the police as suggested by Bowling et al. (2019) (see section 2.2.1), in relation to the activity of policing football matches specifically. As demonstrated, the activities that are being carried out by the police in connection with football matches would fall within the core roles and functions of the police as listed by Bowling et al. (2019). This may pose the question of why the

policing of football matches is subject to cost recovery at all, as none of the activities listed above can necessarily be considered as being additional to the regular duties of the police.

TABLE 3 CORE FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO THE POLICING OF FOOTBALL

Core function of policing (Bowling et al., 2019)	Manifestation in the policing of football
Public reassurance	Police presence at football matches demonstrates to the public that they are resourcing football matches according to risk
Crime reduction	The presence of police at football matches may lead to the absence of disorder and therefore reduce crime
Crime investigation	If any football related offences are committed the policing resources will provide an initial investigation, which could be supported by specialist investigation resources depending on the level of threat and risk
Emergency service	The policing resources will provide an initial response to any major incidents connected with football matches
Peacekeeping	A key role within football policing will be for police resources to ensure that opposing groups intent on disorder have a limited opportunity to meet
Order maintenance	As above, and may require coercive tactics depending on the threat and risk
State security	Football matches can be considered as 'crowded places', and some fixtures or stadia would be regarded as 'iconic locations' leading to a higher level of security being required
Road traffic control	Although mostly outsourced to private companies this may still require police resources to escort supporter or team coaches to and from stadia

The answer to this is found within the case of *Harris v Sheffield United Football Club Ltd* [1988] (see section 2.6.2). In this case the football club contested the payment of police resources that were deployed inside the stadium, claiming that they were performing the same core policing function (i.e. maintaining order and protecting life and property) as those officers deployed outside of the stadium. Although the police agreed that the officers were performing a core policing function both inside and outside of the stadium, the judge ruled that the police were entitled to charge for

resources inside the stadium due to the wider impact of the event on police resources. This case demonstrates that the roles and functions of police resources that are deployed to football are considered to be performing core policing roles, and the meaning of 'additional to regular duties' within the guidance around SPS can be a rather vague and fluid term that may need interpreting on a case by case basis.

In a football policing context, the role that the police perform has changed radically over time. Historically the police would carry out functions that would see them having overall control of the safety of particular stands, including ejecting people and holding them back after the game (Frosdick & Marsh, 2005, p. 156). The resource level that police forces deploy inside stadia has reduced from the 1990s onwards, with football clubs utilising stewards to 'police' inside the stadia (Frosdick & Marsh, 2005, p. 159; O'Neill, 2005, p. 170). This increased use of stewards instead of police officers came in part from the Taylor Report (1990). This recommended that stewards should be performing increased duties inside stadia, such as ejections and crowd control, and there should be suitable national training to ensure standards across all clubs. As a result, the stewards became considered as the private police force for the football ground and can be seen as preferable for football clubs as they cost considerably less than police officers (Frosdick, 1995; O'Neill, 2005, p. 170), this is a key point that will be examined further in this research. However, there was (and still can be) confusion around what the exact role of the stewards and police officers are inside stadia (O'Neill, 2005, pp. 175-176). This specifically related to who should take primacy over certain incidents and the roles overlapping and causing conflict between stewards and police officers as they may consider that the other party is

not fulfilling their duties (O’Neill, 2005, p. 179). The roles of both the police and stewards are more clearly delineated by current national guidance (College of Policing, 2018) and is summarised in Table 4. Police spotters are also considered here, as they form a key part of match day policing and will routinely deploy inside stadia without additional police resources. Their working relationship with stewards therefore provides a key policing response inside stadia during match day operations.

Table 4 demonstrates that there is some delineation between the role of the police and stewards inside football stadia according to national guidance. This is further supported by a ‘statement of intent’ which is agreed between football clubs and police forces which is supposed to identify specific roles and responsibilities (College of Policing, 2018b). The role description for stewards does appear to be more specific in comparison to the general police roles.

TABLE 4 POLICE OFFICER AND STEWARD ROLES IN THE POLICING OF FOOTBALL (DATA SOURCE: COLLEGE OF POLICING, 2018B)

General police roles	Police spotter roles	Steward roles
Prevent & detect crime	Collect & record intelligence	Ensuring crowd safety
Prevent a breach of the peace	Act as a visible deterrent, influence crowd behaviour	Assisting with the circulation of spectators
Regulate traffic (under statutory powers)	Engage with supporters	Preventing overcrowding
Activate contingency plans	Identify known or suspected persons or groups	Reducing the likelihood of disorder
Coordinate emergency response	Identify persons subject to football banning orders	Providing the means to investigate and take early action in an emergency
	Provide information on behavioural patterns of supporters	Ensuring supporters comply with ground regulations
	Identify potential hot spots for disorder	

	Prevent infiltration of visiting supporters into home areas	
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Whilst police spotters appear to be performing a specific role, they will also be conducting some general policing duties as a by-product. What is clear is that the general police roles are very broad such as ‘prevent a breach of the peace’. A supporter being ejected from the stadium can be considered as preventing a breach of the peace but will most likely be managed by stewards. As O’Neill (2005) highlighted there is clear overlap between police and steward roles, and it is subjective as to the point at which an incident changes from being a steward led to a police led role. This will inevitably lead to confusion around the role of police and therefore football clubs may ponder what exactly they are paying for when police are present inside stadia. The specific roles of both the police and the football club in terms of policing football are discussed in the following section.

2.4.4 Football hooliganism and football policing

Despite it being a commonly used term in both the media and academic literature, ‘football hooliganism’ is not actually defined (Giulianotti, Bonney & Hepworth, 1994, p. 2; Dunning, Murphy & Waddington, 2002, p. 1; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005, p. 28). It is used to refer to non-criminal through acts through to serious violence (Dunning, Murphy & Williams, 1988; Giulianotti, 1994; Armstrong, 1998; Dunning et al., 2002; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005; Pearson, 2012, Treadwell & Ayres, 2014; Flint & Powell, 2014). Frosdick & Marsh (2005, pp. 28-29) highlight that incidents occur at train stations, town centres and areas away from stadia as well as within the stadia, which

is particularly relevant for the police when considering threat and risk. Despite being acknowledged as a centuries old issue (Dunning et al., 2002, p. 13; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005, p. 10), in the 1960s football hooliganism was recognised as a wider social issue and became the subject of academic research (Giulianotti, 1994, pp. 9-12), which continues today but with a greater focus on how football is policed as opposed to why hooliganism occurs. Earlier research offered explanations of the phenomenon of football hooliganism. Such as alcohol consumption being a key causal factor as well as youth permissiveness and rebellion towards society (Dunning et al., 1988). The latter was linked towards disaffection towards the Thatcher Government of the 1980s and their hard-line approach to the policing of football disorder (Giulianotti, 1994).

Historically, and recently, a number of high profile incidents of stadium disasters, and stadium safety concerns have occurred in the context of football. Most notably in the UK was the 1989 Hillsborough disaster which resulted in 97 deaths. The Taylor (1990) report which followed the Hillsborough disaster led to significant changes in football policing, with the implementation of improved safety standards and a gradual increased onus of responsibility for safety being moved from the police to football clubs (Frosdick, 1995; O'Neill, 2005; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005). More recently the disorder which occurred at Wembley Stadium during the 2020 European Championship Final led to adverse media reporting, with a number of criticisms being levelled at the policing operation (Casey, 2021). Ludvigsen (2018; 2022) highlights how policing operations for major football tournaments need to be more security focused,. This is due to being considered as 'mega-events' which can attract issues

beyond football hooliganism, such as terrorism or protest activity (Ludvigsen, 2018; 2022). The findings of the Casey (2021) report support this, and argue that high profile football matches of such national significance are given a separate category, and may require maximum levels of policing. It is not being disputed here, that such matches will require higher levels of resourcing. These are to be seen as the exception rather than the norm, and this research is more focused on the volume of football matches that is occurring throughout the regular football season, and considers that these can be viewed separately to the mega event policing as suggested above.

The UK government passed legislation in the Football (Disorder) Act 2000 to manage football hooliganism following the serious violence at Euro 2000 involving England fans. This resulted in the broadening of scope for football banning orders, as well as the power that police forces could wield with them to restrict fans from not just stadia but locations such as town centres as well (Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014). This led to football banning orders being the subject of much academic research, due to them being regarded as 'panic law' (James & Pearson, 2006) and resulting research which suggests improvements of policing methods as opposed to banning fans as a preferable situation. Pearson (2012) conducted ethnographic research observing England, Manchester United and Blackpool fans, and offers support to earlier similar research by Armstrong (1998). They suggest that violence is not the primary objective of groups that would be considered hooligans, and that camaraderie, group identity and escapism from everyday life were the main objectives and that any violence that occurred was often in response to provocation.

Hopkins (2014) interviewed police officers involved in gathering evidence and applying for football banning orders and found that they provide a narrative that is favourable towards banning orders and that they are an effective measure at cutting crime and football related violence. However, Hopkins (2014) also found that a target driven culture had developed where police forces are funded by the Home Office (or more specifically the UK Football Policing Unit) for achieving banning orders. This could then impact on the policing of football, as the police may be looking to obtain evidence to support banning order applications as opposed to methods that seek to minimise disorder. My previous research (see Hester, 2020) on the funding for football banning orders , supports Hopkins (2014) assertion that this is still a problematic area. But it was also found that many officers were now rejecting the notion of funding being provided for banning orders and were vocal that funding should be provided for policing initiatives that seek to promote better liaison between the police and football supporters, to reduce the likelihood of disorder. My previous research (see Hester & Pamment, 2020) supports this, and showed officers were exploring investing in youth initiatives, although the UKFPU funding was still only available for banning orders and post-match investigations. Broader sports criminology literature suggests that sport can act as a powerful crime prevention tool, particularly for youth crime (Groombridge, 2017; Millward, Ludvigsen & Sly, 2023). This apparent change in policing attitudes (albeit not necessarily across the board) is in line with academic research which has been calling for a more liaison based approach for a number of years.

A number of researchers (see Stott, Hoggett & Pearson, 2012; Stott, West & Radburn, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019; Hope, Radburn & Stott, 2023) have argued that a reduction in football violence can be obtained by a liaison based approach to football policing, with improved dialogue between supporters and the police service. The body of work by Stott et al. (2012; 2018; 2019) has involved direct working with and observation of police force football policing operations. These operations have adopted the use of Police Liaison Officers (PLOs), typically associated with the policing of protest, into football operations with the key aim of facilitating dialogue between the police and football fans. Stott et al. (2012; 2018; 2019) suggest that this improves the supporter experience, and can help to minimise disorder. Furthermore, they are particularly vocal in their opposition to the enforcement and intelligence gathering approach with an end goal of achieving FBOs, as this can be considered as being counterintuitive to models of policing by consent and lead to more disorder.

Much of this research has focused on the policing of football in the conventional sense, involving the police service. But there are a range of other actors outside of the police service that are involved in the “policing” of football. In order to examine this further, it is necessary to firstly consider the concept of plural policing, which is defined as:

“The patchwork of policing provision and authorisation – involving a mix of the police, municipal auxiliaries, commercial security and the activities of the citizenry – that is replacing the idea of the police as monopolistic guardians of public security.” (Crawford, 2008, p. 192).

Rogers (2017) reflects that pluralisation of policing has been occurring in its current guise since the late 1990s, with the introduction of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

requiring multi agency partnership working, aimed at crime reduction work. Bayley & Shearing (1996) summarise that this had been a process that had been changing over a protracted period, with a wider range of policing functions being conducted by private security or indeed volunteers.

This also extended to the sphere of football policing, as Frosdick & Marsh (2005) note that the 1990s saw a greater use of stewards to police the inside of stadia, which resulted in a reduction in the number of police officers being deployed compared to the previous decade. This undoubtedly would reduce the costs for football clubs, as deploying stewards instead of police officers will cost less, particularly with the associated costs of SPS as detailed in chapter 1. Whilst literature has extensively explored the policing of football by the police service, there has been less academic research into plural policing of football by other actors, and stewards (O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020).

O'Neill (2005) conducted fieldwork through participant observation at Scottish football matches in the late 1990s. The observations were specific to how the police and stewards interacted with supporters, but also how they interacted with one another as two groups that are responsible for football 'policing'. O'Neill (2005, p. 175) found that there is a 'complex division of labour' between the police service and stewards. Whilst some good practice was observed, there were also issues in terms of confusion and overlap of roles between the police and the stewards. This manifested in the police not supporting stewards when it would have seemed appropriate to do so, or dealing with matters in a heavy handed way which made the

subsequent work of the stewards more difficult. Another observation was that training for stewards seemed inconsistent, leading to stewards not being aware of their role and expectation of this on match days. Whilst the findings from this research are useful, it needs to be understood in the context of the late 1990s and not the present day, so it is difficult to assert that O'Neill's findings are still prevalent. Atkinson & Graham (2020) conducted more recent fieldwork, using similar methods to O'Neill. They found that there had been an improvement in the professionalisation and training of stewards, but that issues remained. These issues related to similar overlap of roles between the police service and stewards, as well as the police having a lack of confidence in the ability of stewards to sufficiently perform their role and maintain safety within the stadium environment. Atkinson & Graham (2020) also remarked that there had been a conscious shift from both the police service and football clubs to withdraw resources from inside the stadium footprint. This is due to football clubs being keen to reduce their safety related costs by paying less SPS and the police service looking to redirect resources to other priority areas.

Kurland, Tilley & Johnson (2014) and Kurland, Johnson & Tilley (2014) provide insights into the link between football events and crime data, focusing on Leeds United in the wake of the legal dispute with West Yorkshire Police. Their findings indicate that a football event leads to an increase in crime levels within the immediate environment as well as the local vicinity, but that not all crime incidents are officially recorded with a suggestion that there is a range of offences that occur without official record. They suggest that due to these findings it could be reasonable for football clubs, as well as those stakeholders who profit from football events, to reasonably contribute to the

additional costs of policing. This argument will be considered as part of this study, as it is still being made by senior police officers. However, there are also other industries that act as crime generators, such as the night time economy. The argument can also be made that if events create crime then the organiser needs to act to minimise that impact, not simply pay for more policing.

Stott, Pearson & West (2019) have focused more on the way in which football is policed than the cost recovery aspect, however their findings could have ramifications for police deployments and subsequently the amount that is cost recovered from football clubs. Their ENABLE project is part of a longer term plan of working with the English Football League to improve the methods of policing football. Their pilot study (see Stott, Pearson & West, 2019) showed that the police overestimate the risk of violence, that there were too many officers on duty in relation to the actual threat, and that those officers did not effectively liaise with supporters. These findings are important, as it partly relates to the pre match planning process that occurs between the police and the football club and leads to how a match is categorised. The implication is that the police could reduce their expenditure on football policing, by assessing threat and risk more effectively and having fewer officers policing on a match day who are more specialised in their role. This concept will form part of the discussion point with interview participants in this study.

My previous research (see Hester,2020) conducted interviews with DFOs relating to the application of UKFPU funding for football banning orders. A theme emerged from the research where officers demonstrated frustration at not being able to adequately cost recover from football clubs. DFOs suggested that if disorder occurred away from the footprint that clubs were not bothered by it and that the Ipswich ruling had restricted what the police can now charge for, as well as how many resources that are deployed to football. I highlight that this can impact on the ability to liaise with fans and gather evidence in support of football banning orders. Finally, it I suggest “further research is required to understand exactly how Special Police Services, and in particular the latest Ipswich ruling impacts on football policing operations” (Hester, 2020, p. 1195). This study seeks to address that requirement for further SPS related research.

There is a range of academic research that has considered and offered some form of commentary on SPS, however there is nothing which has sought to provide a detailed examination with a view to exploring reform to SPS in England and Wales. This makes this study unique and able to provide a detailed insight for this area. The volume of research, not to mention media interest, make football unique in England and Wales in terms of how it is policed in comparison to other sports. The following section explores this in more detail.

2.5 Policing comparisons from other sports

This section considers the approach to the policing of other sports, within the setting of England and Wales. According to analysis by Deloitte (2015), the top five most popular sports in the UK by attendance are: (1) Football; (2) Horse Racing; (3) Rugby Union; (4) Cricket; (5) Rugby League. Whilst, the most attended single sporting events were Wimbledon and the British Grand Prix (Deloitte, 2015). This provides a broad indication of the popularity of sports based on spectating, therefore the nature of the policing of these sports (apart from football which was considered in section 2.3) will be considered in this section.

Whilst conducting a search of literature pertinent to this topic, the focus of research and academic writing into “policing sport” is different from that of “policing football”. The former tends to focus on sport governance and how issues such as match fixing in cricket or doping in cycling are policed, as opposed to how the police service manage crowd related issues, which dominates a literature search for the latter term. This is indicative of a lack of focus from research that examines how sports other than football are policed by the police service.

To consider this, it is important to firstly explain how crowd behaviour problems do not manifest in other sports the same way that they do in football, which is the cause of less academic research into this area. To emphasise this point, Jarvie’s (2012) chapter entitled ‘Sport, violence and crime’ considers violent behaviour from those that are spectating at sport, but only explores examples related to football hooliganism. But this is not to say that other sports are free from crowd related

disorder, there have been a number of high-profile incidents that have gained media attention.

2.5.1 Rugby

The Guardian reported on incidents of disorder involving players and fans at a Rugby League match in Salford (see Bower, 2016), as well as a disorder in the stadium in Perpignan in a match between Catalan Dragons and Warrington (see The Guardian, 2019). However, these incidents appear isolated and are not necessarily part of a declining trend in supporter behaviour at either Rugby League or Rugby Union matches. Upon searching for material related to this, it is more common to find media reports of disorder between Rugby players than it is to find reports of crowd related disorder.

There is very little policing by the public police at rugby matches. This is evidenced by some publicly available freedom of information data which indicates that no police are allocated to Premiership level Rugby Union (see What Do They Know, 2014), and policing only occurs outside the stadium footprint at Twickenham but not inside the stadia (see Greater London Authority, 2015). Even though police resources are allocated to England rugby matches, this will be due to the high-profile nature of these events requiring a safety and security response, as opposed to the likelihood of public disorder. The Welsh Government (2021) markets Wales rugby matches in Cardiff on their Visit Wales website as a 'unique', 'friendly' and 'beery' experience. Despite the prevalence of alcohol consumption at rugby, it is apparent that incidents of disorder do not occur regularly, so a commensurate level of policing resources to

that of football is not required. This is because rugby does not attract the same supporter culture as football, with the supporter tribalism seen in football not being as prevalent in rugby, perhaps due to differing development of the games in public and state schools and the class system aligned to this (Dunning, 1999; Dunning & Sheard, 2004).

2.5.2 Cricket

Cricket is regarded as a more genteel and tranquil pastime, referred to as a 'gentleman's game' due to its early uptake amongst the aristocracy which then led to it becoming commonplace in England's public schools (Wigglesworth, 2007). However, Malcolm (1999) challenges this historical conception of the peaceful nature of cricket and charts a series of incidents of disorder at cricket matches throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Malcolm (1999) also describes some measures taken to prevent disorder, including the use of off duty policemen to maintain order, which could be considered as an early precursor to the current model of SPS.

Compared to that of football, there has been little academic research considering supporter behaviour at cricket. Kuenzel & Yassim (2010) provide an interesting insight into supporter profiles at domestic cricket in England and Wales, through interviews and surveys. They found that many that attend matches are doing so to socialise and that the result of the match is less significant, with a greater value being placed on seeing high quality cricket from both sides that results in a close and entertaining match. This research is important, as it emphasises that the tribalism

that is prevalent in football is much less prevalent in cricket, so followers of different teams are not antagonistic towards one another. This will then likely lead to less policing being required, as the likelihood of violence will be lower and stewards will be managing lower level drunken behaviour.

However, Parry & Malcolm (2004) provide an analysis of the 'Barmy Army', an organised supporter group which follows England international matches, both at home and abroad. This differs from domestic cricket in that the support is more partisan, and it is noted that the Barmy Army are more akin to a group of football supporters. Parry & Malcolm (2004) assert that this manifests in chants directed in support of England players, as well as derogatory songs directed at opposition players, from a homogeneous group of white males that are described as laddish. Despite the similarities with football supporters, Parry & Malcolm (2004) argue that the purpose of this new type of cricketing support is more carnival based (similar to the suggestion of football fans by Pearson (2012)), to socialise and enjoy supporting their cricket team and to actively mix with opposition supporters and to not engage in disorder. This fits with Malcolm's (2009) comments that England cricket support is now more open and tolerant than has been the case previously, due to the increased multiculturalism within the team. This research regarding both domestic and international cricket is supported by the limited number of incidents of crowd related disorder at cricket that have been reported in the media. A simple Google search using the phrase 'cricket crowd trouble' returns very little, specifically relating to England cricket supporters. There are incidents in Australia, the most notable recent example is a disorder between Pakistan and Afghanistan cricket supporters in Leeds

during the 2019 World Cup. Although not as extensive as some football disorder, the incident appears to have been reported for the novelty as there were minimal arrests and an International Cricket Council spokesperson was reported as saying “crowd trouble is relatively unheard of in cricket, and, as such, Saturday's match had been assessed by us as low risk” (BBC Sport, 2019). In 1998, BBC Sport reported concerns around the likelihood of crowd disorder at Headingley, Leeds, during an England v South Africa cricket match (McKay, 1998). The narrative suggested infiltration of cricket crowds by football supporters bringing alcohol related issues, like that reported by Parry & Malcolm (2004) above. This report could be considered as an example of moral panic however, as the problem does not seem to have endured as there is a dearth of further media reports of cricket related disorder following this. It is evident that cricket is fundamentally different from football in terms of how it is supported, and therefore merits an altogether different type of policing response.

2.5.3 Horse racing

The final spectator sport to consider is horse racing, which is fundamentally different in structure from football, rugby or cricket, as it is not team based and racegoers are unlikely to be as partisan as in other spectating sports. Despite this, it does create crowd disorder problems and therefore create a necessity for a policing response to racing events. There have been a number of serious disorders at high profile events at Goodwood and Royal Ascot which were well publicised, leading to horse racing authorities to review their security arrangements (see BBC Sport, 2018). Vamplew (1983) reports that historically horse racing in the UK has been associated with crowd problems, such as disorder and acquisitive crime. Although not true of every incident

of disorder at horse racing, there is a clear manifestation of football hooliganism at horse racing events. In 2012 there was a large scale disorder at Newbury Racecourse, which Reading Crown Court heard was pre planned between Cardiff City and Swansea City supporters (BBC News, 2014) which Freeman (2018) writes is part of a broader problem with football crowds attending horse racing when the football season finishes. There is a lack of academic research which considers the policing approach to horse racing, although it could be considered as an enhanced night time economy style operation due to the likelihood of alcohol and drugs being a causal factor in disorder occurring. These events do not occur with the routine of football matches, so will be approached as one off events with policing resources being deployed as a precaution and as a deterrent. Event organisers will also play a key role in preventing disorder.

2.6 Critical analysis of SPS Legislation & Case Law

Only two pieces of legislation have explicitly referenced SPS, the *Police Act 1964* and the *Police Act 1996*. Section 25 of the Police Act 1996 is the current legislation that applies to the SPS process, it states:

‘The chief officer of police of a police force may provide, at the request of any person, special police services at any premises or in any locality in the police area for which the force is maintained, subject to the payment to the police authority of charges on such scales as may be determined by that authority’

Section 15 of the Police Act 1964 had identical wording to this, so in essence the legislation has not changed in over 55 years. The wording of the legislation is not prescriptive in terms of any practicalities around how officers are deployed and for

what the police should charge for. For example, in the policing of a football match one could not easily establish from the legislation wording alone whether all, some or none of the police resources allocated to the police operation should be charged to the football club. This vagueness may be why there has been a number of legal disputes over SPS, which are detailed below. Consideration is given in this research as to whether practitioners are applying legislation, policy or a combination of both in the SPS process.

There are a number of legal cases which have shaped the SPS process and have acted as case law to guide policy for police forces and football clubs (as well as other event organisers) in how SPS negotiations should be conducted. These are examined chronologically, explaining in clear detail the implication these cases have had on the SPS process for the policing of football. This is summarised in Table 5 below.

TABLE 5 SUMMARY OF KEY LEGAL CASES INVOLVING SPS

Key Cases	Year	Implication
Glasbrook Brothers Ltd v Glamorgan County Council	1925	Case held in favour of police charging for resources, as the resources provided had been at the request of the claimant.
Harris v Sheffield United Football Club	1988	Case held in favour of police, that they can charge for resources deployed inside stadia if the resourcing requires extra officers being deployed (this is a subjective point however).
West Yorkshire Police Authority v Reading Festival Ltd	2006	Case held in favour of the event organiser. The police had charged for extra resources deployed outside the event footprint on public land to support the festival operation, it was held that these resources are not chargeable under SPS.
Chief Constable of Greater Manchester v Wigan Athletic AFC Ltd	2008	Case held in favour of the football club. The police cannot charge for resources when they have not been requested.

Leeds United Football Club v Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police	2013	Case held in favour of the football club. The police cannot charge for resources deployed immediately outside a stadium on public land, even if their primary purpose is the policing of that football match.
Ipswich Town Football Club Co Ltd v Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary	2017	Case held in favour of the football club. The police cannot charge for resources deployed immediately outside a stadium on public land, even if the football club has a road closure in place and is stewarding on the land.

2.6.1 Glasbrook Brothers Ltd v Glamorgan County Council [1925]

Prior to the Police Act 1964 there was no express mention of ‘special police services’ in previous legislation. In the ruling from *Glasbrook Brothers Ltd v Glamorgan County Council* [1925], it was remarked that there is legislative support to the practice of providing police officers to perform special services in return for payment. This is drawn from the *Police Act 1840* and the *Police Act 1890*, in terms of the requirement for contributions being made towards the police pension funds in lieu of officers performing special services at the request. What is apparent from the ruling in the *Glasbrook Brothers* case (which is examined in more detail below), is that it was common practice for police forces to provide officers for special duties at a range of events in exchange for payment.

Glasbrook Brothers Ltd v Glamorgan County Council [1925], is the first stated case that is relevant to the provision of SPS. During a colliery strike in South Wales during the summer of 1921 a small number of ‘safety men’ continued to work to prevent flooding and subsequent damage to the mines. The miners who were striking took issue with this and attempted to prevent the safety men from working, leading to disorder and unrest at the picketing sites. The colliery owners requested additional

police presence to prevent disorder and thus allow the safety men to continue to work and ensure the mines did not flood. The police agreed to provide extra resources, but only on the condition that the colliery pay for these resources, which they initially agreed to. After the resolution of the incident, a legal debate then ensued where the colliery owners refused to pay the police invoice. The colliery owners claimed that the police were performing their core duty of protecting life and property and therefore the services were not liable for payment. The legal judgement was that the police were entitled to charge for the services, as this had been requested by the colliery owner and was a special form of protection that was outside the scope of their public duty. This case demonstrates that what constitutes SPS and what is a core policing function are subject to interpretation.

[2.6.2 Harris v Sheffield United Football Club \[1988\]](#)

The concept of what constitutes the core role of the police was again contested in *Harris v Sheffield United Football Club [1988]*. The police took legal action over Sheffield United not paying for police resources deployed inside the stadium and the ruling favoured the police stating that the resources were in fact SPS. The football club appealed the decision, contending that the police resources were attending the ground under a public duty to protect life and property and were therefore not SPS. The judge in this case made some considerations that are still relevant to the provision of SPS currently:

1. The provision of police resources on private property can be prima facie considered as SPS

This finding implies that the police can charge for resources that are deployed within the stadium, but not those outside such as in adjacent streets or further away in a town or city centre.

2. Whether the provision of the necessary resources could be met without using off duty officers

This finding can be considered subjective as the police would be exercising discretion as to the level of resource required both at a football event and to cover 'business as usual', and one could argue that any level of resource required at football would put an unnecessary strain on police resources.

3. If the police are responding to imminent or recently occurred violence, then this forms a public duty and is not considered as SPS.

This provides clarity for both the police and a football club in that the resourcing needs to be agreed prior to a football match and that the police cannot retrospectively charge football clubs if resources are deployed to the stadium in response to crime and disorder. Although this case did not definitively provide guidance for future SPS negotiations, it did clearly establish a clear differentiation between the police charging for resources both inside and outside a football ground.

Weatherill (1988), writing in the journal *Public Law*, provides a legal focused examination of the issues surrounding the judgement in the Sheffield United case, and the implications for the police service and event organisers following this. Weatherill (1988) highlights that it is problematic that SPS is not in fact defined in the legislation (a problem that remains to this date), leaving it open to interpretation for the police service and event organisers. Another problem Weatherill (1988)

highlights is that there is inconsistent practice nationally, with local police areas operating their own interpretations and charging regimes based on compromise with event organisers. A simpler solution is tentatively proposed, that there is no requirement to pay for any police service, thus removing the potential inconsistency and legal debate that may arise. Weatherill (1988) calls on this vagueness and uncertainty in the legislation to be remedied by parliament, to provide clarity and therefore best serve the public interest. Despite being written over thirty years ago, the comments are still relevant today, as SPS is still not defined and is still subject to a lack of clarity. Because the ambiguity in the law that Weatherill highlighted had not been sufficiently addressed, it appeared inevitable that there would be further legal disputes between football clubs and police forces.

[2.6.3 West Yorkshire Police Authority v Reading Festival Ltd \[2006\]](#)

Although not connected with football, another key case is *West Yorkshire Police Authority v Reading Festival Ltd [2006]*. This concerns a three day music festival held near Leeds over the bank holiday weekend in August, and from 1999-2002 the event organiser had requested and the police had provided SPS. In 2003 the event organiser refused to pay the policing costs, claiming that they were not requested and were not SPS. The ruling was initially in favour of the police, but the event organiser appealed the judgement. The claim that was made in the appeal was that they had not agreed to the level and scope of SPS that was to be provided and therefore no request had been made for the police to provide SPS under the terms that were being charged. The judge ruled in favour of the event organiser that the police were not

entitled to charge for the resources provided and a number of issues were identified in this judgement. The police resources had been put under significant strain by the organising of the music festival, and it was not possible for the police to adequately police the music festival as well as the local community without using extra officers who were on rest days. A high proportion of the police resources were deployed to public areas outside of the festival site, although they were only there because of the existence of the music festival, they were deemed to be performing a public duty and not 'special services' for the festival organisers. In addition to this the resources went onto the festival site as a response to crime and disorder, which was held to be a core public duty and not a special service. Although it may seem unfair on the police service and the tax payer that the police service is having to cover costs for the policing of events that make substantial profits, when summarising the case Lord Justice Scott Baker stated that:

"There is a strong argument that where promoters put on a function such as a music festival or sporting event which is attended by large numbers of the public the police should be able to recover the additional cost they are put to for policing the event and the local community affected by it. This seems only just where the event is run for profit. That however is not the law." ([2006] EWCA Civ 524 [72])

This quote requires consideration when the police service and politicians forward arguments that football is a multi-billion pound industry that should contribute more to police costs (see section 2.7). One can conclude from this case that the event organiser and the police service need to engage in dialog and negotiation to ensure the appropriate level of SPS is reached so that there is some benefit of the police resources for the event organiser and therefore they will be chargeable as SPS. However, as the judgement states that the police should only be charging for

resources on private land, any subsequent negotiation between the police service and event organisers are weighted against the police from the start.

[2.6.4 Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police v Wigan Athletic AFC Ltd \[2008\]](#)

A more straightforward case is Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police v Wigan Athletic AFC Ltd [2008]. Across two football seasons Wigan Athletic refused to pay policing charges in excess of the charges from the previous season and were taken to court by Greater Manchester Police. The initial ruling was in favour of the police, but the football club appealed. The grounds of the appeal were that they had consistently objected to the charges being made for the extra police resources, stating that they were not required and were therefore not SPS. The judge ruled in favour of the football club, considering that the extra resources were not sought by the football club and were therefore not SPS. The judge acknowledged that it is for the police service to determine the exact level of resource but that this must bear some resemblance to the services requested by the football club. This case serves to highlight the importance of negotiation between the football club and the police service to negate such legal issues and maintain a working relationship between the two parties.

[2.6.5 Leeds United Football Club v Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police \[2013\]](#)

Another football related case considered the issue of the stadium 'footprint' in Leeds United Football Club Ltd v Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police [2013]. West Yorkshire Police had charged Leeds United Football Club for the provision of police services within the stadium, in the immediate environs of the stadium on land

'owned, leased or controlled' by the football club, and in the 'extended footprint'. The extended footprint comprised of public highways, residential streets and public car parks within the vicinity of the stadium. Leeds United accepted the charges within the stadium and on land it owned, leased or controlled, but contested the charges in the extended footprint. The High Court considered that the policing in the extended footprint comprised the ordinary duty of protecting life and property, and as such the police were not entitled to charge the football club for it under SPS. The police appealed this ruling, but the appeal was dismissed, considering that the policing of members of the public on public land is no different to 'ordinary' policing and therefore cannot be SPS. The ruling from the Leeds case had a significant impact on the Ipswich case (see section 2.6.6), which again concerns the issue of 'footprint'. As Weatherill (1988) highlighted that there is ambiguity over what SPS is defined as, the legal disputes that followed the Harris case (see section 2.6.2) should have provided clarity. Gay & Davies (2013) writing an opinion piece in the *Sport and Law Journal*, suggest that the ruling from Leeds United v West Yorkshire Police had now brought this clarity. They suggest that this gives both clubs and the police a clear framework for what can and cannot be charged under SPS. However, the subsequent ruling and debate in Ipswich Town v Suffolk Police would suggest that no clarity had been reached and could one to further deliberate on whether the current law is fit for purpose, and why research such as this are crucial for exploring the issues further.

2.6.6 Ipswich Town Football Club Co Ltd v Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary [2017]

The most recent and significant case is Ipswich Town Football Club Co Ltd v Chief Constable of Suffolk Constabulary [2017]. This concerns an area around the football ground that is subject to a temporary road closure (TCO) that is managed by the football club. From the year 2000 onwards, Ipswich Town Football Club applied to the local authority to have two roads closed (namely Portman Road and Sir Alf Ramsey Way) 90 minutes before kick-off until 30 minutes after the conclusion of a game (see Figure 2). This is to allow safe ingress and egress of supporters from the football ground. Figure 2 shows the proximity of the turnstiles of the ground to the public highway, and where both club and police deployments were occurring which became the point of debate. The football club conducted stewarding activity in the road closure area on Portman Road and Sir Alf Ramsey way to ensure safety at matches. On matches that required a police presence, Suffolk Police had charged Ipswich Town Football Club for resources deployed into the TCO up to 2012 which had been agreed and paid by the football club as they were considered part of the 'extended footprint'. The activities of those police resources would be similar (if not the same) to those deployed outside island site stadia which are not in residential areas, the main difference being the ownership of the land immediately outside the stadium. This disparity in football stadia geography can significantly impact on SPS (as discussed further in chapter 5). Following the judgement in the Leeds United case, which considered that resources deployed on public land was ordinary police duty and not SPS, Ipswich Town took legal action against Suffolk Police to recoup the charges they had paid for resources deployed in the TCO area.



FIGURE 2 AERIAL VIEW OF PORTMAN ROAD, IPSWICH. (ATtribution: "FILE:PORTMAN ROAD AERIAL (CROPPED).JPG" BY JOHN FIELDING FROM NORWICH, UK IS LICENSED UNDER CC BY 2.0)

The initial ruling was in favour of the police, stating that resources deployed into the TCO area were SPS and so could be charged. Ipswich Town, with the support of the English Football League (EFL), appealed the decision. The arguments from the football club were that in line with the Leeds ruling, the police resources deployed in the TCO are on public land and therefore cannot be SPS as the police are performing ordinary duties to protect life and property. Suffolk Police argued that in line with other judgements that SPS can be charged for resources deployed on land that is 'owned, leased or controlled' by a football club. In this case the police considered that Ipswich Town Football Club had de facto control of the TCO area, as they were controlling the traffic and conducting stewarding activities, therefore resources can be charged under SPS even though it is public land. The ruling found in favour of the

football club, resulting in Suffolk Police unable to appeal the decision and having to pay the football club a six-figure sum (BBC News, 2018).

The impact of this ruling could be significant. It means that a number of other football clubs will be in a similar position and able to potentially reduce their SPS payments, having a minimum number of resources located inside the stadium (and subject to SPS). Instead, relying on police resources being located outside the stadium that would not routinely be subject to SPS payment. This is what the law would now indicate is the current situation, this may be tested by future case law, but arguably it puts football clubs in a much stronger position during SPS negotiations. Following this ruling, and other cases, there have been a number of opinions raised by journalists, politicians and police officers, which is discussed in the next section.

2.7 Critical examination of Media & political narratives on SPS

Policing has not always had a straightforward relationship with the media despite stories of crime, deviance and policing featuring prominently in the mass media (Reiner, 2003, p. 259). In terms of media content relating to policing, this is often linked to themes around serious criminality that focuses on offenders, victims and the police management of this (Reiner, 2003, p. 268; Bowling et al., 2008, p. 208). A topic such as Special Police Services therefore, is unlikely to feature prominently and make front page headlines in the media. It has still featured in the mainstream media in the UK however, with a key word search in the Lexis Library News archive revealing 98 news stories dating back to 1986, but not all of which actually relate to SPS as is

relevant to this research. Much of the news stories are factually reporting on the outcomes of stated cases discussed in the previous section, however there are also opinion pieces from interested parties on the topic, which will be examined below.

2.7.1 Media narratives

Goodbody (1987) reported in *The Times* following the judgement in the Sheffield United case that had the ruling gone in favour of the football club, then other clubs would have followed this and declined to pay for policing. This demonstrates the potential impact of the stated SPS cases in terms of how one ruling can have widespread implications for all football clubs, as well as the police service and the tax payer. Goodbody (1988) later reported in *The Times* that police costs recovered from football clubs was set to increase, which could push clubs into financial difficulties. Figures stated the cost of policing football to be £3.65m, with only 65% of that being recovered from clubs, whilst further money was paid towards this by the football authorities. This indicates a potential position being adopted by police forces of trying to exert some authority over football clubs and increase the amount of money that is recovered. This increase in policing costs was reported again by Ward (1990), where costs were stated as increasing to £6.2m by 1990. Ward also highlighted how this had become an issue of political interest, with concerns around the amount being spent on football policing.

The Sentinel (2003), a Stoke-on-Trent based newspaper, published a letter written by a Chief Inspector from Staffordshire Police in response to criticism over the level of policing costs charged to Port Vale Football Club. The article defends the police's

position, claiming that they are having to police at these levels due to poor supporter behaviour. It states that if charges were not made against the club then this would impact on their ability to police the public of Stoke more broadly due to the resourcing and costs that go into football policing. The backdrop to this is administration issues which are clearly impacting on Port Vale's finances, but the comments and tone within the letter could be detrimental to the relationship between the club and the police. Following this there were several other articles which reported factually on the outcome of the Leeds Festival case as well as the Wigan Athletic case. Notably, the *Wigan Evening Post* (2007) reported that Dave Whelan, then Wigan Athletic owner, felt that the club were being charged more by the police due to his personal wealth. These examples link with the police cultural trait of maintaining dominance, where the police seek to control others and exert their authority (Loftus, 2008; Bowling et al., 2019).

In 2012 *The Independent* reported that Assistant Chief Constable Andy Holt, then ACPO strategic lead for football policing, claimed that clubs should contribute more to policing costs. This was based on empirical evidence which suggests that football matches act as a crime generator (Kurland, Johnson & Tilley, 2014; Kurland, Tilley & Johnson, 2014). This article would appear to add weight to the police argument of clubs having to pay more for policing, but as is acknowledged the situation cannot be applied across the board to all clubs. This position was also adopted by then West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Mark Burns-Williamson, who in the *Yorkshire Post* (see 2013a; 2013b; 2013c) suggested that reform to the law was needed. This was in response to West Yorkshire Police losing the court case with

Leeds United, but one of the proposals was for TV revenue from organisations such as Sky Sports being used to cover policing costs for football matches. Burns-Williamson also wrote to then Home Secretary, Theresa May, to suggest that the Police Act 1996 is amended to allow the police to charge for resources deployed within the vicinity of football grounds. The tone struck in these articles demonstrates a lack of willingness on the police's part to accept the outcome of the court, instead choosing to lobby for a change to the law to allow them to increase their charges against football clubs. This may be due to a tendency from the police to be resistant to change (Cockcroft, 2014), although Smith (2019) notes that policing is now more embracing of change.

This tone is continued as police leaders from other areas spoke out following the ruling in the Leeds United case. *Western Daily Press* (2014) reported that Assistant Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall Police, Paul Netherton, was critical of the amount of policing costs they could recover claiming that the current law left them subsidising football clubs. Another theme present in this article is austerity, with Paul Netherton citing the reduction in budgets through austerity measures as a reason the police cannot be subsidising football. However, policing and austerity literature conversely indicates austerity provides an opportunity for the police to reconfigure what they are doing (Innes, 2013; Millie, 2013; Millie & Bullock, 2013; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020) as opposed to a reason to find funds to simply continue doing what they have always done. The contemporary issue is starting to develop here, although police forces are not explicitly saying it, there is an

emergence of a notion that clubs should be paying more for policing services particularly in austere times.

Herbert (2015) reported on a court case between Everton Football Club and Merseyside Police with regards to the kick off time for the Merseyside derby between Everton and Liverpool. The Premier League wanted to televise the fixture at 5.30pm, whereas the police did not want the fixture to kick off any later than 2pm. The case was settled out of court with the kick off time remaining with Everton agreeing to provide extra levels of stewarding. The media story alludes to further controversies that will arise with Premier League fixtures due to be scheduled on Friday evenings. The policing stance from this story appears that they consider later kick off times will result in more disorder and therefore a greater level of charges for SPS may be levied. This story also highlights the power and influence of TV rights in the football industry, with a range of Premier League fixtures being available outside of the standard 3pm Saturday kick off time to satisfy TV audiences. Football clubs are understandably keen to maximise their profits from TV rights which are worth over £5billion over several seasons to the football industry (BBC Sport, 2018). Due to this being so financially lucrative clubs may be willing to stage fixtures at a time that suits TV companies, which supports research (see Frosdick, 1995) that football clubs may prioritise financial interests over safety.

The media reporting of the Ipswich Town v Suffolk Police tended to be factual with a focus on the legal proceedings and minutia of legal arguments around whether the police resources deployed in the road closure area were SPS or not. The Ipswich case

appears to have generated some broader interest, as the *BBC* (2017) demonstrated that the Metropolitan Police spent £7.1 million each year on policing football, but only recovered 5% of this from football clubs. Like his predecessor, Mark Roberts, the national strategic lead for football policing, has been outspoken in the media about the cost of policing football. Kopczyk (2018) reported that Roberts was critical of football clubs for cutting policing costs and stating that “police forces cannot subsidise football”. In reality, this cost cutting may be a result of the Ipswich Town ruling so a number of other clubs are now paying less for policing under SPS because the latest case law dictates that. This was repeated by Homer (2018) where Roberts reiterated the position and called for clubs to be doing more to meet the costs of policing. Roberts went further in a *Sky Sports News* (2019) story calling for legislation to be changed to make football clubs pay more for the policing of football. One would expect Roberts to take this stance of looking to protect the interests of the police service, as the police utilise image management through the media to garner public support (Mawby, 2002a; 2002b; Leishman & Mason, 2011), which could be the approach that Roberts is using. The Deloitte (2020) report on football finances highlights record revenues across some of the top European clubs, which would support Roberts’ assertion that clubs can pay more. But the report also paints a stark picture with a range of Premier League clubs as well as Football League clubs operating at a loss.

It is apparent that the media has taken a keen interest in SPS, reporting on legal cases and discussing their outcomes, meaning that how tax payer money is spent on policing is a newsworthy topic. Despite senior police officers utilising the media to

forward their arguments on why the football industry should pay more for policing, it is evident that the financial picture is complex within this multibillion pound industry. Furthermore, the wealth is not distributed evenly, leaving one to consider that the argument for clubs to just pay more is too simplistic. There are a number of other considerations for football clubs, such as the financial incentives from broadcasters. It is a newsworthy area because a lot of policing resource is devoted to it. Police reform is an unexplored media angle in terms of how the police can modernise (particularly considering austerity) their approach to football policing. As well as media interest, political interest has been prevalent in SPS, as discussed in the next section.

2.7.2 Political narratives

South Yorkshire Police (2019) (see Figure 3) have published an infographic on their website, when Mark Roberts was Deputy Chief Constable there. The infographic contains a range of financial information, such as Premier League TV rights, wages, transfers and the amount spent on players and agents. It seems that the reason for highlighting these figures is to emphasise the point that the football industry has a lot of wealth. This is then contrasted against figures of police forces receiving £5.48 million from football clubs under SPS, when the police service has actually spent £48 million on policing football. The infographic does not list the season these figures relate to, but according to Sky Sports News (2019) it was 2017/18, and in this press report Mark Roberts clearly calls for football clubs to pay for more police resources and cites the wealth of the football industry. What is not clear is how these figures

have been calculated, but they have been accepted as fact and discussed in parliament as such.

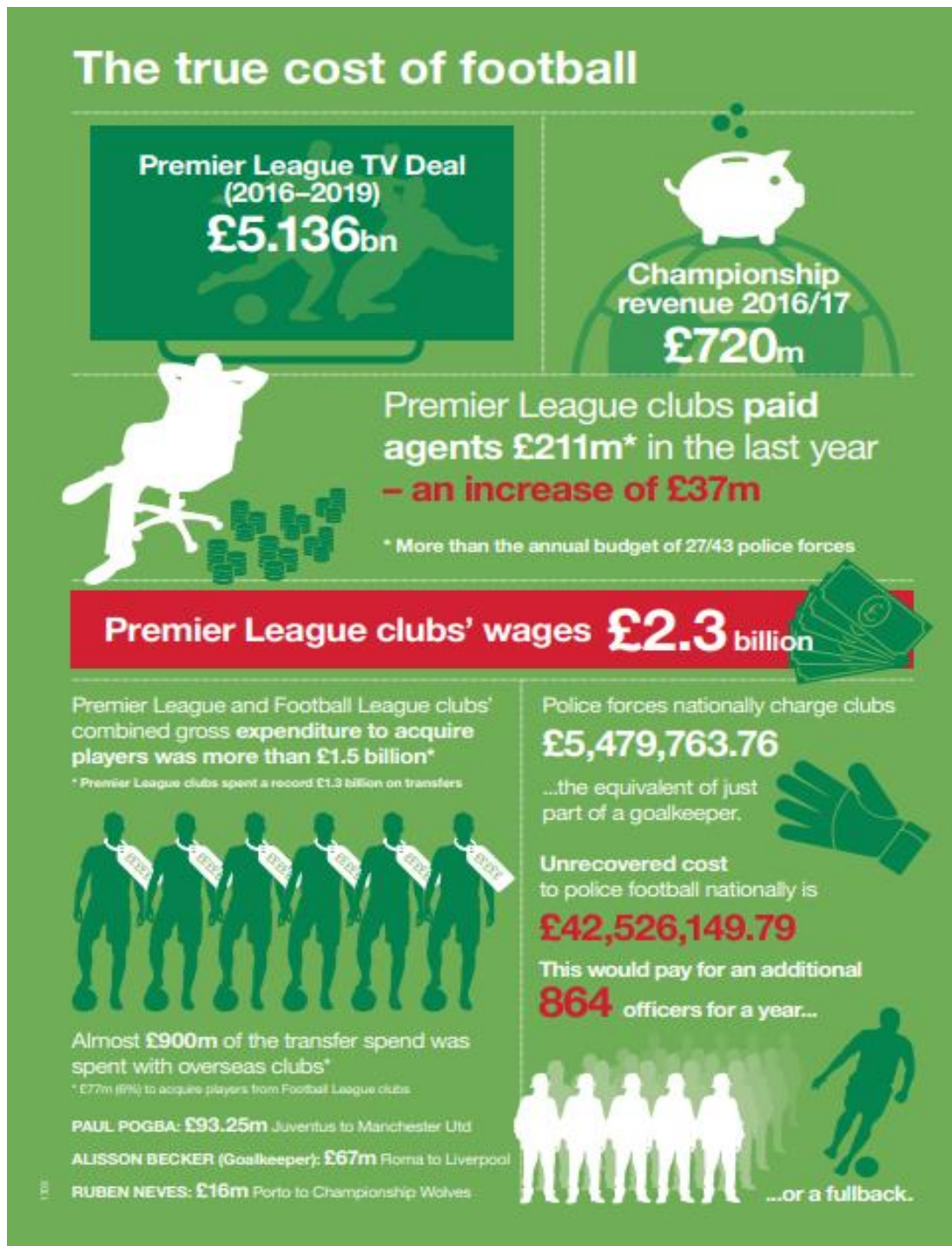


FIGURE 3 SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE INFOGRAPHIC ON THE COST OF FOOTBALL POLICING. DATA SOURCE: ([HTTPS://WWW.SOUTHYORKS.POLICE.UK/MEDIA/4048/20190645-FOOTBALL-COST-INFOGRAPHIC.PDF](https://www.southyorks.police.uk/media/4048/20190645-football-cost-infographic.pdf))

There has been some political support for Roberts' views on law reform and increased contribution from clubs. Gill Furniss (2019b), a Labour MP in Sheffield,

wrote an article in the Yorkshire Post discussing the cost of policing football. Sheffield is within the jurisdiction of South Yorkshire Police where Mark Roberts worked as a Deputy Chief Constable. The article had a particular focus on the costs of policing the Sheffield derby, reported as over £200,000 in 2017, and how the backdrop of austerity has left police forces in a financially precarious position of having to pay significant amounts to police football amongst other competing crime priorities. Furniss concluded the article by suggesting that a 1% levy is introduced to football TV rights, which would be sufficient to pay for policing across the country. Furniss (2019a) took this issue to a debate in the House of Commons where she addressed the same issues as in her media article, stating that police forces need to be suitably reimbursed for their expenses and that this can be done from a levy on existing TV rights money. This received support from other MPs, as well as a response from then policing minister, Nick Hurd. He responded that he is understanding of the issue, but also stressed that the Premier League and football clubs pay a vast amount of taxes as well contributions to society in other ways. Hurd considered that this should be framed within a broader debate around police funding and made a commitment to discuss this further with the Secretary for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. Following this commitment, and at the time of writing, no update has been brought back to the House of Commons concerning SPS.

Gill Furniss is not the only politician to have become involved in the debate around SPS, and this issue has been on the political radar on various occasions in the past decade. In 2009 the Home Affairs Select Committee produced a report which examined issues relating to the cost of policing football following the Wigan v Greater

Manchester Police legal case. The report recommended that the Home Office should review the current legislation to provide clarity on what the police can charge for outside of the stadium footprint. The government responded by saying it would consider reviewing legislation if the issue continued to be a point of dispute between football clubs and police forces (Parliament. House of Commons, 2010).

A recommendation from this Home Affairs Committee report (2009, p. 4) stated that:

“It is right that an increase in police costs which is attributable to the policing of a football match should be met by the clubs rather than the taxpayer. Clubs should continue to pay the total cost of policing on their "footprint". Equally, where it can be shown—using evidence which is available to the clubs—that the police are also incurring costs because of "consequential policing", this should also be met by the club. However, clubs should not have to meet the cost of "consequential" policing that is not a direct result of their activity. Any new arrangements must allow this distinction to be made and not merely be a blanket proposal.”

This statement from the Home Affairs Committee can be considered as ambiguous in terms of how the police service should interpret exactly what consequential policing is. A direct interpretation could be that any policing activity due to incidents of disorder involving football supporters that are away from stadia, such as at train stations or town centres, should be chargeable to clubs. Given that this was prior to the rulings in the Leeds and Ipswich case, this rhetoric may explain why police forces may have felt entitled to increase the amount of resources that could be charged to clubs beyond the footprint of the stadium. Clearly with subsequent legal cases the issue of SPS continued to be a point of dispute, but a change of government in 2010 may have led to the commitment to review this legislation not being continued further.

Burley (2011) raised the issue in parliament, with a similar viewpoint in terms of calling for Premier League clubs to contribute more to policing following the ruling in the Wigan case. Emphasis was placed on the disparity between what the clubs are legally obliged to pay for and what it costs to police football matches. Again, this cited the wealth of the Premier League clubs, particularly in terms of player wages and their perceived ability to be able to easily afford the policing costs. The key point being made was that the taxpayer was subsidising football and the question being asked was why this is and whether the government will examine the issue further. The government response was that it considered the argument to be too simplistic to say that taxpayers are subsidising football, although the government said it would consider options to provide a solution to the problem. In 2017 this issue was raised by then shadow policing minister, Louise Haigh, who with support from other MPs, raised the suggestion that the Premier League should make a voluntary contribution from the TV rights money to cover the cover the cost of policing football matches. This suggestion was rejected by the government, who stated that the Premier League already contribute £2.4 billion to public finances and no commitment was made to examine this further.

What is apparent from the media and political narratives is that this issue has sporadically moved into both media and political focus throughout the last thirty years, but this typically seems to coincide with the prevalence of legal cases. This is particularly true of political narratives, with a keen interest being taken following a legal ruling that places the police service in a disadvantageous position in terms of SPS. This could be because senior officers have historically been keen to influence

politicians on matters of resourcing and other priorities (Newburn, 2003; Reiner & O'Connor, 2015; Bowling et al., 2019). Evidently, this is what Roberts has been attempting in order to bring about change in terms of how SPS operates. The dominant political narrative appears to be that football clubs, particularly those in the Premier League, need to be paying more. Despite the political interest and voicing of concerns around the amount of taxpayer money being spent on policing football in relation to the amount received from clubs, little political action has resulted. Some progress does however seem to have been made in terms of National Police Chiefs' Council guidance on SPS, which is discussed in more detail in the next section.

2.8 Critical review of SPS approaches in England and Wales

The historical case law and legislation that was discussed in section 2.6, has shaped the current picture in England and Wales with regards to SPS policy. There are some key documents that guide practitioners in terms of the SPS process from both event organiser and police perspectives. These are: the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Policing Services; College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP); the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (the Green Guide); and the Purple Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Music and Other Events. These documents are analysed, with a particular focus on the guidance these documents provide for practitioners as well as considerations on ambiguity that may be present. Some of the practitioners that these documents are aimed at, are those that are the focus of this research and have been sought as participants which is discussed further in chapter 3. Typically, the NPCC Guidelines

and College of Policing APP are aimed at police officers and the Green and Purple Guides are aimed at safety officers (as well as other event practitioners).

2.8.1 College of Policing APP

The College of Policing (2018c) has the following statement on their website about

APP:

“APP is authorised by the College of Policing as the official source of professional practice on policing. Police officers and staff are expected to have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities. There may, however, be circumstances when it is perfectly legitimate to deviate from APP, provided there is clear rationale for doing so.”

One may then consider that APP guidance is appropriate for police practitioners to follow in all situations pertaining to SPS, as the deployment and charging of resources is pre planned and should therefore comply with the guidance. There are two main areas of APP that relate to the charging for police services for events, namely: ‘policing football’ and ‘operational planning’. The guidance in the operational planning section is brief, mainly due to being a consideration for all operations, not all of which are chargeable such as a response to a major incident. The guidance does state that: “where an operation or incident has involved a private business or transport company, full or partial recovery may be possible from the owners” (College of Policing, 2015b). This does not provide any further details in terms of how this cost recovery process should occur, but signposts to the NPCC Guidelines on Charging for Police Services, which is discussed further in this chapter.

The guidance on 'policing football' is slightly more comprehensive in terms of SPS. A clear emphasis is placed on the need for signing an agreement in advance and for both parties to provide clarity over the footprint in terms of establishing what land is owned, leased or controlled by the club (College of Policing, 2018b). APP also notes that disputes between clubs and police forces should be resolved through discussion over legal action (ibid.). A couple of references are made to the UKFPU retaining further guidance in relation to SPS, with a particular focus on case law, but no signposting is present in the guidance to the NPCC Guidelines on Charging for Police Services. Overall the APP guidance appears somewhat limited for police practitioners in terms of managing SPS, so cannot readily be taken in isolation as a resource. Furthermore, despite being the professional point of reference, officers can be resistant towards College of Policing guidance, preferring instead to develop their own codes of operating (Westmarland, 2016). This may be linked to the broader resistance to the College of Policing professionalisation agenda (Lumsden, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Cockcroft, 2020), resulting in some operational resistance towards College of Policing 'best practice'. The NPCC Guidelines on Charging for Police Services need to be considered in conjunction with this to provide a more comprehensive overview of SPS, this is examined in the following section.

[2.8.2 NPCC National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Policing Services](#)

The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) was formed in 1948 to provide national police coordination and leadership, which ceased in 2015 and was replaced with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC, 2019). ACPO first issued guidance on

charging for police services in 2005 with a document entitled *Paying the Bill*, which was updated in 2011 with a document entitled *Paying the Bill 2* (ACPO, 2011; NPCC, 2018; NPCC, 2020). *Paying the Bill* is not publicly available, a Freedom of Information request was submitted to the NPCC asking for the document, but they advised that they do not have a copy, so it has not been examined for this research. However, *Paying the Bill 2* as well as the more recent NPCC guidelines are publicly available documents that have been examined as part of this research.

Paying the Bill 2 was published in 2011 and was intended as a guide for the police service in how they manage charging arrangements within their police authority area. ACPO (2011) notes that updated guidance was required following the rulings in the Leeds music festival and Wigan Football Club rulings (see section 2.6 for case law discussion). Paragraphs 5.22-5.25 examine the location within which the police service can charge for SPS. It could be considered that some of this guidance is unclear:

“5.24 The locality should be defined to encompass the need to properly protect or benefit the persons organising the event or their attendees. It should not be determined on the basis of a need to protect the general public at large as a consequence of the event” (ACPO, 2011).

This second sentence can be regarded as being clear, in that all associated policing costs related to an event are not cost recoverable. However, the first sentence is more ambiguous and could be interpreted as the police may be able to cost recover for some aspects of resources that are deployed in the immediate vicinity of the

event but not within the event itself. This may have led to some of the legal cases regarding footprint as considered in section 2.6 of this chapter.

Section 6 of the document provides guidance on charging for the policing of football matches and is explicit in saying that the footprint needs 'common clear understanding'. What could be considered as more ambiguous however, is section 6.5 which suggests that a charging period of six hours is required for deployments solely inside the footprint, which includes transport, briefing and debriefing time. Section 6.6 suggests a charging period of three hours for resources that are deployed partially in locations such as town centres and then within the footprint during the match. These figures of three and six hours could be considered as quite arbitrary and football clubs may feel that they are being overcharged for resources if they are deployed within the footprint for less than these times, a legitimate question could be whether they are actually getting what they are paying for. Whilst this was a live document that was acting as a source of guidance for the police service, there were a number of legal cases during this period as detailed in section 2.6. One may draw the conclusion from this that the guidance was not sufficiently clear, or that police practice was inconsistently applied in various parts of the country leading to these legal cases.

Following these legal cases, the guidelines were updated in 2018 and also 2020 with the *NPCC's National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services*. The 2018 document contained a detailed precis of the case law that is pertinent to SPS. Both

the 2018 and 2020 documents do not provide much update on *Paying the Bill 2*. The 2018 and 2020 documents both contain section 2.6 'Charging for Football', which are identical to one another. There has been some minor changes to this section, namely 2.6.6 and 2.6.7, which amend the wording of 'footprint' used in *Paying the Bill 2* to 'land owned or leased'. This brings the latest guidance in line with the ruling from the Ipswich case. The suggested charging of three hours for partial deployments and six hours for full deployments remain in the latest documents. Other than the clarifications following the Ipswich case, it appears that very little has changed in the latest guidance regarding cost recovery for football and as a result it raises the question about how much of the ambiguity still remains.

The Independent Review of ACPO (see Parker, 2013) suggested that the creation of policy and practice should become the role of the College of Policing. It is therefore unclear why the policy remains within the remit of the NPCC, however (Kilgallon, Wright & Lee, 2015) suggest that professional knowledge on how policing is done should not be contained within one organisation. Therefore, it could actually be considered a positive that there is a range of SPS information and policy available from both the College of Policing and the NPCC. Furthermore, organisations such as ACPO, have helped to promote standardisation and professionalisation within policing (Charman & Savage, 1998; Charman, 2011; James & Mills, 2012), albeit with limitations in terms of how influential they can be. It is clear that police officers operating with SPS should be following the guidance that is available to them through both the NPCC and College of Policing material. There is further guidance available

to event organisers, as discussed in section, which is also available to the police service.

2.8.3 The 'Green' and 'Purple' guides

'The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds', more commonly referred to as the Green Guide, was first published in 1973 and is intended to assist all concerned with design, scrutiny and safe operation of sporting events within the United Kingdom (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 1997; Sports Ground Safety Authority, 2021). In 1993 the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in conjunction with the Home Office published 'The Guide to Health, Safety and Welfare at Pop Concerts and Other Similar Events', more commonly referred to as the Purple Guide, to assist organisers of music or similarly themed events to manage safety in the United Kingdom (Health and Safety Executive, 1999; The Purple Guide; 2015). This section reviews the guidance provided in these documents in terms of managing the process of SPS and having police resource deployed at football matches, as well as other events.

Not all editions of the Green Guide were available, but the fourth (1999) and sixth (2018) editions have been available to review. The fourth edition has a limited amount of information and guidance in terms of working with the police. Section 2.19 covers policing and 2.20 covers the statement of intent. Section 2.19 is clear that the responsibility for safety remains that of the ground and that the police role is public order maintenance and prevention of offences (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 1999, p. 36). Clearly there is scope for these functions to overlap somewhat when

performed by stewards and police officers, which is evidenced by research (O'Neill, 2005, p.179; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) and arguably these roles should be the responsibility of all concerned in football safety. The guidance states that when a police presence is required the 'number and disposition of the police shall be determined by the Chief Police Officer in whose area the ground is located' (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 1999, p. 36). This is in line with Section 25 of the Police Act 1996, but the Green Guide does mention that the quality of the stewarding operation may influence the policing resources (ibid.). No interpretation of this statement is offered in the guidance as to how this may occur, which leaves it open to interpretation, particularly for football clubs, in how they negotiate with the police around the level of police resource, as well as the cost. Section 2.20 concerning the statement of intent simply states that the division of responsibility between the football club and the police should be established (ibid.). Again, there is no mention of negotiating over resources or any guidance on how the costs can be established by agreeing a 'footprint' as part of the statement of intent. One may consider that the fourth edition of the Green Guide was inadequate at the time, as a resource for safety officers in providing suitable guidance over how to interact with the police service about the level of police resources that will be deployed into the event and how much the football club should pay for them. A counter argument to this would be that it is beyond the scope of the guidance to provide any kind of detail for safety officers about how to negotiate this process.

The sixth edition of the Green Guide is also silent in terms of any guidance for safety officers in managing the SPS process, but there are some other revisions that are relevant overall. The scope of responsibility for safety has been widened, as previously it used to concern spectators whereas now the guidance suggests that the event organiser is responsible for the safety of all persons present and not just spectators (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 2018b, p. 26). A key new development in the Green Guide is the definition of an area referred to as 'Zone Ex':

"The external zone. This zone is sometimes referred to as the 'Last Mile' is in the public realm and is likely to encompass the main pedestrian and vehicle routes leading from Zone 5 to public car parks, local train stations, bus stops and so on." (Sports Ground Safety Authority, 2018b, p. 87)

The Green Guide goes on to stress that this area is not the responsibility of the sports ground, but that incidents that occur within Zone Ex can have an impact on the safety within the sports ground itself. Therefore, it could be in the interest of the stadium management to consider deploying staff into this area as part of a multi-agency approach to managing Zone Ex. The Green Guide stops short of suggesting who should have overall responsibility within Zone Ex, but that this needs to be established as part of the planning process. This can be considered as a significant development in view of the case law outlined earlier in the chapter, specifically with regard to the Ipswich Town and the Leeds United cases. The case law is clear in that the police cannot charge for SPS within the Zone Ex area, but football clubs may be reluctant to fully engage in deploying resources into this area with concerns that this could reopen the debate around what policing can be charged for.

This research has not reviewed all editions of the Purple Guide, but the second edition (1999) was available as a hard copy book and the current guidance is now behind a paywall online, and different sections are continually updated, so it is in effect a live document. Similarly, to the Green Guide, the Purple Guide is silent on the issue of SPS and provides no guidance for safety officers on how to negotiate with the police service over police resources and associated costs. The guidance refers to a statement of intent being required if the police are present, but stresses this is to establish responsibility of roles to be carried out (Health and Safety Executive, 1999, p. 51). This is almost identical in nature to the material in the Green Guide and fails to offer any kind of guidance in relation to managing negotiations. Again, this could be argued as being at the time an inadequate resource for safety officers to be able to manage the SPS process with the police.

The current Purple Guide has a chapter (c. 28) that is entitled 'Working with the Police' (The Purple Guide, 2019), and is more comprehensive than previous guidance or that contained within the Green Guide. The guidance tends to focus on providing some practical advice for event organisers, such as drawing up written agreements and developing a positive working relationship with the police, and it consciously steers away from providing any form of legal guidance. The guidance does remark that police forces are inconsistent in their approach to applying the law regarding SPS as well as policy, which is in line with research (Weatherill, 1988; Williams, 2008; Hester, 2020). The guidance does make mention of only paying SPS for resources

deployed within the footprint, but also stresses the difference between 'core policing' and SPS:

"28.11 Core policing is that which the Chief Constable considers necessary to provide to satisfy the police's public duties to "keep the Queen's peace" and to uphold law and order, wherever that may be. This includes preservation of life, although primacy for keeping people safe at events remains with the organisers. Police duties also include the co-ordination of responses during an emergency in line with the Civil Contingencies Act" (The Purple Guide, 2019).

"28.12 Special Police Services (SPS) are duties that the police may be asked to carry out by the event organiser to facilitate the smooth running of an event but something that they are not required to do in law. For example, implementing and enforcing non-emergency road closures, assisting with bag searches, staffing a temporary police station within an event site or being on site at the request of the organiser to deal with offenders or assist in removing people from site" (The Purple Guide, 2019).

The role of the police was discussed further in section 2.2, but the guidance above may be confusing as one may think that everything the police do could be considered as 'core policing'. An example that would illustrate the difference would be a horse racing event that is attended by members of the royal family. Officers that are deployed onto the footprint to deal with public order issues would be considered as SPS, whereas officers deployed onto the footprint for protection purposes or counter terrorism purposes would be considered as 'core policing' and therefore not chargeable to the event organiser. The National Police Chiefs' Council (2018) would appear to concur with this, suggesting that an increase in core policing in the local area may be required. Another example of this in a football policing context would be an increase in police resources in a town centre to manage issues around pubs and transport hubs, but not within the stadium itself.

The language of chapter 28 in the Purple Guide (2019) can be considered as adopting a somewhat defensive and cautious tone with the advice to event organisers in terms of dealing with the police. This is reflected in the below comment and accompanying graphic:

“28.44 It is important that you understand your rights and are not intimidated. To help with this there are a few simple rules that are worth keeping in mind throughout your discussions” (The Purple Guide, 2019).

TABLE 6 RULES FOR WORKING WITH THE POLICE (DATA SOURCE: THE PURPLE GUIDE, 2019).

Rule 1	Organisers cannot be forced to pay for police to be at an event unless the organiser has requested this and been supplied with SPS.
Rule 2	Organisers cannot be charged for core policing.
Rule 3	Organisers cannot be charged for policing that is not on the event footprint, even if it would not be required if the event was not happening. An event footprint covers all land being controlled by the organiser, including car parks.
Rule 4	Never agree to any condition on a premises licence that says that the event organiser must pay for policing.
Rule 5	Don't be persuaded to request SPS to avoid the police objecting to a licence being granted.
Rule 6	If a request is made for police to attend an event, make sure that for the charges are as agreed.

The comment would suggest that event organisers may be subject to intimidation from the police regarding the level of police resourcing. This could take the form of the police advising that any incidents of crime and disorder may lead to a licensing problem in the future, leaving event organisers feeling compelled to pay for policing. Given that the guidance has been created by event organisers from the Events Industry Forum, this may have been based on their experiences across the UK. Furthermore, research (see Palmer & Whelan, 2007; Nyberg & Priks, 2017; Baxter et al., 2019; Hester, 2020) suggests that tension between the police and event organisers does occur. The organisational cultures and attitudes of the police was

considered further in section 2.3, but it seems apparent that the attitude of both the police and event organisers is key to an effective approach to SPS.

The policy guidance for both the police and event organisers appears to be drawn from the existing case law. As a result of this, it adopts a tone of being sceptical towards the motivations of either side. What it says, without explicitly saying it, is that the police will try and maximise their costs from events, whilst event organisers will try and minimise them. Whilst there is some focus on collaboration and working in partnership, it is easy to see how an adversarial stance may be taking by the police and event organisers. This section considered the policy guidance for SPS at events in England and Wales, but in the next section it is necessary to examine how a selection of foreign jurisdictions approach this issue when planning the policing response to commercial events such as sports matches and music festivals.

2.9 International police cost recovery examples

To effectively examine the positions on cost recovery in foreign jurisdictions, a range of other democratic nations have been selected to contrast their position on police cost recovery with that of England and Wales. The purpose of this study is not to provide a full international comparison analysis, however understanding other jurisdictions allows for deeper understanding of the issues relating to SPS. Readily accessible information is available for Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada, and Sweden. The policing systems in Australia and New Zealand are comparable to that of England and Wales, having been developed based on the early British models of policing (Finnane, 1994) and with a supposed focus on community policing

(Fleming & O'Reilly, 2009; Rowe, 2009). Whilst Mawby (2008a) explains that Canada and the USA are jurisdictionally more complex than England and Wales, even though they retain similarities in some community based approaches to policing. Sweden is somewhat of an exception within continental Europe, as they have a centralised police force, which is broken down into seven separate regions (Polisen, 2022) that have local accountability (Mawby, 2008a).

2.9.1 Australia

The operation of law enforcement in Australia occurs at both domestic and state level, with each state retaining law making and criminal code powers as well as having separate federal laws and policing (Finnane, 1994; James & Warren, 2010). This has resulted in laws relating to police cost recovery being set at a state level, and therefore each state operating differently in how they recover costs for policing events, leading to inconsistency across the country (Dellora & Beck, 2021). Although football in Australia does not attract the same level of crowd problems as in England and Wales, cricket matches do have crowd issues with players reporting that abuse from Australian cricket fans is a regular occurrence (The Times of India, 2021), so will require a level of policing to manage public order issues. Not all information for each police force in Australia is publicly available, but policy documents from New South Wales (2019) and Western Australia (2018) police forces were available to review.

New South Wales Police (2019) are explicit in their policy document, which reads as being police led with regards to the planning of the event, that they can charge costs for all resources deployed to an event. This includes police resources that are

deployed inside the event as well as those associated with maintaining order external to an event, and includes the policing costs for the planning of an event as well. Western Australia (2018) has a very similar policy, but is less explicit on the charging of resources outside of the event by saying that resources 'associated with the event' may be charged. Compared to England and Wales, the application of police cost recovery in Australia appears police led, with them being able to charge for a broader range of resources at events. Interestingly, the Western Australia policy has a section entitled 'resolution of disputes', which suggests that disputes may occur frequently so require clear guidance in order to manage them. This is supported by research by Palmer & Whelan (2007), who found that there were tensions between Victoria Police and event organisers over both the cost of resourcing, and what they are expected to do when policing the event, in terms of event organisers viewing that they had procured a service and therefore had expectations of directing policing activities. Ayling & Shearing (2008) conducted a case study analysis of user pays policing within Victoria Police. They caution that there is a risk of commodification of public policing, where those that can afford to pay regard policing as a service to be bought which can negatively impact police resources and budgets. Furthermore, another direction may occur from charging, where it pushes the onus back onto the event organiser to take a greater degree of responsibility for the safety of their event, to not to be reliant on the police, and to develop greater private security expertise (Palmer & Whelan, 2007; Ayling & Shearing, 2008; Dellora & Beck, 2021). This could then lead to the police resources being used for other policing purposes, whilst event organisers utilise private security instead. To an extent, this is already occurring in football in England and Wales, as discussed in section 2.4 with the increased

utilisation of stewards (O'Neill, 2005; Graham & Atkinson, 2020). The concept of the cost of policing (or SPS) being a deterrent to event organisers is an interesting one, which will be explored further in this work.

2.9.2 New Zealand

Unlike Australia, New Zealand has a unitary police force which has responsibility for all law enforcement functions across the entire country with a domestic law being applied nationally, although the force is sub divided into districts for organisational purposes (New Zealand Police, 2021a). In 2012, New Zealand Police produced a public consultation paper, regarding the proposal to charge for certain police services such as event policing and vetting. It is suggested in the document that legislation is required for this to prevent tax payer's money being used to supplement profit making events and to bring New Zealand into line with other countries such as the UK, Australia and Canada (New Zealand Police, 2012). Following this public consultation, in 2016 the Policing Act 2008 was amended to allow for cost recovery processes to occur, but this has only been applied to vetting (New Zealand Police, 2021b) so there is currently still no cost recovery for the policing of events in New Zealand. The legislation does however state that indirect costs (i.e. off the footprint costs) may be recovered by the police service, which appears to align more closely to the Australian model than that of England and Wales. Further research is required to establish exactly how this process will manifest in New Zealand once it has been fully implemented.

2.9.3 The USA & Canada

Due to the jurisdictional complexity of policing in the USA and Canada, a homogeneous approach to police cost recovery is less likely, so broader literature has been consulted here. Lippert & Walby (2019) reflect that police cost recovery is a complex area in the USA and Canada, which is further complicated by the various terms with which it is known: user pays policing; special duty; paid duty and paid detail. This has a much broader remit than in England and Wales, as police officers can be hired to perform security functions by a private organisation but seemingly fall into a grey area of being an 'employee' of the private organisation, as opposed to still coming under the command and control structure of the police service (Lippert, Walby & Taylor, 2016; Lippert & Walby, 2019; Walby & Lippert, 2020). This has led to controversy and cases of corruption being reported, as the funding is paid directly to the police officers (Lippert, Walby & Taylor, 2019; Lippert & Walby, 2019) as well as directly into police foundations (Walby & Lippert, 2020). Sporting events are a common event with which officers perform special duty (Lippert, Walby & Taylor, 2016; Lippert & Walby, 2019, p.117), but the direct payment to police officers or foundations, albeit controversial, removes the debate around footprint which is prevalent in England and Wales.

2.9.4 Sweden

Nyberg & Priks (2017) examined the issue of clubs paying for policing services in the professional Swedish football league, from an economic perspective. This occurred through natural experiment due to the nature of legislation in Sweden where some clubs are required to pay for policing and some were not, based on their

'professional' status (Baxter et al, 2019). This means that football clubs that operate on a for profit basis are liable for all policing costs, whereas those that operate on a voluntary, community oriented basis are not (*Public Order Act, 1993*) in Swedish law. Interestingly, it was found that the use of paid for policing can result in a decrease in incidents of disorder (Nyberg & Priks, 2017). However, some negative aspects were highlighted such as the reliance on the police as opposed to developing effective private security arrangements. The potential for payment creating an adversarial relationship between the police and the football club was flagged as a concern (Nyberg & Priks, 2017; Baxter et al., 2019), which can negatively impact on cooperation. In terms of football policing, Sweden has demonstrated some progressive approaches in terms of utilising specialist units that are focused on communication and dialogue with supporter groups. This in turn can reduce the likelihood of disorder which reduces the need for the police to over resource (Stott, Havelund & Williams, 2019; Stott et al., 2020).

It is difficult to judge exactly what can be learnt from how foreign jurisdictions operate, as there is a limited amount of research that examines these issues, particularly with a comparative approach to England and Wales. Although there is potential for learning from these countries, more research is required that examines the strengths and limitations of the models used for each country, as well as how they may be best adopted into the England and Wales system. Another factor, which was discussed further in section 2.4, is the unique context of the necessity to police football within England and Wales in a way that is not as prevalent in the foreign

jurisdictions explored here. Globally, and particularly across Europe, the policing of football is an important area of business for police forces.

2.10 Key arguments

This chapter offers a critical insight into the policing of football, which can be regarded as being unique in terms of its requirement for policing in comparison to other sports. This is because of the tribal nature of football, as such it requires a more nuanced policing approach to deal with these issues. It is important that this is considered in the broadest context, in that it is not just the public police that are responsible for policing football, and that private policing has a key role to play. One of the main issues of plural policing is concerns around accountability, which is a key consideration. Central to this notion of private and public policing of football, is the occupational cultures of the different organisations performing the role, and discussing resources under SPS. There are well established cultural traits within policing, some of which can be problematic and as such can impact on the SPS process. Similarly, football club culture can be focused on maximising income. The meeting of these two disparate cultures acts as both a threat and an opportunity regarding the policing of football in England and Wales . All of which links to a wider societal discussion of what the police are for, and what they should be doing. For the objectives of this research to be met, this wider question cannot be disentangled from the nuanced detail of how football is policed. Regarding the policing of football as a key and regularly occurring community event, will allow for a reframing of what the police are for. This key debate is revisited in later chapters.

There is a contention that the law is currently in an unsatisfactory state concerning SPS and this has been further compounded by the Ipswich Town stated case which ruled in favour of the football club, further limiting the amounts that police forces can cost recover. Importantly, previous work (see Weatherill, 1988) has demonstrated that there were clear issues identified with SPS dating back to the late 1980s. The future issues were also forecasted in this work, and a call was made for amended practice to ensure that further legal cases did not manifest. This warning was not heeded, and this raises the question of whether it should now be time for SPS to be regarded differently and for reforms to happen. For this to be developed, evidence is required. The next chapter explores how evidence for reviewing SPS was generated in this research, by explaining the data collection methods that were used.

Chapter 3 – Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter does not explicitly provide answers to the research objectives; however, it provides the platform for objectives 2, 3 and 4 to be answered in the later chapters. The methods used through the gathering of FOI data allow the establishing of cost data on the policing of football in England and Wales (objective 2). The interviews allow for the views of key practitioners on SPS practice to be established (objective 3). The gathering of this data, once analysed will allow for alternative approaches to be considered and help to meet objective 4.

This chapter critically considers the research methods utilised in this study, as well as the philosophical paradigm that informed the research design. The research employed triangulation of both methods and respondents to enhance the credibility and validity of the findings, and allow for a fuller picture of the phenomenon studied (Bryman 2016, p. 57; Heap and Waters 2018, p. 116). The research utilised a mixed methods design, comprising of descriptive quantitative data on the cost of football policing and qualitative data which examines the nuances of football resourcing implications. This qualitative data within the study was obtained from interviews that gathered perspectives from police forces and football clubs that are engaged in negotiations over police resourcing, as well as views from key stakeholders and organisations that have an interest in football policing. Triangulation of participants ensures a comprehensive analysis, reflective of the complexities of the phenomenon under study (Denzin, 2012; Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012).

The remainder of this chapter examines the philosophical approach which has influenced the research design, as well as how my positionality as a researcher impacted on both the focus of the research and the field of study, before elaborating on the mixed methods approach introduced above and the analytical approach taken with this mixed dataset. The justification of and detail around the data gathering process involving both Freedom of Information (FOI) requests and semi structured interviews are discussed, and due consideration is given to the ethical implications of the research. My positionality as a researcher is a key aspect of this thesis, and this is analysed in the context of the research that has been gathered. The chapter ends with reflections, which consider the issues that were encountered when gathering data and how they could be addressed in future research.

3.2 Research paradigm

Crotty (1998) stresses that it is essential for any research project to consider what methods and methodologies are appropriate, but also establish what the justification is for using these approaches. This utilises the four elements that Crotty (1998, pp. 4-5) establishes as the building blocks for justifying the research design (epistemology; theoretical perspective; methodology; methods), and applies this framework to my research.

3.2.1 Epistemology

This research can be considered as adopting elements of constructionism as its epistemology, but maintains a pragmatic position throughout, particularly through

the additional use of a mixed methods approach. Constructionism is where “meaning is constructed not discovered, subjects construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon” (Gray, 2018, p. 22). Pragmatism is more concerned with identifying a research problem and the practical outcomes connected with this, whilst not being rigidly aligned to any set philosophical position (Denscombe, 2010; Robson, 2011; Gray, 2018). Denscombe (2010, p. 128) suggests that applied researchers focus on ‘practical usefulness of their findings rather than its underlying philosophy’. In this research, the participants have their own experiences and perceptions around SPS and will therefore have constructed their own truth and meaning of how SPS works, and these perspectives will be subject to change over time as their experiences develop. This aligns with the epistemology of constructionism, as this research is not trying to prove that there is one reality or truth (positivist approach) relating to SPS or football policing, but that there are different realities constructed by different people, as suggested by Crotty (1998). Constructionism is used as opposed to constructivism, because it is expected that participants will have developed pre-conceived views about SPS and football policing and that these views will have evolved through their practice. However, their pre-conceived views cannot necessarily be disentangled from and may even have impacted on their own practice. The interpretation of participant perspectives fits more closely with a constructionist approach (Crotty, 1998; Gray, 2018), as the objective truth of how SPS manifests in football cannot be readily identified using a positivist approach. The research seeks to provide ways to address the challenges posed by current SPS arrangements for football policing. It is not the objective of the research to provide a definitive answer to the problem, as it is acknowledged that

this is a complex phenomenon for which there is likely to be multiple solutions. This can be considered as a pragmatic research approach, as it seeks to utilise both qualitative and quantitative approaches to explore possible outcomes to a particular problem (Denscombe, 2010; Robson, 2011, p. 30; Gray, 2018).

3.2.2 Theoretical perspective

This research uses a theoretical perspective of interpretivism, with a specific research methodology of phenomenology. Interpretivism is an anti-positivist stance, which Crotty (1998, p. 67) describes as “looking for culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the social life world”. This approach fits with this research, as the research seeks to interpret meaning from not only historical enquiry into SPS and football policing but also by gaining insight from participants who are engaged in this practice on a routine basis. The phenomenological aspect is appropriate to this study, as the research establishes new meaning from what the participants say about SPS and football policing. It also challenges pre-existing views and encourages the participants to question their own understanding and position on the topic, which Crotty (1998) suggests is a key aspect of phenomenology. Policing and criminological research which utilises quantitative approaches tends to be more concerned with verifiable data, such as crime statistics (Bows, 2018; Tilley, Farrell & Tseloni, 2018) and could be argued as being more positivist in nature. Within a football policing context, specific quantitative research examples (see Kurland, Johnson & Tilley, 2014; Kurland, Tilley & Johnson, 2014) were discussed in section 2.4.4, and unequivocally demonstrates that football events lead to increase incidents of crime. Although this study uses mixed methods, including quantitative data, it is not seeking to identify

empirical truths in the same way as a quantitative study, instead it uses this data to identify opportunities for progressive change.

There has been an increased focus on evidence-based policing in recent decades (Lum & Koper, 2017). Evidence-based policing means that the best available evidence is used to inform and challenge policing policies, practices and decisions (College of Policing, 2023). The original tenets of evidence-based policing was more focused on quantitative, using experimental research methods or randomised control trials (see Sherman et al., 2002; Lum & Koper, 2017; Mitchell & Huey, 2019). Whilst elements of this research are quantitative, and overall this research seeks to identify progressive change to the problems posed by SPS, it does not readily make it a positivist piece of research. Lydon (2023, p. 265) argues how a problem of evidence-based policing research is that it does not neatly sit within a particular research paradigm, and suggests that a 'more inclusive paradigm' which 'embraces methodological pluralisation' is required. As evidence-based policing has developed, researchers such as Punch (2015), Brown et al. (2018) and Williams & Cockcroft (2019) argue that there should be a range of research methodologies that constitute evidence-based policing, including mixed methods and qualitative research. Punch (2015) calls for a widening of the research base which contributes to the concept of 'what works' in policing, and highlights specifically the value that interview based studies have made to crime reduction. Brown et al. (2018) argue for a similar plurality of methods that contribute towards evidence-based policing, but go further in suggesting how this will help to develop knowledge in policing in line with the

professionalisation agenda and increase in policing degree qualifications. Williams & Cockcroft (2019) emphasise that the voice of policing practitioners should constitute an important aspect of evidence-based policing, as their knowledge and experience can contribute to evidence-based outputs and policy change for policing.

This piece of research, whilst maintaining the form of pragmatism identified by Denscombe (2010), utilises an interpretivist approach to understand both the quantitative and qualitative data. Interpreting the data allows for an understanding to be developed of the findings. The study is trying to achieve ‘progressive change’ (Stanley, 2018, p. 333) to SPS practice, utilising an interpretivist and evidence-based policing approach. As a consequence, the research seeks to establish potential alternative policing practice, identifying those most likely to offer progressive change. This ‘methodological pluralisation’ (Lydon, 2023, p. 265) that underpins evidence-based policing demonstrates that the approach used in this research fits both the intended paradigm and is evidence-based.

3.2.3 Methodology

The methodological approach used is phenomenological research, by developing a broadly qualitative and inductive approach to meeting the research objectives, but utilising quantitative methods to further understand the phenomenon. Gray (2018, p. 25) suggests that phenomenology “has to be grounded in people’s experiences of social reality”, and that pre-conceived understanding must be put aside for new meaning to develop. The qualitative approach establishes people’s experiences, as

well as the social reality. The quantitative approach focuses on the social reality by providing numerical data that provides detail on what is occurring in relation to the phenomenon. It is important to emphasise that a strength of combining qualitative and quantitative methods together is that they can be regarded as tools to answer different aspects of the research objectives (Brannen, 2005; 2017; Hammersley, 2000). This also fits the 'methodological pluralisation' Lydon (2023, p. 265) and pragmatic nature of this research (Denscombe, 2010; Robson, 2011, p. 30; Gray, 2018), as the methodological tools are designed to meet the specific objectives of the research, as opposed to aligning with an overarching research philosophy. This is discussed further in the next section.

3.2.4 Methods

One of the methods that best supports a phenomenological approach, is semi-structured interviews. This ensures that an understanding can be developed regarding people's experiences, as well as challenging them to question their own interpretation of how they view the topic of SPS and football policing. Stanley (2018, p. 333) highlights how knowledge creation through interviewing in criminological research "is not just a library exercise...it is directed to progressive change in perceptions, laws, policies and official practices". As a consequence interviews were adopted as one of the methods this research, because analysing perspectives on the issues of SPS will allow for progressive change in policing to be identified. This method helps to meet objective 3 of the research, and starts the process towards exploring objective 4. The quantitative method utilised is Freedom of Information requests. These establish numerical data regarding how much is spent on football

policing, as well as how much is received from SPS. This method helps to meet objective 2 of the research. This provides reality regarding SPS, and can be contrasted against the perceptions of the participants, which is a strength of mixing both qualitative and quantitative approaches in an inductive way (Brannen, 2005; 2016; Hammersley, 2000).

3.3 Gathering and analysing secondary data

Secondary analysis is defined as: 'the analysis of an existing data set with the aim of addressing a research question distinct from that for which the data set was originally collected' (Hewson, 2006, p. 274). Bryman (2016, pp. 310-312) states that there are a number of advantages to using secondary data such as the saving of cost and time which allows more time for analysis, reanalysing data may also provide new meaning and good quality data may also be located. However, Yar (2018, p. 416) highlights a number of issues such as the lack of knowledge about how the original data has been collected and the variables of the data not suiting your own research purpose. For this research, the internet provided a source of information on the cost of policing football against the amount of money that is cost recovered by police forces across England and Wales. This information was located by entering key terms into Google:

- Cost of football policing
- Football policing cost recovery
- Special Police Services

Robson (2011, p. 54) highlights that using Google can be beneficial for locating sources of data but cautions that the sources cannot always be taken as being

reliable. This is because the source of the data and methods of collection cannot always be readily verified (Carmichael, 2008, p. 381). Another problem of using internet search engines to gather data is the overwhelming amount of available information (Rasmussen, 2008, p. 94). This will result in a time-consuming process of filtering a large number of web pages to ensure that the data that has been located will be relevant to the objectives of the research. These various sources may be the result of FOI requests that have previously been submitted by other parties to police forces or even data that police forces have published themselves. Each data source therefore required an analysis to establish the relevance and credibility for inclusion in the research. This was met with specific questions for each data source:

- Who has posted/published this data?
- What or who is the origin of the data?
- Is the original data readily accessible?
- How has the data been collected?
- What was the original purpose of posting/publishing this data?

Answering these specific questions for every data source that was located through secondary analysis, provided an effective framework for establishing the veracity of data on the cost of policing football.

The search terms did reveal some information that was publicly available, but existing publicly available information was limited and not sufficiently comprehensive to meet the objectives of this research. For example, police forces held some FOI data on what the specific cost or SPS received was in relation to a particular game, for example a local derby match. But, there was insufficient data to look at the costs of football policing and the amount of SPS received holistically, such as across several

seasons. Therefore, secondary data analysis alone, was an ineffective method for this research, so data was sought via FOI requests. This approach is discussed in the next section.

3.4 Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

FOI requests were submitted to police forces and local authorities in England and Wales, and this approach and its limitations are discussed in the following sections.

3.4.1 Police force FOI requests

Due to the limited amount of data available from the secondary analysis, which was not sufficient to provide data for all 43 police forces in England and Wales. As well as there being no central Home Office database on the cost of policing football or the amounts that are cost recovered, a potential other way to establish this data is through FOI requests. Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows:

- (1) Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled
 - (a) to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request, and
 - (b) if this is the case, to have that information communicated to him

FOI data is considered as a valid research tool but is currently underutilised in social sciences research (Brown, 2009; Walby & Luscombe, 2017). Savage & Hyde (2014) state that FOI is a particularly useful research tool when it is combined with other methods. This is the case for this research, as it is used to supplement the qualitative data (discussed in section 3.4 below). FOI can be problematic as a research tool however, with some data being exempted due to processing costs leading to the data

that is available being limited and not suiting the research requirements (Lee, 2005; Afful-Dadzie & Afful-Dadzie, 2017).

To meet objective 2 of this study, the following questions were submitted to all 43 police forces in England and Wales as an FOI request:

Question 1 From the 2014/5 to 2018/19 football seasons, how much Special Police Services have you received each season from football clubs in your force area?

Question 2 From the 2014/5 to 2018/19 football seasons, how much have you spent each season on football policing operations?

Requesting the data which covers these football seasons, helped to create a picture of the changing trends in cost recovery, particularly following the Ipswich Town v Suffolk Constabulary (2017) ruling which had the effect of restricting some of the resources that police forces can charge football clubs for. It also captured the period prior to Covid-19 altering the football landscape by fans not being present within stadia and therefore removing the necessity to police inside the footprint. Due to the cost limits attached to FOI requests and the staffing required to fulfil the request (see Information Commissioner's Office, 2015) there is potential for some or part of the data to be refused. This was particularly relevant to the second part of the request, as police forces may not be actively calculating the cost of policing football matches. In addition, this can be complex to calculate for forces as they will need to consider a number of factors such as staff costs, overtime, specific equipment costs, pension contributions, staff subsistence, travel expenses and so on. This information was still requested however, as a negative FOI response can be valuable in identifying

gaps in knowledge (Holman, 2020) or in this case gaps in data being collected by police forces. Police forces are more likely to be able to provide information in response to part one of the request as they will have accounting records of payments received from football clubs for SPS.

A third question as an FOI request to police forces was considered, but precluded. The additional data being considered was a breakdown of the policing categories for the football seasons from 2014/15 to 2018/19. This would have allowed for an examination of whether SPS income had decreased in line with the number of policed matches decreasing, as suggested by senior officers (Wilde, 2018). However, previous research I have conducted using FOI requests (see Hester, 2020; Hester & Pamment, 2020), I found the majority are declined due to exceeding cost allowances. I therefore decided to discount this additional question from the FOI request, allowing a greater focus on questions one and two. The results of these FOI requests are explained and analysed in Chapter 4.

As more data was received in relation to the requests sent to police forces, it became apparent that the data that had been presented by South Yorkshire Police (2019) (see section 2.7 & Figure 3) was not consistent with the FOI data that was being received as part of this research. These findings are discussed further in Chapter 4, but to understand this disconnect, a follow up FOI request was sent to South Yorkshire Police in November 2021, with the following details:

Please can you provide a response to the following questions, with regards to two figures quoted in the infographic:

Figure 1 – Police forces nationally charge clubs - £5,479,763.76

Figure 2 – Unrecovered cost to police football nationally - £42,526,149.79

- 1) Please explain how both figure 1 and figure 2 have been calculated
- 2) What is the timeframe that both figure 1 and figure 2 relate to

The FOI data relating to SPS received by police forces from football clubs was used to calculate the average amount of SPS charged per club by police force area. This helps to provide an overview of how police forces may operate differently in relation to cost recovery processes, however there are a number of different variables within this, which is discussed further in Chapter 4.

3.3.2 Local Authority FOI requests

During the course of the interviews an alternative argument was put forward by one of the safety officers in the research, which led to a new FOI angle needing to be explored. They raised that football clubs pay their business rates, so why should they not be entitled to policing in the same way that other businesses are, such as pubs or nightclubs. This meant an examination of how much football clubs actually paid in business rates and how much of this gets transferred to the local police authority was required. Business rates are charged on most non-domestic properties, and are calculated based on the 'rateable value' of the property (HM Government, n.d.), this is linked to the value and use of the land on the property, but this a complex system of taxation (HM Treasury, 2021). Unlike council tax, where Police and Crime

Commissioners are able to set a levy that is paid to the local police, there is no such system for business rates. Instead, business rates are paid half to the local authority and half to central government (Local Government Association, 2021). Therefore, FOI requests were required as part of this research to explore how much football clubs are actually paying in business rates to their local authority, and what proportion of that is paid to the local police. The following questions were submitted either on local authority websites, or directly to the local authority via email:

Question 1 From 2015 to 2020, how much have professional football clubs (Premier League through to Football Conference) in your local authority area paid in business rates?

Question 2 From 2015 to 2020, what percentage of that business rate has gone to the local police service?

These requests were submitted to 106 local authorities, which covered the 116 football clubs from the Premier League to the National Conference.

There were two initial pilot FOI requests to identify if there were any issues with the questions posed. These were submitted to Dorset Police and Bournemouth Borough Council respectively in February 2021. This police force and council was chosen, as they had a single football club (AFC Bournemouth) which reduced the complexities with this pilot request. The FOI was answered positively and no issues were identified with the questions so the original questions were proceeded with. FOI requests to both police forces and local authorities, were submitted from March 2021. Most were returned within the twenty working day timeframe, however there were some outliers to this.

The FOI data provides one perspective on this research, and whilst this data is interesting within its own right, it needs to be complemented by qualitative data to support the process of triangulation for validity and credibility outlined at the opening of this chapter. This was achieved by utilising a series of semi structured interviews, as discussed in the next section.

3.5 Interviews

This section examines how objectives 2 and 3 of this research were met by establishing practitioners' views towards SPS and their experiences of managing the SPS process, as well as examination of the views of key stakeholders in the SPS process. This was met through interview questions which sought to assess the suitability of the current SPS arrangements and identify opportunities for progressive change. In this section the recruitment and sampling of participants is considered for both police forces and football clubs, as well as the approach to the interviews and ethical considerations.

Interviews are a useful research method as they have the potential to provide a large amount of 'rich and highly illuminating material' (Robson, 2011, p. 281). Brancati (2018, p. 141) highlights that semi-structured interviews are particularly useful for exploration of an issue and fit well with a convenience and snowball sampling method, as participants are from a particular network and may be known to one another, which was the case with this research study. Therefore, interviews were effective in meeting objectives 2 and 3 of this research, with specific questions

around how the SPS process is negotiated, and the issues that manifest in this and how the process could be improved. Semi structured interviews were necessary as it allowed for a clear framework of key areas (themes) for discussion but provided room for the interviewee to explore areas that the researcher may not have considered. The interviews were generally conducted on a one to one basis; however, two interviews were conducted with two participants present in each. Gray (2018) highlights that one to one interviews are an ideal way of eliciting rich detail, providing the interviewer is skilled at building rapport. However, Bows (2018, p. 102) highlights that joint interviews can also be a key way of stimulating discussion amongst the participants on themes set by the researcher, allowing for in depth material to develop but cautions that this can stifle some individuals from expressing their views. As such, the two joint interviews were only utilised with participants who were already colleagues and are more likely to feel comfortable in expressing their opinions around one another. Due to the adversarial nature of the topic and potential for DFOs and safety officers to disagree it would not be appropriate for group interviews to be conducted involving DFOs and safety officers together, it would also likely result in any meaningful data being suppressed.

The interviews were broken down into two separate phases:

- Phase 1 – interviewing DFO and safety officer / football club representative participants
- Phase 2 – interviewing participants with a strategic overview or professional interest in SPS for football policing

The justification for these two phases is discussed in the 'Sampling' section below, and the hierarchy displayed in Figure 4. Both phases allowed for a rounded view of the topic from people that have an operational, as well as people that have a strategic perspective on SPS in football policing.

The interviews were conducted over a 15-month period between November 2020 and January 2022. All interviews were conducted online, using Microsoft Teams, with the exception of one interview (DFO 1) which was conducted over the phone. The online interviews were recorded using the recording function on Microsoft Teams, in the case of the phone interview a Dictaphone was used to record. Initially the interviews were transcribed using the 'Otter' software, but as the functionality on Microsoft Teams developed, a transcript was available to download as a word document. Some participants did not wish to be recorded, or their interview used in the research. As a result, these do not form part of this thesis, but were useful conversations that helped to contextualise some of the issues. All transcripts were then checked against the recording and edited to ensure they were an accurate reflection of the interview, a redacted and anonymised version was created, with participant details and any other information which could lead to their identity being removed (see section 3.7 for further discussion). The redacted transcripts were then emailed to the participant to check accuracy, and to offer the opportunity for any comments to be removed and not utilised in the research. Two participants returned highlighted sections, and asked for this content not to be used in the research, which was complied with.

The utilisation of Microsoft Teams for the interviews is not something that was initially envisaged for this research (see section 3.7 for ethics discussion on this). O'Connor & Madge (2017) suggest that face to face interviews are the preferred format for qualitative research, as it is perceived as providing a better quality of interview. However, as the majority of the interviews were conducted either during a national lockdown or during periods of restrictions due to Covid-19, it felt normalised to conduct the interviews this way.

TABLE 7 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ONLINE INTERVIEWS (ADAPTED FROM DEAKIN & WAKEFIELD, 2014, P. 613)

Issue	Advantages	Disadvantages
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows participants flexibility in terms of meeting location • Participants are used to video meetings due to Covid-19, so may not regard it as inferior to a face to face meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential interviewees may be reluctant to participate if they have a preference towards face to face meetings. • Participants may have video meeting fatigue due to Covid-19, and be reluctant to participate
Logistical and technological considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost and time effective, as travel is minimised • More environmentally friendly • Ease of recording and transcribing using video software • Most participants were routinely using video meetings, so were familiar with the software • Allows for data to be gathered more easily from a larger geographical area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional transcribing software was required at first, as Microsoft Teams was less developed • Occasional technological problems with participant broadband affected the quality of the call
Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoids lone working and travel for the researcher • Interviewees can withdraw easily by leaving the call • Anonymity process is the same as with face to face interviews • Health and safety concerns alleviated regarding Covid-19 • Recordings automatically stored in cloud via Microsoft Stream, adds data security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaining informed consent has to be done via email, as opposed to at the start of the interview, and requires chasing up by the researcher • Participants may feel uncomfortable that it is visually recorded and not just audio recorded • Participants may feel uncomfortable being filmed in

		their own home
Rapport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In some cases, the participants were existing professional contacts, so rapport was already present. • Rapport was built up with other participants through email exchanges prior to and an informal conversation at the start of the interview. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No conversation can occur outside of the video setting, which stifles informal discussion • The physical distance between researcher and interviewee can make it feel less personable than face to face interviews
Absentees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and money have not been spent if the interviewee does not attend the interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier for participants to not attend by not logging into the call

Deakin & Wakefield (2014) provide an analytical account of conducting Skype interviews for research. Albeit in a pre-Covid-19 world, the comments are still relevant. They have provided useful detail around the advantages and disadvantages, and this has been adapted here to reflect this research in a Covid-19 context, as detailed in Table 7. Despite these potential drawbacks, upon reflecting on the interviews for this research, I feel that the positives outweigh them. This is because at the time of the data collection, online video meetings were normalised and the general population had become more proficient at conducting such meetings. If I were to conduct this study again I would still utilise online interviews because of these benefits.

3.5.1 Sampling & Recruitment

For clarity around a research sample, it is important for the researcher to establish exactly 'who' or 'what' is going to be studied (Savin-Baden & Howell Major, 2013, p. 97). In order to meet the specific nature of the research questions a purposive sample of participants who have expertise in a certain area is required (Bryman, 2016, p. 408; Brancati, 2018, p. 126). For the first phase of interviews, the research population comprises two specific groups of people:

- Dedicated Football Officers (DFOs) in police forces in England and Wales
- Safety officers performing the role at football clubs in England and Wales, or alternative football club representatives

These individuals were sought as participants due to their subject matter expertise and first-hand experience of dealing with SPS negotiation from either the view point of the police or the football club, which will help to answer objectives 2 and 3.

It is not straightforward to establish or calculate the exact size of these research populations, therefore estimates have to be made which then assist in determining how representative the sample in this research is. There is no publicly held information on the number of DFOs or safety officers in England and Wales. The number of DFOs could be established by submitting FOI requests to all police forces, but realistically this will not yield information that is much different to the estimates I have made here. There are 43 police forces in England and Wales, all of which will have some elements of football policing, but these will vary greatly in the need for resourcing. The College of Policing (2018b) provide guidance on how forces should structure their football policing resources, depending on the number and status of the clubs and the historical threat and risk that they present. As such it is reasonable to expect that large urban police forces would have a greater number of DFOs than smaller rural forces. In addition, some DFOs will manage more than one football club, for example when I was a DFO with Thames Valley Police I principally covered three clubs (Reading, Wycombe Wanderers and Maidenhead United). Whereas other clubs may require (and often did have) more than one DFO allocated to them, as well as

an additional officer such as a police force football banning order officer. In the absence of any publicly available data, it would be fair to estimate that the total number of DFOs in England and Wales would be around 80-100. This is based partly on my experience to calculate that the majority of the 92 professional clubs have a single DFO, with some clubs having more than one and some other DFOs overseeing more than one club.

With regards to safety officers, there are 92 professional football clubs across the Premier and Football Leagues in England and Wales and a further 72 professional and semi-professional football clubs in the National Leagues. These clubs will all have at least one person who is nominated as the safety officer and in the case of some clubs higher up the football pyramid there may be a larger safety team consisting of assistants and deputies. There may also be occasions where safety officers are performing the role at more than one club. Based on these factors, it is realistic to estimate that the total population of safety officers for the purposes of this research is between 150-200.

For some research, it is important to utilise a sample of the research population that is considered as representative of the whole population that is being studied (Gomm, 2008, p. 129; Gray, 2018; p. 83). Given that the research population of DFOs and safety officers is relatively small, it is difficult to clearly establish what a representative sample will be. Robson (2011, p. 276-277) comments that obtaining a representative sample can be impossible to fulfil and the sample will invariably result

in being one of convenience around who is willing to participate in the study. Given the small research population the only way that this study would be truly representative would be if all the population were interviewed, however this is not realistic. Even though there is national guidance which states that police forces should be consistently approaching SPS (College of Policing 2018b; National Police Chiefs' Council, 2018), there is likely to be some variability in how both police forces and football clubs approach this issue. Therefore, one may argue that a representative sample would be to interview a DFO from every police force in England and Wales, as well as a safety officer from a football club within that force area. If this approach were to be adopted it could result in over 80 interviews, which is a highly unlikely number to achieve due to potential for high non-response rates (Bryman, 2016, p. 184). It would also produce an unwieldy volume of data, making the analysis stage incoherent and unachievable (Robson, 2011, p. 300).

Therefore, instead of seeking to achieve a representative sample, this study obtained a sample that can be considered as being indicative of the research population, as there is a broad range of police force types, as well as football clubs from different leagues (displayed in Tables 9 and 10). The denotation of a police force as large, medium or small is an observation of police officer strength as opposed to geographical size (see Allen & Zayed, 2019, for more details on police officer numbers). Most of the participants were male, although female participants from football clubs and police forces were interviewed in the research. This is broadly in

line with majority of people in football safety officer, and police football officer roles being male.

A challenging aspect of researching is securing access to research participants, which can be a time-consuming process involving negotiation and written consent as well as establishing a clear time frame of when access is required (Francis, 2018, p. 52). This challenge is further amplified when attempting to research with police forces due to what Reiner & Newburn (2007, p. 353) describe as the 'peculiar difficulty of police research'. This concerns anxiety from police officers about how they may be represented by researchers or the revelation of controversial material (Reiner & Newburn, 2007, p. 353). Essentially this research sample can be considered as a difficult to access group, as their details are not always publicly available and as highlighted above there may be some reluctance to participate in research. Also, with the organisations such as the Premier League or the FA, it is difficult to ascertain the exact person that is required and as such requests for interviews can be ignored, or not reach the intended recipient.

In order to recruit participants for interview in a timely manner, initial emails were sent directly to potential participants, this was accompanied by a participant information sheet outlining the nature of the study. Robson (2011, pp. 200-204) outlines a series of effective steps to obtaining consent from participants in a way that ensures that they are making an informed decision to take part in the research. Through my previous role as a DFO in the police and through other research activities,

I have built up a series of professional contacts of both DFOs and safety officers. This was a purposive sample in that it is being selected because it fits the research objectives, however one could argue that the sample is more convenient in nature because of the potential for ease of access to the participants (Brancati, 2018, pp. 126-127). These individuals were contacted and invited to take part in the study, but my existing pool of professional networks was not sufficient to provide a comprehensive sample on its own. Therefore, an element of snowball sampling was utilised, with contacts that participate in the research also being used to facilitate contact with other DFOs or safety officers who were willing to participate in the research. This form of snowball sampling can be particularly effective when trying to gain access to difficult to reach groups when combined with initial purposive sampling (Robson, 2011, pp. 275-276; Bryman, 2016, p. 419; Brancati, 2018, p. 128) and was critical in ensuring a research sample that was sufficient to meet the research objectives. However, it can lead to bias in data due to potential participants being contacted who may have a similar perspective to the initial participant (Parker, Scott & Geddes, 2019).

Safety Officer 1 was the first participant that was interviewed in November 2020. As a former colleague, we have worked extensively together in the police and as such have built up a professional relationship. Following the interview, they reached out to a number of other safety officers in their professional network, to help gain participants for me. SO5 and DFO5 also provided a contact for me through their professional network. The remaining participants were recruited through direct contact, either through my professional network or email addresses or contact forms

that were available on police force or football club websites. This is summarised in

Table 8:

TABLE 8 RECRUITMENT METHOD FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

Participant	Method of recruitment
Football Club Participants	
SO1	Email contact through my existing professional network
SO2	Email contact through my existing professional network
SO3	Email contact after introduction made by SO1
SO4	Email contact after introduction made by SO1
SO5	Email contact after introduction made by SO1
SO6	Email contact after introduction made by SO1
SO7	Email contact after introduction made by SO5
SLO8	Email contact after introduction made by Amanda Jacks
Police Participants	
DFO1	Email and phone contact through my existing professional network
DFO2	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO3	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO4	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO5	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO6	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO7	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO8	Email contact through my existing professional network
DFO9	Email contact after introduction made by DFO5
Strategic Organisation Participants	
NPCC – Mark Roberts	Direct email contact through contact details on public facing website
SGSA Rep	Email contact to generic SGSA email on public facing website, referred to SGSA Rep
EFL Rep	Email contact to generic EFL email on public facing website, referred to EFL Rep
FSA – Amanda Jacks	Direct email contact from contact details on public facing website
HMICFRS Rep	Email contact to generic HMICFRS email on public facing website, referred to HMICFRS Rep
PCC's Office Reps	Email contact to generic PCC's Office email on public facing website, referred to PCC's Rep
SAG Rep	Email contact to generic local authority emails and asked for referral to SAG chairs
Home Office Rep	Email contact to Kit Malthouse (Policing Minister), referred to Home Office Rep

Following this recruitment, the following tables represent the actual participants in this research and their skills and experience which are relevant to the study.

TABLE 9 DFO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Police participants			
Participant name	Police force area	Club(s)	Background & Experience
DFO1	Small rural	League 1	Has over 20 years police service and vastly experienced in the FIO and current DFO role
DFO2	Large urban	Various – Premier League to National League	Has over 15 years police service with operational experience of policing football. Current role for over three years is as a supervisor on the force football unit
DFO3	Large urban	Various – Premier League to National League	Has over 30 years police service with operational experience of policing football. Current role for over 15 years is as a supervisor on the force football unit
DFO4	Small rural	League 2, National League	Has over 10 years police service, over 8 years involved in the policing of football, initially as a spotter. Has been in current role as a DFO for over 3 years
DFO5	Medium mixed rural and urban	Premier League, League 1 and National League	Has over 10 years police service, with a vast amount of football policing experience. Has been in current role as a DFO for over 7 years.
DFO6	Large mixed rural and urban	Championship, League 1 and National League	Has over 20 years police service, with a vast amount of football policing experience. Has been in current role as a DFO for over 5 years.
DFO7	Large mixed rural and urban	Championship, League 1 and National League	Has over 15 years police service, with operational experience of policing football and event planning for other large events. Has been in current role as football unit supervisor for less than 1 year
DFO8	Large mixed rural and urban	Premier League and National League	Has over 15 years police service, with significant operational experience of policing football, as well as event planning for other large events. Has been in current role as a DFO for over 10 years
DFO9	Medium mixed rural and urban	Championship, League 1 and National League	30 years police service, extensive public order experience as a bronze commander. Has been in current role as a football unit supervisor for 9 years.

TABLE 10 FOOTBALL CLUB INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Football club participants			
Participant name	Police force area	Club(s)	Background & Experience
SO1	Large mixed rural and urban	Championship, League 1 and League 2	Over 30 years police service including silver commander duties for football. Over 5 years as a safety officer including time with a club in League 2 and League 1, currently at a Championship club.

			Interview focused on experience from both clubs.
SO2	Small rural	League 2	Over 30 years police service including the former Football Intelligence Officer role. Current role as a safety officer for over 3 years.
SO3	Small rural	League 1	Vast experience in football safety for over 20 years with roles as a safety officer in League 1 and League 2, as well as steward training. At the time of interview was moving to work as a safety officer at a Championship club, but interview focused on the work at the League 1 club.
SO4	Medium mixed urban and rural	Championship	Over 30 years police service, including the former Football Liaison Officer role and silver commander for football events. Previous work as a safety officer at a League 2 club, currently working as a safety officer at a Championship club for less than 1 year.
SO5	Small mixed urban and rural	Premier League	Over 30 years police service including operational experience of football policing. Previous work as safety officer at non-league clubs. Was a safety officer at a Premier League club for 9 years and currently at a Championship club. Has held a management role within the Football Safety Officer's Association. Interview focused on work at the Premier League club, as well as FSOA role.
SO6	Large urban	Premier League	Over 30 years of match day safety experience. Started as a steward, then a steward manager and became a safety officer in 2006. Currently safety officer at a Premier League club, a position held for over 15 years.
SO7	Medium mixed rural and urban	Championship	30 years policing experience. Has been a safety officer for 16 years, working with a football club as well as other large sporting and international events. Current role is as a safety officer at a Championship football club.
SLO8	Medium mixed rural and urban	National League	Previously involved in the Supporter's Trust, before becoming the Supporter Liaison Officer at the club. Actively involved in meetings between the football club and the police with regards to safety and resourcing.

In addition to these participants, a range of other actors and interested parties were required as part of the research to build up a comprehensive picture of the issues.

This can be described as a purposive case study sample (Robinson, 2014), which results in a pyramid approach. This is visually represented in Figure 4 (also see glossary of terms):

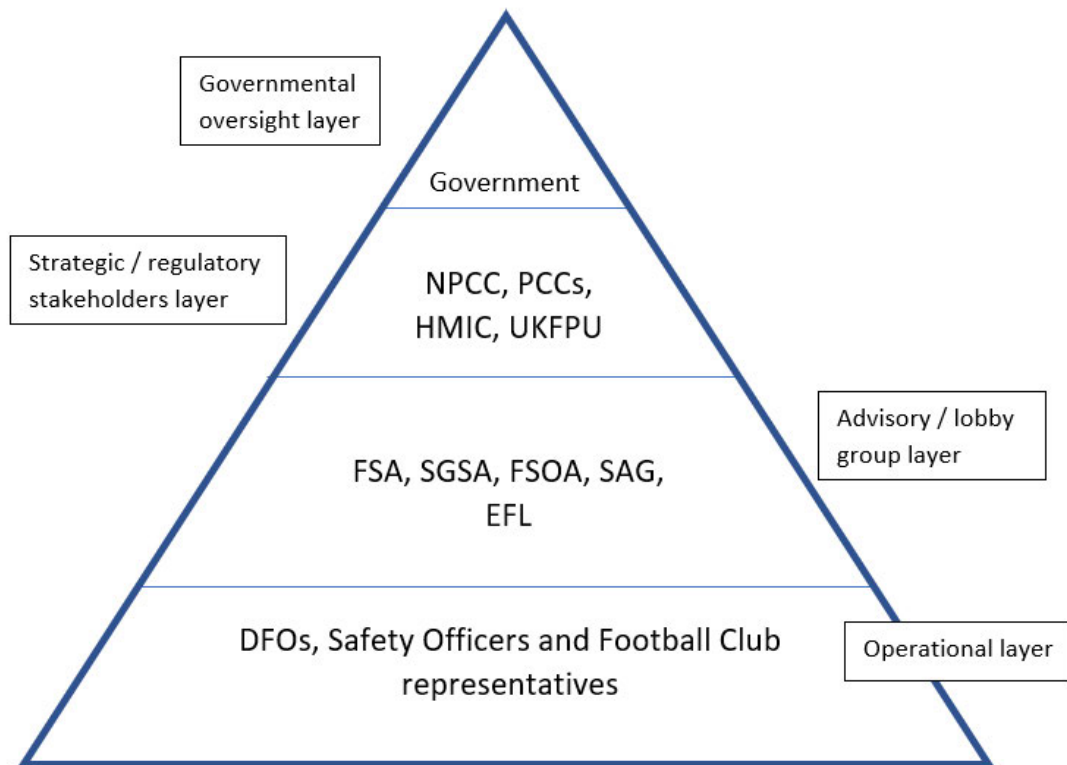


FIGURE 4 PYRAMID OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The pyramid of research participants is layered according to the role and influence that they have over the issue of SPS. At the base of the pyramid are the practitioners that are engaging with the SPS process as a core part of their role, but are not in a position to easily influence change in the SPS process. The next layer up comprises stakeholder organisations that have a clear interest in how football is policed, as well as how SPS issues manifest. They are likely to have contact with practitioners on a routine basis, as well as being able to lobby other organisations or even government, however they are not able to make policy change decisions that would affect

practice. The next layer on comprises organisations that are linked to policing and can interact with government, as well as other organisations. They will be able to set policy decisions that can be implemented by police forces, which can impact on the SPS process. The NPCC and UKFPU should be regarded as key stakeholders within football policing, and their influence can amend the way in which police practice occurs in relation to football policing, but also regarding SPS. At the top of the pyramid is the government, and more specifically the Home Office, as policing falls within their remit. The government participating in this research is seen as important, as they can influence legislation change with regards to the Police Act 1996 and SPS.

The list of phase two participants is detailed in Table 11. The sample of interview participants for the study represents a very comprehensive pool of people, that can offer a variety of perspectives into the issue of SPS and can therefore be considered as a reasonable indicator of the research population. By utilising this broad sample, this research provides a unique insight into SPS.

TABLE 11 PHASE 2 INTERVIEW PARTICIPANT DETAILS

Participant name	Organisation	Role	Notes
Chief Constable Mark Roberts	National Police Chiefs' Council	National Strategic Lead for Football Policing and Chief Constable of Cheshire Police (at time of interview was Deputy Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police)	Wished to have comments attributed to himself, as advised that what he said to me would be repeated in an interview with the media.
SGSA Rep	Sports Ground Safety Authority	Sits on SAG for clubs within a specific region and ensures compliance with the Green Guide	
EFL Rep	English Football League	Unspecified	Did not want to be recorded, but discussed their perspectives on football policing

Amanda Jacks	Football Supporters Association	Caseworker, providing assistance for supporters that feel they have been poorly treated by the police or football clubs. The FSA provides representation at the APPG for Football Supporters	Was happy to go on record as herself after reviewing the transcript, as comments would be replicated in the media
HMICFRS Rep	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service	Senior oversight of inspections of police forces	Did not wish to be recorded, but provided some insights from their perspective
PCC Rep 1 PCC Rep 2	An unspecified Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	PCC Rep 1 – Chief Finance Officer PCC Rep 2 – Head of Communications	
SAG Rep	Safety Advisor Group Chair from an unspecified local authority	Chairs a Safety Advisory Group that has responsibility for a football club within their local authority area	
Home Office Rep	Home Office – Police Funding	Responsible for strategy for policing funding within the Home Office	Did not wish to be recorded, but provided some discussion and Home Office perspective on this topic.

In addition to participants that were successfully recruited as part of the research, there were a number of other potential participants that were contacted that either did not respond at all, or declined to participate in the research. This included 15 DFOs or Safety Officers, plus numerous individuals and organisations that would have a broader interest in this issue. The politicians that were contacted as part of the research had either a current or previous role that was relevant to this research, or had previously contributed to a debate in parliament on SPS.

3.5.2 Analysis

Gray (2018, p. 218) considers that the main problems associated with interviews is the time-consuming nature of not only the interview, but the analysis as well. Therefore, a smaller purposive, yet indicative research sample was utilised. All the

interviews that are used in this thesis lasted between 30-60 minutes approximately, were digitally recorded and subsequently transcribed. An effective approach to analysing qualitative interviews is employing a coding process that establishes issues that were common to the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006). As such, this coding explored themes that were intentionally placed into the interviews but also themes which emerged from discussions by the participants themselves. The interview questions were designed around these themes (see appendix 3 for example interview questions), which were:

- Costs
- Policy & Training
- Negotiations
- SPS Perspectives
- Alternatives

A theme of 'better policing/stewarding' emerged from the participants from the initial interviews, so was added to subsequent interviews.

The interview transcripts were then reviewed manually, with relevant quotes being added to a table for use in chapters 4 and 5. This was done using Microsoft Excel, which made the large volume of data easier to manage. As the interviews had been structured into specific themes, all the interviews followed a similar pattern of addressing each theme in turn, so the relevant quotes could easily be extracted from each interview and placed in the spreadsheet. There was an effective balance of quotes retrieved under each theme, which is demonstrated in Figure 5:

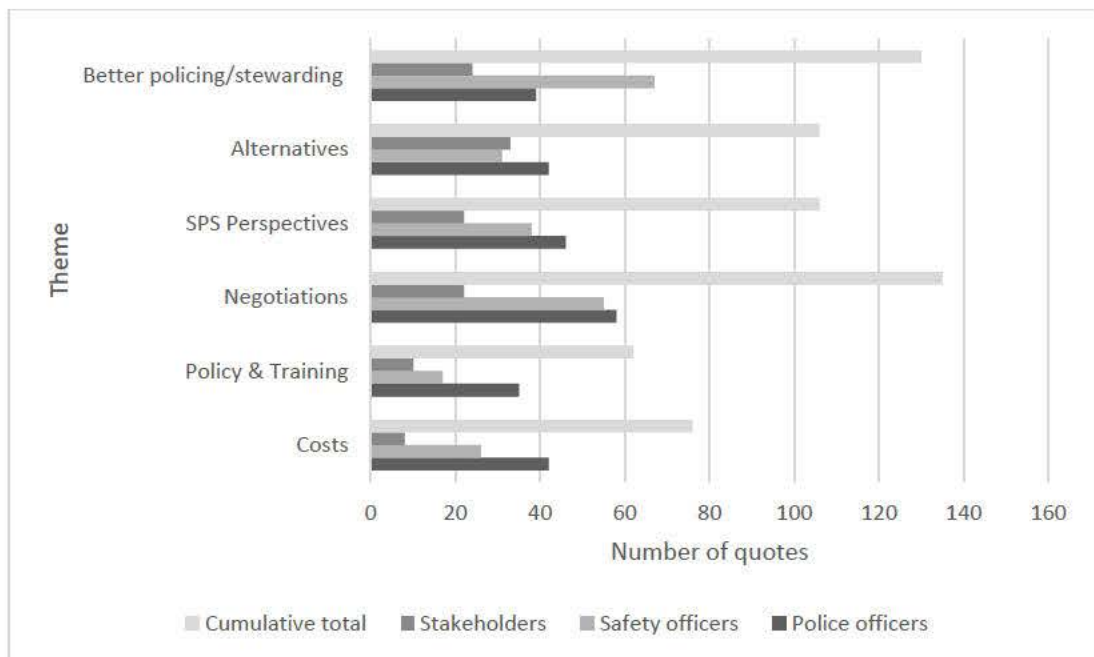


FIGURE 5 NUMBER OF QUOTES EXTRACTED UNDER EACH THEME

The quotes were then further analysed and subject to a colour coding using a RAG rating (Red, Amber, Green) to denote the prevalence that they would appear in the final thesis. Green quotes were particularly pertinent and would almost certainly appear in the thesis. Amber quotes were pertinent, but repeating information and may be used in the thesis to emphasise points. Once the Green and Amber category quotes had been established, Red quotes were considered to be less impactful and therefore were not required in the final thesis.

3.6 Researcher Positionality

The positionality of the researcher needs to be clearly explained, as different researchers may interpret data differently as well as influence their research field (Dean et al., 2018; Lu & Hodge, 2019). I have outlined in Chapter 1 my background with regards to my experiences of policing football, so it is important to consider how my positionality can then impact on my participants, the analysis and the results of

the research. As I am a former police officer that was engaged in football policing over a period of six years, the insider-outsider dichotomy and associated complexities are relevant (Brown, 1996; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009), specifically in relation to policing. According to Brown’s typologies, I would be considered as an ‘outsider-insider’ (Brown, 1996). This is because I was engaged in work (recently) as a police officer, which means I would still be regarded as an ‘insider’ or having some sense of belonging to the police service, but also an ‘outsider’ as I no longer work within policing. Dwyer & Buckle (2009) articulate this as the ‘space in-between’, which I occupy as a former police officer, but those that work within football policing may deem that I have enough credibility regarding the topic. Furthermore, I am also a white male, which is the most common demographic within policing (see Allen & Mansfield, 2022). All of the research participants were white, and 18 out of 23 were male. This will have impacted on my research in unknown ways, but it is well evidenced recently that both race and gender issues are prevalent within policing in terms of interactions with the public (see Casey, 2023).

My positionality can have both advantages and disadvantages, as described in Table 12:

TABLE 12 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF MY RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY

Researcher Positionality Advantages	Researcher Positionality Disadvantages
Credibility within policing, which may assist in accessing DFO and safety officer participants.	Participants may regard me as being biased in my approach and findings towards the police.
Ability to interpret the materials, subject matter and terminology that participants use regarding football policing and SPS.	Pre-existing experiences of football policing and SPS may lead to unconscious bias with regards to how I approach the data collection, and interpret the results.
The research is conducted from a position of both having research experience on	Safety officers may be reluctant to speak to me because of my policing background.

football policing, but also operational experience.	
	My insider status will diminish as the duration from my previous police employment increases.

To preclude the concern that I may be biased toward the police, Bryman (2016, p. 206) suggests that taking a neutral stance is key to building rapport with participants. At the start of the interviews I explained to all participants that I am approaching this topic as a previous practitioner who found that the process did not work well for either party and felt that it needed reform, emphasising my neutral approach to them.

Reflecting on how my positionality may have impacted on the study is difficult to succinctly explain. I am confident that I will have been able to gather data that otherwise could have not been offered so freely, because people I had only met for a few minutes on Microsoft Teams spoke very openly about their experiences, giving great detail and negative opinion of police forces or football clubs and trusted that their identity would remain confidential. This allowed for rich data to be gathered. A former colleague (Safety Officer 1), even utilised my police background to legitimise my position as a researcher when helping to recruit further participants for the study. My pre-conceived ideas around SPS certainly changed throughout the process of the study. I started the process considering that there could and should be a better way of implementing SPS, even from a pro police perspective. As the research developed, I found myself coming to a perspective that the answer is much more nuanced and complex than this. I even found myself considering that the whole process should be

abolished. The reflections on this and my positionality is discussed further in Chapter 6.

3.7 Ethics

TABLE 13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND MITIGATIONS

Ethical consideration	Mitigation
Storage of data	This study utilised human participants, which necessitated the requirement for data to be stored securely on a password restricted OneDrive folder to ensure confidentiality for participants (with the exception of those participants who opted to be named, as outline earlier) (Neuman, 2006, p. 139; Bryman, 2016, p. 128). The data was stored in line with University of Gloucestershire data retention policies.
Lone working	Initial interviews were conducted online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was considered to be a more efficient method so was retained for subsequent interviews, even after Covid-19 restrictions eased
Reputational risks	The intention of the research is to discover and promote good policing practice as well as issues that are encountered in relation to the research question, whilst seeking to utilise this information to inform progressive change. Constructive criticisms resulting from the research, have not been directed at any named police forces and were considered against policing in England & Wales in general. The same applies to football clubs. Participants were advised that any critical comments that are made about their employer will be anonymised in the research.
Confidentiality for participants	A transcript of each interview was created verbatim. A separate transcript was created from this, where the participant is allocated a pseudonym (e.g. DFO 1). Any reference to people, locations, police forces, football clubs or any other information that could identify any person was sanitised (e.g. <football club>; <police colleagues name>), with excerpts from the sanitised transcripts being used in the thesis. Participants were sent anonymised transcripts for approval before they were used in the research. No data was used from those participants that did not wish to be recorded.
Consent	All participants were fully informed of the requirements and purpose of the study, by being sent a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) in advance (see appendix 1). Once participants had an opportunity to review the PIS and had agreed to participate, they were emailed a consent form for completion (see appendix 2). This included the right to withdraw from the research at any stage until the thesis has been completed.

Research needs to be conducted in a manner that is ethical and accountable as well (Robson, 2011, p. 221; Barbour, 2014, p. 78). The research received approval through the University of Gloucestershire's School of Natural and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee in April 2020 (see appendix 4). The ethical considerations are detailed in Table 13. Ethical issues such as this, as well as reputational risks and researcher risks were mitigated against and detailed for this research to gain ethics approval.

The initial intention with the interviews when my ethics forms were submitted in early 2020, was to conduct the interview face to face. This is because it was felt that this would be the most appropriate approach, and would engage the participant more and allow for better data to be gathered. By the time ethical approval was granted in April 2020, we were in the midst of lockdown due to Coronavirus. Therefore, the ethics submission had been varied so that the interviews would occur online and only be conducted face to face if permitted when restrictions had eased. However, maintaining all the interviews online was the most effective approach for this study.

3.8 Issues arising

Reflective practice is a key professional development skill, but is also a key part of research in avoiding making assumptions (Moon, 2006; Bassot, 2016). In this research, a key and unavoidable issue was Covid-19, but this was both an opportunity and a threat. A great amount of time was saved by conducting the interviews online

given the location of participants in different parts of the country. However, the suspension in football being played and the resumption of football behind closed doors at the time of the interviews would clearly have impacted the results in a way that is difficult to fully understand. Even though participants were asked to reflect on SPS with a pre Covid lens, they most likely would have answered questions differently had Covid-19 not occurred. This far from invalidates the results though, instead it provides an opportunity to open a discussion on how football needs to be policed having had the natural firebreak that was created by Covid-19.

As with any research, there were issues around non-response from potential participants. This can be for a variety of reasons, although anecdotally I did hear that a number of potential DFO participants were no longer in that role as they had been redeployed due to the lack of football policing required during Covid-19. Similarly, the small number of participants who did want to speak to me but did not want to go on record has left some aspects of the results lacking those key narratives from a broader range of stakeholders. Nevertheless, this helped me to understand in more detail the context surrounding the current issues in SPS.

A key issue, and unanswered question is around the existing publicly available information on the costs of policing football held by South Yorkshire Police and the National Police Chiefs' Council. Despite repeated attempts to gain access to an individual who could provide a detailed account of how this data had been calculated, my requests were not responded to. This is discussed further in chapter 4, but a clearer picture of this data would have added value to this thesis.

3.9 Key arguments

In order to achieve the research objectives, it has clearly been demonstrated in this chapter that qualitative interviews, supplemented by the FOI requests, is the best method to use. The justification of the methods has been articulated here, and is clearly based in a theoretical framework that applies logic whilst maximising potential data outputs. Whilst it may be an overclaim that the methods have generated a unique data set, they have certainly led to originality of the thesis and the discovery of new information that makes a substantial contribution to the field of study. This is because data from a difficult to access population has been generated, but furthermore has been triangulated by gaining perspectives from football club, police, and stakeholder participants. The breadth of the participants assists with the claim for originality commensurate with doctoral study. Moreover, the FOI data that has been generated is detailed and comprehensive, and something that no other current body of work in this field can claim to present. This is because the FOI data actually helps to debunk existing data on the cost of policing football, as is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4 – Critical analysis of the cost of policing football

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter addresses objective 2 of this research, by critically evaluating the costs of policing football in England and Wales. Whilst it cannot be definitively said exactly what that cost is, this research does categorically demonstrate that existing costing data is inaccurate. It also begins to address objective 3 of this research, by exploring views of the research participants in terms of the suitability of SPS as well as the costs. This chapter critically evaluates the data that has been generated from this research through Freedom of Information (FOI) requests. This provides an analysis of how much police forces spend on football policing, as well the income that is generated from cost recovery through SPS for football. The FOI data is examined in section 4.2, and this data shows that the existing data on costs of policing football are not accurate.. The reasons for this are extensively discussed, and this helps to demonstrate the original contribution of this thesis. FOI data received from local authorities in England and Wales regarding the business rates that football clubs pay is also analysed here. This shows that the police are not receiving any income from football clubs through business rate taxation. Views from the interview participants are critically analysed, in terms of the financial arrangements surrounding SPS from police, football clubs and stakeholder perspective. This demonstrates some of the financial pressures that both police forces and football clubs are under, as well as inconsistency there is nationally to SPS practices between football clubs and police forces. Perspectives on the merits of alternative sources of funding for football

policing are explored, as this forms a key part of the thesis in exploring reforms to SPS.

4.2 Freedom of Information Analysis

This section evaluates the FOI data that was obtained in relation to the amount of money that football clubs pay in business rates, as well as how much police forces receive in SPS and how much they spend on policing football.

4.2.1 Football clubs and business rates

As detailed in section 3.4, a series of FOI requests were sent to 106 Local Authorities in England and Wales in March 2021, which asked the following questions:

Question 1 From 2015 to 2020, how much have professional football clubs (Premier League through to Football Conference) in your local authority area paid in business rates?

Question 2 From the 2015 to 2020, what percentage of that business rate has gone to the local police service?

31 of the 106 Local Authorities responded with a refusal to provide the data, citing that it was subject to privacy in terms of the financial affairs of the football clubs concerned and therefore exempt from being provided under FOI. A rebuttal was sent to all these Local Authorities, explaining that the position that they had adopted was contrary to that of most other Local Authorities and as such the exemption that was being claimed was therefore invalid. All the Local Authorities concerned still refused

to provide the data, claiming that as they were independent of other Local Authorities they could apply and interpret the exemptions as they considered appropriate (see appendix 6 for an example). It is possible to further appeal that decision (see Information Commissioner's Office, no date). However, this was not considered to be a worthwhile avenue of exploration due to the time consuming nature of any appeal being not commensurate to the data that would be returned. The remaining Local Authorities had responded and provided the relevant data, which ensured that there was sufficient data to be able to understand the relationship (or lack of) between football club business rates and payments to police forces.

Business rates can be calculated by establishing the Rateable Value (RV) of a property, and then using a multiplier to calculate the actual amount that the property is liable for in business rates to the Local Authority (see HM Government, 2022). During the Covid-19 pandemic, a range of businesses were provided with business rates relief by the Government (see HM Government, 2021), as many businesses were not able to operate normally. This resulted in the 2020 figures obtained as part of this research, being discounted from the results that are presented here. This allows for a more accurate picture to develop of what football clubs are paying in business rates. Table 14 summarises the data received through the FOI requests to local authorities, and shows the amount that football clubs are paying in business rates:

TABLE 14 FOI DATA SHOWING BUSINESS RATES PAID BY FOOTBALL CLUBS (2015-2019)

Local authority	Club(s)	Rateable Value	Multiplier added	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Barking & Dagenham	Dagenham & Redbridge	£36,250	£17,799		£3,944	£19,880	£16,262	£0
Barrow in Furness	Barrow	£16,750	£8,224	£7,408	£9,940	£7,899	£8,040	£8,224
Birmingham	Birmingham City	£860,000	£433,440	£596,530	£601,370	£584,041	£574,085	£553,057
	Aston Villa	£2,870,000	£1,446,480	£1,281,800	£1,292,200	£1,374,730	£1,414,910	£1,446,480
Blackburn with Darwen	Blackburn Rovers	£840,000	£423,360	£576,810	£581,490	£564,844	£555,217	£534,883
Blackpool	Blackpool	£244,000	£122,976	£145,000	£146,000	£142,000	£139,000	£126,000
Bournemouth	Bournemouth	£287,500	£144,900	£57,928	£58,398	£86,108	£115,728	£144,900
Brent	Wembley Stadium	£7,080,000	£3,568,320	£3,180,600	£3,205,400	£3,532,920	£3,632,040	£3,709,920
Bromley	Bromley	£21,500	£10,557	£3,510	£3,539	£3,408	£3,510	£7,979
Calderdale	FC Halifax	£50,000	£24,550	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Cheltenham	Cheltenham Town	£47,750	£23,445	£25,513	£17,395	£19,439	£22,920	£23,445
Cheshire East	Crewe Alexandra	£56,500	£28,476	£54,230	£54,670	£54,714	£57,425	£59,923
Chesterfield	Chesterfield	£133,000	£67,032	£61,161	£63,374	£58,598	£63,842	£67,009
Colchester	Colchester United	£113,000	£56,952	£47,821	£48,209	£54,127	£55,709	£56,952
Coventry	Coventry City	£600,000	£302,400	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Crawley	Crawley Town	£49,750	£24,427	£15,283	£15,407	£16,460	£20,399	£24,207
Croydon	Crystal Palace	£1,270,000	£640,080	£193,658	£195,168	£301,547	£401,711	£590,343
Derby	Derby County	£610,000	£307,440	£271,180	£291,410	£304,446	£326,738	£343,695
Doncaster	Doncaster Rovers	£236,000	£118,944	£121,780	£120,471	£123,599	£127,765	£135,832
Dover	Dover Athletic	£24,000	£11,784	£12,325	£12,606	£11,552	£11,520	£11,784
Eastleigh	Eastleigh	£47,500	£23,323	£19,474	£19,632	£20,220	£21,083	£22,206
Hammersmith & Fulham	Chelsea	£3,650,000	£1,839,600	£2,023,785	£2,039,565	£1,988,167	£1,955,706	£1,912,600
	Fulham	£760,000	£383,040	£564,300	£568,700	£550,318	£541,267	£452,428
	QPR	£1,000,000	£504,000	£138,510	£139,590	£222,277	£290,341	£425,257
Harrogate	Harrogate Town	£25,750	£12,643	£5,374	£13,543	£12,108	£12,360	£12,643
Hertsmere	Boreham Wood	£41,250	£20,254	£14,174	£14,289	£14,912	£18,498	£20,254
Hounslow	Brentford	£290,000	£146,160	£26,622	£26,838	£31,399	£38,295	£92,893
Islington	Arsenal	£6,130,000	£3,089,520	£3,385,800	£3,412,200	£3,326,988	£3,272,680	£3,212,120
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk	Kings Lynn Town	£9,100	£4,586	£2,111	£2,128	£0	£0	£0

Kingston upon Hull	Hull City	£1,600,000	£806,400	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Kingston upon Thames	AFC Wimbledon	£31,000	£15,221	£15,283	£15,408	£14,446	£14,880	£15,221
Lancaster	Morecambe	£42,500	£20,868	£20,952	£21,123	£19,805	£20,400	£20,868
Leeds	Leeds United	£775,000	£390,600	£562,020	£588,560	£662,593	£718,187	£823,869
Lincoln	Lincoln City	£40,500	£19,886	£32,350	£32,614	£29,637	£26,993	£64,185
Liverpool	Everton	£2,440,000	£1,229,760	£1,084,600	£1,093,400	£1,168,760	£1,206,232	£1,233,148
	Liverpool	£4,410,000	£2,222,640	£1,890,607	£2,241,645	£2,379,690	£2,349,839	£2,264,561
Manchester	Man City	£4,000,000	£2,016,000	£1,311,380	£1,322,020	£1,916,000	£1,972,000	£1,972,000
Mansfield	Mansfield Town	£40,750	£20,008	£19,277	£19,383	£18,990	£19,560	£20,008
Medway	Gillingham	£87,000	£43,848	£47,328	£47,712	£43,785	£42,891	£43,848
Milton Keynes	MK Dons	£936,000	£471,744	£341,059	£434,363	£432,206	£461,448	£471,744
Newham	West Ham United	£3,000,000	£1,512,000	£1,297,377	£377,602	£267,651	£275,297	£281,304
Newport	Newport County	£115,000	£57,960	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Northampton	Northampton Town	£81,000	£40,824	£0	£0	£38,899	£39,933	£40,824
Norwich	Norwich City	£705,000	£355,320	£325,380	£328,020	£334,695	£345,565	£354,720
Nottingham City	Notts County	£93,000	£46,872	£43,877	£44,233	£44,547	£45,849	£46,872
Oldham	Oldham Athletic	£67,500	£34,020	£29,352	£32,772	£35,175	£36,206	£44,155
Oxford	Oxford United	£89,500	£45,108	£45,824	£42,214	£34,603	£28,794	£24,726
Peterborough	Peterborough United	£93,000	£46,872	£55,216	£55,664	£50,972	£45,849	£46,872
Plymouth	Plymouth Argyle	£148,000	£74,592	£59,776	£60,262	£116,590	£105,002	£111,637
Preston	Preston North End	£222,000	£111,888	£141,738	£142,888	£139,000	£136,634	£131,638
RB Windsor & Maidenhead	Maidenhead United	£9,900	£4,861	£1,224	£1,234	£1,188	£1,224	£1,252
Reading	Reading	£870,000	£438,480	£559,036	£574,776	£556,941	£550,382	£534,097
Rochdale	Rochdale	£62,500	£31,500	£31,059	£31,311	£32,367	£34,327	£36,056
Rotherham	Rotherham United	£216,000	£108,864	£39,440	£39,760	£41,673	£77,057	£107,864
Royal Borough Greenwich	Charlton Athletic	£415,000	£209,160	£323,190	£325,710	£311,962	£306,778	£295,829
Rushmoor	Aldershot Town	£41,500	£20,377	£10,230	£10,313	£3,868	£3,984	£4,075
Salford	Salford City	£37,250	£18,290	£4,560	£4,598	£3,681	£4,989	£18,290
Sandwell	West Bromwich Albion	£1,610,000	£811,440	£110,049	£106,363	£113,076	£98,882	£147,044
Solihull	Solihull Moors	£50,000	£24,550	£24,650	£24,850	£23,300	£24,000	£24,550
South Somerset	Yeovil Town	£51,500	£25,956	£35,250	£32,305	£29,550	£29,954	£25,956
Southampton	Southampton	£2,040,000	£1,028,160	£253,895	£255,955	£387,548	£517,374	£774,714

Southend on Sea	Southend United	£49,500	£24,305	£49,120	£49,327	£44,944	£41,419	£38,421
Stockport	Stockport County	£43,000	£21,672	£23,418	£23,608	£21,105	£20,640	£21,110
Stoke on Trent	Stoke City	£1,930,000	£972,720	£221,850	£223,650	£385,925	£530,791	£757,412
	Port Vale	£98,500	£49,644	£41,659	£41,997	£43,034	£45,055	£49,644
Sunderland	Sunderland	£3,530,000	£1,779,120	£990,209	£1,011,892	£1,423,478	£1,773,903	£1,837,287
Sutton	Sutton United	£22,750	£11,466	£9,960	£10,043	£9,903	£10,920	£11,170
Swindon	Swindon Town	£68,500	£34,524	£39,440	£39,760	£36,435	£33,771	£34,524
Trafford	Altrincham	£24,000	£11,784	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Man United	£6,090,000	£3,069,360	£3,268,590	£3,295,110	£3,218,071	£3,163,517	£3,069,360
Walsall	Walsall	£95,500	£48,132	£112,158	£106,641	£86,261	£97,792	£92,114
Waltham Forest	Leyton Orient	£53,000	£26,712	£31,037	£31,279	£27,570	£26,324	£26,912
West Dorset	Weymouth	£13,500	£6,629	£6,360	£6,413	£3,146	£3,240	£3,314
Wirral	Tranmere Rovers	£60,000	£30,240	£41,997	£38,513	£36,729	£36,729	£37,548
Woking	Woking	£24,000	£11,784	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Wolverhampton	Wolverhampton Wanderers	£685,000	£345,240	£568,429	£573,041	£581,388	£588,878	£564,737
Wrexham	Wrexham	£42,000	£20,622	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Wycombe	Wycombe Wanderers	£77,000	£38,808	£47,974	£47,974	£47,974	£47,974	£47,974
Wyre	Fleetwood Town	£34,750	£17,062	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
	Total	£84,942,000	£42,796,141	£26,971,510	£26,731,006	£28,610,687	£29,622,307	£30,524,331

Table 14 shows that there is a great degree of disparity nationally in terms of how much is paid in business rates by football clubs. The multiplier added column shows the actual amount that football clubs should be paying for their business rates, according to the Government website. In general terms, the larger the stadium the higher the amount that is due. Football clubs which are near one another, such as West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers, provide good examples of the disparity. From 2015 to 2019 West Bromwich Albion have been paying significantly under their multiplier added value, whilst Wolverhampton Wanderers have been paying significantly more than their multiplier added value. Purely based on the numerical data here, it is not clear why this disparity is occurring. Section 47

of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 reallows local authorities to apply a discretionary business rate relief, of up to 100%. This can be for a variety of reasons, but is not prescriptive and the local authority can award this for any circumstances that it sees fit. The FOI data demonstrates that this discretionary relief is being exercised by a range of local authorities, leaving a shortfall of around £12 million annually that football clubs are not paying against the multiplier added amounts. It is worth noting that this is not all the data, due to the thirty-one local authorities that did not respond or refused to provide data over privacy grounds (see appendix 5).

The data is clear that most of the business rates are not paid to the police. Common practice dictates that half goes to the local authority and half is paid to central government (Local Government Association, 2021). However, there were some exceptions to this, as four local authorities responded to question 2 that they do in fact pay a percentage of the business rates to the local police service, as displayed in

Table 15:

TABLE 15 LOCAL AUTHORITIES THAT PAY A PROPORTION OF BUSINESS RATES FROM FOOTBALL CLUBS TO THE POLICE SERVICE 2015-2019 (BASED ON FOI DATA)

Local authority	Club(s)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Croydon	Crystal Palace	2.97%	2.98%	2.07%	1.94%	1.12%
		£5,760	£5,808	£6,245	£7,800	£6,601
Hounslow	Brentford	20%	20%	37%	36%	27%
		£5,324	£5,368	£11,618	£13,786	£25,081
Portsmouth	Portsmouth	11.32%	11.13%	10.97%	11.23%	12.09%
		£ Unknown	£ Unknown	£ Unknown	£ Unknown	£ Unknown
Southend on Sea	Southend United	2.82%	2%	2.61%	2.7%	2.98%
		£1,385	£987	£1,173	£1,118	£1,145

Again, due to the discretion that local authorities have over business rates, there does not appear to be a consistent approach to the percentage that was being provided to the police service between the clubs listed in Table 15. It is also inconsistent between one police force, as both Crystal Palace and Brentford come under the Metropolitan Police area and are being provided with vastly different amounts and also no money from the business rates of other London clubs. Regarding Portsmouth, the local authority provided detail about the percentage that is provided to the police service, but refused the actual amounts citing privacy reasons.

Unlike with council tax, Police and Crime Commissioners are not able to set a precept against business rates. An argument could be made that if the police service were able to place a precept on business rates that impact on police resourcing, then this would go some way to assisting the police in recovering their costs. This could be similar to the late-night levy, which was introduced under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, in order to provide additional funding for policing to prevent crime and disorder linked to the night time economy (Woodhouse, 2019). However, there have been criticisms that the late-night levy is ineffective, does not result in the funds being distributed correctly and does not address broader alcohol consumption issues (Bothwell, 2013; Woodhouse, 2019). If Police and Crime Commissioners were hypothetically able to set a precept on business rates, then this does raise issues around fairness if it is only applied to certain businesses. If it were the same as council tax, and applied universally, then it could be seen as a fairer way of the police recouping costs for the policing of businesses than if it was applied

according to a perceived threat and risk basis. It is worth noting, that a number of businesses benefit from football matches taking place. For example, local transport systems and hospitality sectors will benefit financially from the influx of football fans, but not be required to pay SPS. Progressive changes such as this are discussed further in chapter 6, as it is essential to first understand how much is actually spent on the policing of football and how much football clubs are paying, as is discussed in the next section.

4.2.2 SPS received and police expenditure on football policing

This section evaluates a separate set of FOI requests that were sent to police forces, establishing the cost of policing football, as well as income from football clubs. As discussed in section 2.7, a particular narrative has developed from Chief Constable Mark Roberts, the NPCC lead for policing football, that suggests that the police service is spending £48 million on policing football, and is receiving around £5.5m in return from football clubs. In order to explore this further, as explained in section 3.4, FOI requests were sent to all 43 police forces in England and Wales asking the following questions:

Question 1 From the 2014/5 to 2018/19 football seasons, how much Special Police Services have you received each season from football clubs in your force area?

Question 2 From the 2014/5 to 2018/19 football seasons, how much have you spent each season on football policing operations?

The results are shown in Table 16:

Police Force	SPS Received from football clubs					Amount spent on football policing				
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
1. Avon and Somerset Constabulary	£97,511	£353,618	£202,601	£366,243	£239,935	£69,862*	£188,401*	£241,009*	£229,315*	£221,300**
2. Bedfordshire Police	No data	No data	£53,167	£54,260	£79,063	No data	No data	£78,276	£72,129	£35,226
3. Cambridgeshire Constabulary	No data	£59,830	£69,139	£56,569	£49,916	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
4. Cheshire Constabulary	£85,776	£88,149	£58,275	£31,002	£27,304	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
5. City of London Police	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
6. Cleveland Police	£88,035	£84,876	£204,600	£163,699	£151,369	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
7. Cumbria Constabulary	£0	£30,818	£51,234	£50,127	£7,018	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
8. Derbyshire Constabulary	£342,172	£375,615	£413,268	£206,079	No data	£308,764	£522,526	£550,728	£556,491	£454,851
9. Devon and Cornwall Police	£25,177	£45,869	£38,453	£20,583	£22,603	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
10. Dorset Police	No data	£113,382	£124,231	£135,434	£126,952	No data	£434,804	£334,885	£421,729	£429,206
11. Durham Constabulary	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	0
12. Dyfed-Powys Police	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	0
13. Essex Police	£2,278	£18,722	£6,701	£0	£0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
14. Gloucestershire Constabulary	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15. Greater Manchester Police	No data	£2,544,455	£2,777,264	£2,073,861	£1,721,122	No data	£1,857,979**	£2,249,630**	£1,843,000**	£1,698,479**
16. Gwent Police	No data	No data	No data	£10,761*	£18,497	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
17. Hampshire Constabulary	£317,635	£302,828	£326,152	£176,155	£196,028	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
18. Hertfordshire Constabulary	No data	£142,454	£85,852	£32,874	£39,984	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
19. Humberside Police	No data	£287,651	£455,654	£427,519	£353,758	No data	£467,677	£549,577	£761,556	£401,622
20. Kent Police	£9,949	£5,930	£10,921	£25,778	£7,085	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
21. Lancashire Constabulary	£421,386	£391,112	£366,800	£411,217	£346,771	£346,212*	£290,177**	£454,680**	£538,931**	£496,036**
22. Leicestershire Constabulary	£304,090	£294,456	£385,668	£340,516	£232,018	£82,398**	£54,136**	£129,918**	£84,236**	£107,721**
23. Lincolnshire Police	No data	No data	£6,171	£20,268	£13,043	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
24. Merseyside Police	£980,799	£991,742	£928,835	£1,089,029	£1,069,787	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data

TABLE 16 FOI DATA SHOWING SPS RECEIVED AND AMOUNT SPENT ON FOOTBALL POLICING 2014/15 TO 2018/19 (* DATA INCOMPLETE; ** OVERTIME ONLY)

25. Metropolitan Police Services	No data	No data	£613,146	£559,170	£682,197*	No data	No data	£9,656,892	£8,549,734	£10,658,174*
26. Norfolk Constabulary	£236,852	£156,062	£70,000	£70,000	£91,735	£94,460*	£63,372**	£31,160**	£66,145**	£40,542**
27. North Wales Police	£16,929	£11,569	£14,286	£14,083	£8,755	£197,325	£182,049	£323,737	No data	No data
28. North Yorkshire Police	£15,637	£16,917	£0	£2,735	£0	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
29. Northamptonshire Police	£39,971	£39,219	£67,293	£74,616	£31,107	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
30. Northumbria Police	£610,099	£497,414	£449,470	£511,237	£474,917	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
31. Nottinghamshire Police	£217,484	£162,745	£216,577	£282,801	£155,602	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
32. South Wales Police	£175,499	£152,410	£154,216	£190,846	£166,793	£95,282*	£69,353**	£131,305**	£118,227**	£126,932**
33. South Yorkshire Police	No data	£34,719	£1,130,775	£688,807	£427,591	No data	£133,591	£1,971,950	£740,828	£1,316,444
34. Staffordshire Police	£170,602	£94,054	£71,549	£122,781	£151,902	£353,966*	£327,641**	£235,575**	£238,121**	£185,177**
35. Suffolk Constabulary	£169,826	£118,309	£68,800	£54,138	£69,972	£70,155*	£128,073*	£83,238**	£57,719**	£59,738**
36. Surrey Police	No data	£2,571	£2,705	£5,125	£2,435	No data	£1,484	£7,036	£10,251	£3,125
37. Sussex Police	No data	£169,188	£261,798	£366,841	£244,526	No data	£166,044	£273,394	£578,787	£363,572
38. Thames Valley Police	£159,567	£176,213	£137,805	£131,374	£76,121	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
39. Warwickshire Police	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
40. West Mercia Police	No data	£40,002	£12,384	£28,121	£24,232	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
41. West Midlands Police	£1,052,927	£1,046,400	£1,118,909	£1,106,841	£1,100,519	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
42. West Yorkshire Police	£637,752	£1,027,180	£1,398,188	£2,634,970	£1,263,826	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
43. Wiltshire Police	£44,512	£55,608	£63,925	£43,829	£36,033	No data	No data	No data	No data	No data
44. British Transport Police	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£571,406	£874,884	£826,680	£642,157	£219,510
Total	£6,222,465	£9,932,086	£12,416,812	£12,580,289	£9,710,516	£1,618,424	£4,887,307	£17,302,991	£14,867,198	£16,598,144

Table 16 shows the data collected from the FOI requests submitted to all 43 Home Office police forces in England and Wales, as well as British Transport Police. Most responses were received within the 20-working day period from sending the requests in March 2021, however some took longer into the autumn of 2021 and one police force (Gloucestershire Police) did not provide any response at all. Some forces indicated that the data they provided was incomplete, but this was limited and only present on two elements of data regarding received SPS and one element of the data regarding the amount spent on football policing. Most police forces were able to indicate accurately the amount of SPS they had received from football clubs within their force area. A small number of forces were not able to give exact data on costs, but this related to earlier football seasons and reasons such as a change of accounting software were cited.

Eight police forces indicated that they were only able to provide financial information on the amount spent on overtime for policing football, and that this was not representative of the total cost. The data shows that a further twenty-five police forces either had no available data on the amount spent on policing football, or they were able to confirm that they had not spent any money on this. In total, this means that thirty-three police forces either have no information on the total amount that they are spending on policing football, or they are not actually spending any money on it. Police forces typically responded to this saying that to calculate the amount spent policing football would exceed the cost allowance for an FOI request.

Nine police forces in total were able to provide confirmed data in terms of both the amounts they received in SPS and the amount that they have spent on football policing. Although, they did not always have the amount they had spent confirmed for each season that was requested. Table 17 shows the net spend for each police force based on their confirmed data, this was calculated by deducting the amount they had received in SPS from the amount they said they had spent on football policing. Despite the gaps in this data, it provides some interesting findings.

TABLE 17 NET SPEND ON FOOTBALL POLICING FROM POLICE FORCES WITH CONFIRMED DATA (EXTRACTED FROM FOI DATA)

	Net spend (amount spent on football policing minus SPS received)				
Police Force	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Bedfordshire Police	N/A	N/A	£25,109	£17,869	-£43,837
Derbyshire Constabulary	-£33,408	£146,912	£137,460	£350,412	N/A
Dorset Police	N/A	£321,422	£210,654	£286,295	£302,254
Humberside Police	N/A	£180,026	£93,923	£334,037	£47,864
The Metropolitan Police	N/A	N/A	£9,043,746	£7,990,563	£9,975,976
North Wales	£180,396	£170,480	£309,451	N/A	N/A
South Yorkshire Police	N/A	£98,872	£841,175	£52,021	£888,853
Surrey Police	N/A	-£1,087	£4,330	£5,126	£690
Sussex Police	N/A	-£3,144	£11,597	£211,946	£119,046
Total	£146,988	£913,481	£10,677,445	£9,248,270	£11,290,846

Firstly, it seems apparent that the figures in the South Yorkshire Police Infographic do not seem to align with the FOI data that has been received here. To understand this in more detail, a further FOI request was sent to South Yorkshire Police about the Infographic (see Figure 3), as follows:

Figure 1 – Police forces nationally charge clubs - £5,479,763.76

Figure 2 – Unrecovered cost to police football nationally - £42,526,149.79

- 1) Please explain how both figure 1 and figure 2 have been calculated
- 2) What is the timeframe that both figure 1 and figure 2 relate to

The response from South Yorkshire Police (dated 20th January 2022) was that they did not hold the requested information, and that enquiries should be made with the NPCC instead. The same request was then sent to the NPCC, and they provided the below response (dated 9th February 2022):

“The infographic above was released in 2019 following a significant period of work. Forces were asked to provide data to the NPCC, however the NPCC no longer holds the returned information (including date ranges) or methodology used to calculate these final finance totals.”

A request to have a meeting with an employee of either the NPCC, or the police service who could explain the data received no response. Without someone who can provide this detail around how these costs were calculated, it is difficult to judge the accuracy of the data presented in the Infographic, even though it has been presented as fact in parliament. It may be that the data is extremely robust and provides a very accurate picture of the true cost of football policing in England and Wales, we simply do not know without an explanation of how public funds are being spent.

The amount of SPS that police forces have received from football clubs each season (see Table 16) obtained in this study should be considered as a reliable data, as it is a direct result of records from police force accounting departments. This means that the average SPS that police forces have received from football clubs from the 2014/15 to 2018/19 seasons is £10,172,434. This is much higher than the figure that has been quoted in parliament of just under £5.5m, which was supposed to be from the 2017/18 football season. The total SPS received in the 2017/18 season is shown to be £12,580,289, which is more than double the figure presented in the South Yorkshire Police infographic. This raises serious doubt about the veracity of the data in the South Yorkshire Police Infographic in terms of SPS received, as this clearly has not been calculated using the same method that this study has done, and as a result the figures are vastly different. If this aspect of the Infographic is not reliable, it does raise questions over the reliability of the cost to police football as well.

The lack of transparency over this data is concerning, as a simple question has been posed around the calculation of this data and it has not been answered. In order to have an informed debate on this, the public need to know how taxpayer's money is being spent. Therefore, a number of questions remain over the data in the Infographic around how it has been calculated. Firstly, how have police officers been costed? Has this been at the rate that they actually cost the police force, or is it at the Full Economic Cost? Secondly, what other costs have been considered to arrive at the total cost figure? Thirdly, has this exercise been conducted over an entire season, or one matchday, or a series of census points across a season? Fourthly, have

all police forces taken part in this exercise? One must assume that it is unlikely that there has been full participation from all police forces in this data, and therefore there has had to be some extrapolating with the data to cover any gaps in how data has been returned. The main concern, is that this data actually comes with more questions than answers, and therefore should be treated with a degree of scepticism before being readily accepted as fact, particularly by politicians.

Having accurately established the amount that the police service is receiving from football clubs between the 2014/15 to 2018/19 seasons, it is necessary to consider the more pertinent question of whether this SPS amount is proportionate to what it actually costs the police service to police football. From the FOI data (see Table 16), the logical answer to this is that there is insufficient data for this to be effectively judged. This is because, the majority of police forces have given a response that indicates that they are not actively calculating how much it costs them to police football matches. Those that have indicated that they are actively calculating it (see Table 17) are in the main, not actually losing vast sums of money on the policing of football matches. Some police forces (Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Surrey and Sussex) have actually indicated that they have even made a profit in some seasons from SPS after their costs have been accounted for. This is in direct contradiction to the comments by Mark Roberts that the police service is subsidising the costs of policing football (see Kopczyk, 2018; Homer, 2018; Sky Sports News, 2019). There are other forces however, which indicate that they are not covering costs and could be seen as making a significant loss on the policing of football, notably South Yorkshire Police

and The Metropolitan Police. The latter appear to be a significant outlier in terms of SPS received against amount spent on football policing, so much so that if they were taken in isolation it would appear that the police service is losing more money on policing football than it perhaps is.

The difficulty in extrapolating this data from different police forces, is that we do not know the methods used to calculate the cost of football policing from those police forces that have said that they are calculating it. Even if we were to accept the calculated costs in the FOI data as fact, there are still a further thirty police forces that would need to be spending about £1m each on policing football to reach the suggested total of £48m. Given the data already indicates that most forces are not spending that much, and the relatively small size and lack of demand for football policing in some forces the £48m can be seen as an overestimate as opposed to a reliable fact.

In addition to this, previous research indicates that there is varying practice in terms of how police forces approach football policing (see Stott et al, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019; Hester, 2020). This is reflected in this data, as some forces are spending a lot more than others which may not be linked to demand but to the approach being used. This is in line with previous research (see Stott, Pearson & West, 2019) which indicates that there is a practice of over resourcing football matches and not necessarily policing them in line with the threat and risk that is presented, and a liaison-based approach may help to reduce the resource level that

is required. What is clear, is that if police forces were to adopt a more proportionate policing response, with fewer but more specialised resources, then the actual cost of policing football could be reduced for the force as well as the tax payer. To compliment this data, it is also important to consider how the perspectives of the interview participants relate to it. This is discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.2.3 Business rates levy analysis

Section 4.2 discussed the FOI data that was obtained in this research and it was established that there was a piecemeal approach to how business rates were obtained by the various local authorities that covered football clubs in England and Wales. Table 14 showed that if all business rates for football stadia were collected according to the rateable value of the property, it would amount to around £42 million a year. PCC precepts that are applied to council tax are typically from 0-5%, with an average of 2.8% (HMIC, 2012, p. 17). If a similar approach of applying a precept, as is done with council tax, to business rates, it would not actually recoup an amount that would cover the quoted amount of £48 million per year. For example, even an upper end precept of 5% would recoup around £2.1 million, and the average of 2.8% would recoup around £1.175 million. This would therefore seem an ineffective measure of funding for the policing of football, particularly as it would also seem that some football clubs have business rate exemptions and would therefore not be contributing. It could be viewed as an additional funding stream on top of SPS, but this would mean that police funding of football would be piecemeal

and be subject to even further geographical variations. Given the desire within policing to adopt policies that are evidence-based (Sherman et al., 2002; Lum & Koper, 2017; Mitchell & Huey, 2019), this method is not recommended based on the evidence presented in this research.

4.3 Participant perspectives on the costs of policing football

This section is divided into three parts, which consider how aware the participants were over the costs associated with football policing, the inconsistency over costing processes and the financial pressure that was experienced by the participants.

4.3.1 Awareness of costs

When the DFO participants were asked about how much they received from football clubs each season, they were mostly not able to recall the exact amounts that football clubs paid over the course of the season or indeed for individual fixtures. This could link into the cultural trait suggested by Bowling et al. (2019) of police officers being mission focused. This could manifest in officers, certainly those within an operational role, being more focused on the outcome, as opposed to the cost. Some DFOs were however more aware on the costs to the football clubs and how much was being recovered under SPS by the police:

“For the Cat C, or Cat B plus games, we're only ever really going to put one serial in the ground, which comes out about two and a half [£2,500]. And we have minimal in terms of Cat B plus games, it's the local derby and then a couple or more. It's probably under 10,000 [£ per season] per club easily.” (DFO4)

“I had <local derby>, <problematic fixture>, both of those were in the tens of thousands. And then the season afterwards, it wasn't even 10,000 for the season. So, it can vary depending on behaviour.” (DFO6)

“I'm aware that you know, it's been up towards a million pound previously, SPS charges to <football club>.” (DFO8)

“In terms of <League 1 football club> we only police four or five games there a season normally, probably the charged cost across the season for them is about 35, 40 grand a year...for <Championship football club> we obviously police a lot more games there. It's a bigger club, bigger stadium, bigger crowds, bigger threat. And it's probably about 120, 130,000, something like that a season.” (DFO9)

These DFOs displayed an awareness of the amount that football clubs are charged, which demonstrates that they are involved in the process of organising the cost recovery aspects with the relevant football clubs. As can be seen here, which is supported by the FOI data, there is wide variation in the amounts that football clubs are charged (this is discussed further in section 4.2.2). DFO4 and DFO9 clearly explain that this variability may be due to the threat and risk that is posed by different football clubs and matches, even within a police force area. Further to this, DFO9 is suggesting that the larger the crowd, the greater the threat and risk, which is an approach that Stott, Pearson & West (2019) are critical of as it does not adopt an intelligence led approach and may lead to the police over resourcing football matches.

Although not necessarily aware of the specific costs, one DFO was acutely aware of potential controversy surrounding charging football clubs for the deployment of spotters:

“The Premier League club, I don't think had any spotters only games last season. The League One club certainly had more spotters only than anything else, and then the National League clubs only had spotters only if they had anything. With the National League clubs...the few games that we did have spotters only games, we didn't charge them for spotters.” (DFO5)

This position was an outlier compared to the other DFOs from different police forces that engaged with this research, and clearly has been amended accordingly. Research (Stott et al., 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019) does however highlight the value of spotters in terms of their proactive engagement with football supporters and how this can reduce disorder. Therefore, one may question as to whether these should be the resources that need to be paid for, as opposed to the PSU resources.

Mark Roberts, as National Police Chiefs' Council strategic lead for football policing, was conversant with the cost of policing football as well as how much had been paid to police forces by football clubs:

“We've got the breakdown...I was always conscious that when we try to talk about the disparity in what football pays for what it gets, we're always challenged about the figures. So, a couple years ago now, I dedicated a business analyst to it, we sent a spreadsheet to every force so we have got it almost to the officer. Nationally, we know 19/20 season when we did the exercise, total cost of policing to us was £47 million. And obviously, we only recovered, I think, around about £7 million. So that's obviously a massive deficit there.” (Mark Roberts)

As discussed in section 4.2.2, there is a disconnect between the figures that Mark Roberts is claiming are an accurate reflection of the cost to policing and the amount received from clubs and what was found from the FOI data. What this does demonstrate, is that Mark Roberts does consider the issue of SPS and cost recovery to be a very important issue for football policing and the police service in general, and understandably he is highlighting this to try and represent the police service interests in the best way possible. It could also be argued that this does show elements of the 'them and us' police cultural trait (see Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017) as it appears an adversarial stance against the football industry. The cost of policing

football was not something that the DFO participants were as familiar with as Mark Roberts:

“I couldn't actually pluck a figure out of the air to be specific, Richard, but it was considerably higher than the costs that were being recovered.” (DFO1)

“[On calculating costs] Only recently, at the request of Mr. Roberts. They've put together a team who started measuring those figures, we got sent a few requests to put together a spreadsheet and send it out to them...but in house, there isn't really.” (DFO5)

“Do you know, I genuinely don't think we ever got a grasp of actually what that cost was.” (DFO8)

However, some police forces did appear more active in terms of establishing the actual cost of policing football, or going some way towards doing so:

“I've been asked by our current Chief Inspector, that for next season, I record and monitor the deployment of resources, but particularly specialist resources, i.e. DFOs, spotters at the games.” (DFO7)

“We have previously done that bit of work, which has helped us to then sort of formulate what our charging structure looks like and also get the clubs to actually agree that what we are charging is reasonable based on the actual costs.” (DFO9)

This supports the FOI data gathered in this research (see section 4.2.2), as it reinforces the findings that many police forces are not actively calculating the cost of policing football. It does also lend some support to the claims by Mark Roberts over the cost of policing football, as police forces had provided some data to South Yorkshire that would assist them in reaching the figure of £47million per season. However, this does not provide any sort of conclusive proof that those figures are accurate, and a number of questions still remain over how that figure has been calculated.

Some of the football club participants were not necessarily forthcoming about the amount that they were being charged by the police. Overall though, the football club participants, tended to have a much greater awareness of the costs that were being charged by police forces under SPS:

“Wow, I mean, in our first couple of seasons, police bill was well over a million pounds a season. But you know, I think that was a combination of a number of things. It was moving to a new stadium. It was at a time when the police were still quite heavily involved. They were still they were doing things like policing the seg lines.” (SO6)

“When I first started here, the bill was somewhere in the region of about 80,000. And I've reduced that and reduced it basically, because I took all the stewarding in house, got rid of the stewarding company, which were causing some real hassles and that has enabled us here to actually reduce the policing bills.” (SO7)

SO6 and SO7 demonstrate a clear understanding of the SPS charges over the course of a season, and spoke of methods that they have used in order to reduce costs. The discussion around an increase in stewarding resulting in a decrease in police bills (and potentially police resources) is of merit, and as such is discussed further in chapter 6. The Safety Officer participants were not just aware of their own costs, but also demonstrated that they take a broader view by comparing how this sits with other football clubs:

“What I hear, particularly in the <region>, what we're charged seems to be pretty reasonable compared with some of the other clubs. I don't know whether there is a standard format for working costs out, but I know talking to <safety officer> at <football club>, their police costs are a lot different to ours.” (SO3)

“I wanted to know what other clubs were being charged certainly in the <region>, and why with a category A at <former football club>, which was 2 PSUs. Why was a category A at <former football club> with two PSUs an equivalent of a category A at <nearby bigger football club> with two PSUs? You've got to look at like for like, they always insisted on two PSUs, it was never one PSU.” (SO7)

This lends support to the view that commercialisation of football is evident in English football (Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019), as the safety officers are considering cost aspects as well as safety aspects (this is discussed further in section 4.3). However, a counter view is that the safety officers are simply exercising due diligence (as suggested in The Purple Guide, 2019) in ensuring that the police force that they are dealing with is operating in line with SPS case law and in a way that is comparable to one another. It does not necessarily support the assertion (see Frosdick, 1995) that football clubs are prioritising safety over costs, they could be ensuring that the police are not operating in an overly risk averse manner, as is commonplace (Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) . Clearly safety officers are checking practice against other clubs and force areas. The reason for this could be due to inconsistency in how the police service approaches SPS and cost recovery with football clubs, as discussed in the next section.

4.3.2 Costing inconsistency

Regarding costing, it was evident that there was inconsistent practice from police forces in particular, both in terms of their approach to costing and also how a particular match category may have a particular fixed cost associated with it for the club:

“Once the categorisation was agreed, they knew what the bill was, what they were going to be getting, so we never moved the goalposts on them.” (DFO1)

“The SPS papers that get drawn up for bespoke events...we don't do that for football. What we do is we have a contract with the club and for the graded games A, B, C, we basically have a fixed charge, a fixed rate for those graded games. Because we work on the basis that an A grade, a low threat game for

us requires this level of policing. B the same, C, you know the same and then we have that costs for it.” (DFO9)

From a business perspective, it could be argued that a fixed category in terms of costs and police resources makes sense, as it is a single piece of negotiation over the category and then the cost of that category is known by both parties. The football clubs were seemingly in favour of this as well:

“No, it was if it was a Cat, whatever Cat it was, you knew that's what you were going to be charged. I think that was fair, and everybody knew where they stood.” (SO5)

But this was not evident that every police force operated in this way, as some clubs considered the category was just indicative of the resource level:

“The category will give you, you know, it will give you an idea of roughly what your police resourcing's going to look like. But that's also still negotiable as well”. (SO6)

The negotiation of the category and then negotiation of the resources can further complicate the process for both parties, this is discussed further in chapter 5. By police forces having an ‘off the shelf’ resourcing process for match categories, this is contrary to the College of Policing (2018b) guidance for policing football, which suggests that categories ‘should not be a template for financial arrangements’. Other Safety Officers were critical of this approach:

“Doesn't matter what [category] you call it. I want to know how many police officers are required. And what I don't want to get to a position of is, do you know what this is a Cat C, go to the shelf, take off the plan for a Cat C fixture. Well that's not risk based. That's not intuitive. That's just, I don't know what it is. It's lazy.” (SO4)

The findings here demonstrate that there is inconsistent practice over costings and associated match categories by police forces, as well as practice that is out of step with national guidance. Costing arrangements were further complicated in some

police forces, which operated on a direct debit basis with football clubs as opposed to payment on an event by event basis which was more typical:

“[Clubs paying by ongoing direct debit] It got moved to a Sunday lunchtime kick-off or whatever the reason was, we dropped it to five officers, we kind of just keep a running log between us and the club.” (DFO5)

An argument can be made for the process that DFO5 describes, and it may assist both parties in managing their finances across the course of a football season. The College of Policing (2018b) guidance does not give direction either way on this approach, but emphasises the importance of a signed agreement between the club and the police. In any case, this process requires careful management and demonstrates further inconsistency between police forces.

The NPCC (2018; 2020) guidance on charging for police services suggests that football events should be charged on either a three or six hour basis, as a full or part deployment of police resources on the stadium footprint. It was apparent that not all forces were adhering to this, or that this guidance was not fit for purpose:

“We probably undercharge them currently...so what we charge them on is six and three hours of police officer time. For me, that's probably antiquated.” (DFO2)

“We've gone up over the last couple of years, we used to pay, I think it was four hours. And we agreed to go to five hours in recognition of the extra, you know, they have to get people in an hour before and all this and an hour after.” (SO2)

Despite it being the NPCC (2018; 2020) charging guidance, a system of charging for either three or six hours can be seen as quite inflexible and is not necessarily commensurate to the actual time that the police resources will spend on the footprint. As a result, football clubs will invariably be paying for time that resources

spend away from the footprint and there is potential for this to lead to disagreements. The comment from SO2 indicate that there has been a form of local agreement between the police force and the football club, and does not appear to be in line with the NPCC (2018; 2020) charging guidelines. This could be regarded as a sensible approach, which is fine providing there is written agreement, however it could leave the police force subject to a legal challenge if they are charging outside of the guidance. This suggests that there is police officer scepticism to the College of Policing guidance and legitimacy as an institution, which is in line with previous research (Westmarland, 2016; Lumsden, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Cockcroft, 2020).

There was also a range of other issues apparent in relation to inconsistent practice of costing arrangements between football clubs and police forces:

“We've just had a bit of a shift in our management thinking, I think it came it probably came from UKFPU actually, that we shouldn't charge for spotters. In the past the way we've worked with our clubs is potentially different to some other clubs. Whereby if it was agreed that four police officers would be best, we would naturally use four spotters because they're the best officers to use at football because they're trained. So, we might not call them spotters in relation to SPS and we would just charge for four officers if that makes sense.”
(DFO5)

The practice of the police force charging football clubs for the deployment of spotters is out of step nationally. It does appear semantics if there is an 'enhanced spotting operation' and this is being referred to as a Cat A fixture and clubs are being charged for resources that other forces may not charge for, as they are categorising the fixture as 'Spotters Only'. Regardless of the ethics of charging for spotters, DFO5 is making a valuable point in terms of spotters being the best placed resources to work at football events, and this supports research which advocates for liaison based

resources being utilised for football (see Stott et al., 2012; 2018; 2019; Hope et al., 2023).. Whilst DFO5 gave the example above of football operations that were resourced appropriately, there were other examples of potential over resourcing of fixtures:

“I went to <football club> with <football club> a couple of seasons ago, Tuesday evening fixture and I turned up to the briefing and there was two PSUs on. I was like, Christ, you know, I've sent you intel that you might get a handful and that'll be it. And they said, no, no, this is normal for a home game. So, they have two PSUs on it, and I say well what are you charging the club, and he just sort of smiled and winked.” (DFO6)

This example demonstrates a football fixture that was over resourced by a police force, and not based on intelligence and the threat and risk, which research (Stott et al., 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019) is critical of and said was occurring too regularly. With regards to the costing, it is not clear from the comment what is happening, but the question needs to be posed as to whether or not the resources that are being paid for are actually commensurate to the threat and risk.

Other police forces and football clubs seem to have arrangements that are not necessarily in keeping with SPS case law or College of Policing (2018b) guidance:

“We agree what we're going to pay for in the footprint. And if we have others come up, then yeah, we should may even be paying double for that, because we should have asked for them in the footprint in the first place. We shouldn't just be kind of keep your fingers crossed, and only ever call them in at the last moment when it's all gone wrong.” (SO1)

The process of paying for resources that are deployed in response to incidents sits outside the guidance from case law, particularly the Harris case (Harris v Sheffield United Football Club, 1988), and NPCC (2018; 2020) guidance in that the police responding to spontaneous incidents of disorder should not be charged as SPS. This

practice was not typical from this research, and could lead to more complex situation of actually counting police officers that respond to an incident within the stadium footprint and then billing the football clubs accordingly.

With 43 different police forces, there is always going to be some disparity in practice over all aspects of policing, including SPS. Mark Roberts was adamant however that police forces should be operating consistently with SPS:

“The forces should all be consistent. I mean, the law is very clear that we can charge on officers deployed on land owned, leased or controlled.” (Mark Roberts)

This statement from Mark Roberts is theoretically correct, but the NPCC (2018; 2020) guidance is not explicit and can be regarded as being open to interpretation which can lead to inconsistent practice in how police forces apply SPS. It is not just how the police apply SPS, but also how the approach the policing of football. Hester (2020) highlights inconsistency in police approaches to football policing, so this will manifest in different approaches to resource levels, which will ultimately lead to different SPS levels being recovered from football clubs. A further explanation could be police entrenched resistance towards College of Policing and NPCC guidance, linked to broader scepticism towards these organisations (Westmarland, 2016; Lumsden, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Cockcroft, 2020). There is clearly inconsistent practice in how SPS costs are being applied across England and Wales in relation to football. Another factor that will impact on that is differing financial pressures, which is discussed in the next section.

4.3.3 Financial pressures

This section discusses the financial pressures that both football clubs and police forces are experiencing in relation to policing football, and examines data from this research which relates to this. In 2010, the Government introduced public sector austerity measures, which led to a 20% cut in police funding in real terms from 2010 to 2017 (BBC, 2018b). In addition to this, police officer numbers fell by around 21,000 officers from 2010 to 2018 (Allen & Zayed, 2019). Hester (2020) reported that this manifested in an impact on the police services resourcing of football matches, and as such will lead to police forces experiencing a degree of financial pressure over football resourcing.

In section 2.3, it was discussed how some football clubs have ceased to exist in recent times, and how the Covid-19 pandemic may lead to further financial insecurity for football clubs. Whilst there is a lot of reported wealth within the football industry more broadly, there is an increasing wealth gap developing with the elite clubs across Europe becoming increasingly wealthy (Grimault, 2017; Deloitte, 2020; 2021b). Furthermore, Deloitte (2021b) reported that there was an increase in clubs within the EFL operating at a loss, as exemplified by Reading and Derby County football clubs being deducted six and twenty-one points respectively in the 2021/22 football season for breaching financial loss rules (Fisher, 2021). This demonstrates that football clubs outside of the Premier League, further down the football pyramid, are operating a hand to mouth existence. It could be that in order to be competitive, clubs are having to push the limits in terms of the financial viability of the club and

potentially having to live beyond their means to obtain success on the pitch. In either case, it demonstrates that football finances, certainly outside of the Premier League, are in a precarious position, so much so that the Government has announced a plan to introduce an independent regulator that will ensure better financial oversight of football clubs (Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (UK), 2021; BBC Sport, 2022).

Police forces did not express that they considered football policing as an opportunity to recoup costs from football clubs.

“I don't think the force see it as a money-making exercise...there's no getting away from the facts it gives us a great deal of income, and it is a good money maker for the force to invest in other parts of policing.” (DFO2)

“I was open to persuasion that we've got it totally wrong. I didn't think we had, I thought we'd been quite fair. And we certainly weren't looking to profiteer.” (DFO1)

Despite DFO2 acknowledging that football policing provides income to police forces, the participants were clear that it was not regarded as an opportunity to profiteer from football clubs. This was supported by the relative lack of pressure from senior managers to pursue SPS with clubs, other than what was considered standard cost recovery.

“So, the threshold on our matrix system was 40 points, and above to push it into a category A. If I wound up at 39 points, I never had a commander say, <DFO1> you need to find an extra two points there so that we can police this and get the SPS from it, there was never anything like that.” (DFO1)

“If we earned 2 million pounds through SPS last season, the expectation would be we'd probably be earning 2.1 or 2.2 million pound this season. So, it was never a set figure...it was a case of a match by match basis.” (DFO3)

“It's not financially driven at all. Obviously, they would expect us to recover costs, or some cost towards a PSU, because we're putting that on purely

because of the impact of that fixture, and I think it's only right that the club do contribute to that.” (DFO4)

“[On management pressure] I've certainly never experienced that and I don't think that would happen. Not from above, no. I think if it was clear that one club maybe wasn't giving as much as the others, and yet we're having a large amount of police resources, that would definitely be questioned.” (DFO7)

The findings here suggest that the police service is not necessarily approaching SPS from a financially driven perspective, but more in keeping with the ‘Principles of Public Life’ and values prescribed in the Code of Ethics (College of Policing, 2014) in the value being placed on the policing of an event and not the cost. Structure of a football unit (see College of Policing, 2018b) may influence how a police force looks to recover costs through SPS:

“Our lead Silver's all sit outside of our line management, if that makes sense. I know a lot of forces have the ops superintendent for example, is the lead Silver, whereas ours all have different day jobs. So, they're not, I don't want to say not interested...they don't own that budget.” (DFO5)

This was not something that was prevalent across the DFO participants, and the implication from DFO5 is that there could be more proactivity with regards to cost recovery within a football unit as opposed to outside of it. Due to the limited sample size, it is not possible to generalise further from this, but this does highlight the variability between police forces regarding proactivity of SPS cost recovery.

The DFO participants were however, of the view that the football clubs were under financial pressure to reduce costs and therefore lower either the category of the match, or the amount of SPS they were liable to pay:

“The safety officer walks a very fine line between pleasing him [the club owner] and between public safety. In my view, there will come a moment

where that doesn't play out well for that safety officer. He's been fortunate enough to get away with it until now...the billionaire that owns the club doesn't want to pay for policing. He sees it as an unnecessary expense.” (DFO1)

“I think they are they are under pressure. Definitely. Interestingly enough, probably the Premier League club more so than the League One club, despite having all the money, they still have budgets that they have to follow.” (DFO5)

“Yeah, 100% even before the current times, when there's no money coming in through the turnstiles they [football clubs] were desperate to save money [DFO7 nods in agreement].” (DFO6)

In line with existing research (see Frosdick, 1995), it is concerning that there could be football clubs which seemingly prioritises costs over safety, as this could have adverse consequences for the supporters that are attending. Mark Roberts however was not supportive of a narrative developing as mentioned by the other DFOs, which suggests that football clubs cannot or are struggling to pay the costs of policing:

“So, I don't really accept the argument that they can't afford it... I think football clubs tend to see policing as an avoidable expense. But when you see some of the wages that are being paid to players, even at the lower leagues, I just don't think that's, that's a tenable argument.” (Mark Roberts)

There is the ‘them and us’ police cultural trait being displayed here (see Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019) which can create rifts between police forces and football clubs. This potential issue of avoiding costs would not necessarily manifest overtly and football clubs are not likely to be explicit about this to police forces, as it will be the nuances that have been picked up by the participants. However, some football club participants did somewhat acknowledge that the pressure to reduce costs was prevalent:

“Yeah, we do we get allocated a budget and we have to try and reduce it every year if possible. No, the safety's got to be number one, they fully understand safety's number one and to be fair when you're paying footballers, x thousand pounds a week. What's an additional 10-15 stewards?” (SO1)

“So, I've not seen that, I won't deny it doesn't go on. I know it goes on. But it's not happened at clubs I've been at.” (SO5)

Other football club participants however, presented a different narrative to this which indicated that they had not been received any pressure to reduce costs:

“I've never been put under any pressure to not have the police, or reduce the amount.” (SO4)

“No, that is purely down to me. So, if I think that it needs to be a Cat C, then that decision is mine. If I can save the club some money by having it as a lower category, great, no problem at all. I won't drop a category just to save money, though. I will drop a category or ask for the police to drop a category on the information and the intelligence that I have, and they have.” (SO7)

There will naturally be variation in the safety officers' experiences across the country, and potentially social desirability bias in some responses (Fisher, 1993). This notion was generally supported by the other safety officers, who also highlighted how important it was to have an ownership and management structure at the football club which was supportive with regards to match day safety and operations. It did tend to be dependent on the ownership at the club:

“The chairman will always say, do we need to do this, and you'll explain why we're doing it and he's okay with it...it's not a difficult sell.” (SO2)

“I don't think we even had a budget for stewarding costs, because I'll be very fair to our chief exec at <football club>...when it came to the safety side, if we went to him and said, I want another 20 response because of x, y, and z. He would never argue, he's one of the few CEOs that I've come across that didn't argue on costs...his view was he'd rather spend the money and have the resources than we try and do it on the cheap and we have problems.” (SO3)

“There was never any question of not paying...once the people from <overseas> took over, it was like a different club. Money no object and they were quite, the CEO <name> was quite practical and supported the operations team 110%.” (SO5)

The findings from this research do not necessarily support the assertion by Frostdick (1995), that football clubs prioritise finances over safety, despite the emphasis on

commercial activities (Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019). If anything, the football club participants have suggested that safety always taking priority. In some cases, there was a “money no object” approach to safety whereas there were other instances of financial factors being a consideration, but not in an obstructive way. The potential for social desirability bias has to be considered however, as the police participants were more forthright in saying that football clubs were under pressure to reduce costs, and there was even a tacit admission from a safety officer that this does occur across the industry. As will be discussed further in chapter 6, there are possible ways for SPS to operate that alleviates some of these pressures on both football clubs and police forces.

4.4 Participant perspectives on funding related reform

This section considers the viability of alternative funding streams for football policing in England and Wales through examining the views of the research participants. This includes revisiting the discussion of the football industry funding football policing, Home Office funding and a revised SPS framework.

4.4.1 The football industry funding football policing

Given the comments from Mark Roberts in the media (see section 2.7), it is expected that a similar narrative came from his interview as part of this research:

“My argument is a multi-billion-pound industry shouldn't be subsidised to the detriment of the community...Liverpool paid £44 million to agents and the Premier League paid £260 million to agents. So, are you telling me for the cost of a fullback in the Premier League, they can't actually cost recover policing. Because if we get proper costs recovery, we can resource it properly...The problem with football is it spends its money badly. How can it be that they can't afford to pay a police bill, but they will pay average players tens of

thousands of pounds a week and transfer fees of millions. Don't waste your money and tell me you can't pay my bill." (Mark Roberts)

This was a viewpoint that was shared by other police participants in the research:

"It is a multi-million-pound industry...but it's got a kind of global responsibility, hasn't it or a national responsibility? So, I think he's [Mark Roberts] spot on in the fact that yeah, they do need to put their hands in their pockets and support the community that supports them." (DFO4)

Broadly though, this viewpoint was not universally supported in the research, in fact it was the case that most other participants did not support the view adopted by

Mark Roberts:

"For <police force> to come in and say right you now owe us £20,000 for this policing. We'd just ruin them, completely ruin them. And that wouldn't be good reputationally wise for <police force> either." (DFO3)

"[On Mark Roberts comments] I think it's an easy argument to put across, and it's an easy argument to convince people of, but I don't think it necessarily deals with the crux of the discussion...it's easy to say oh because you've got loads of money, you should pay the police. But well, firstly, not every club has...the lower league clubs haven't necessarily got that much money, and quite often need more police. So, I don't think that argument necessarily stands up." (DFO5)

"Don't look at the Premier League being what football is all about. And not every club, in fact, most clubs are not awash with money at all." (SO5)

"The amount of money that football as an industry contributes to the treasury far outweighs any disparity in figures, and perhaps you could turn the argument on its head. And rather than say, isn't it unfair that football is this multi-billion-pound industry and the police is this, you know, cut stricken organisation, we look at how you police football, perhaps would be a more reasonable starting point." (Amanda Jacks - FSA)

Even though there were sentiments from safety officers that disagreed with the comments from Mark Roberts, they did still raise concerns about the finances and spending within football:

"Does Mark Robert's argument hold weight?" (Researcher)

"No, it doesn't to be perfectly honest...don't get me wrong, I've got grave concerns about the money in football...the fact that my club can spend a million pounds on a player and pay him £6,000 or £7,000 a week. But I get

challenged about spending £200 on safety signage. So, you know, finance in football is a strange beast.” (SO4)

The comments by SO4 support previous literature (see Frosdick, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019) which is indicative of the football industry prioritising commercial interests over safety. This does raise concerns over the longer-term stability of the football industry, and how this will lead to ongoing tensions over finances regarding safety at football. Of concern is the clear demonstration of the ‘them and us’ police cultural trait (see Skolnick, 1966; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019) by Mark Roberts, where the narrative is explicitly pitting the police service nationally against the football industry. This creates a barrier to delivering effective partnership working between police forces and football clubs.

There were counter arguments which focussed on the premise that football clubs are key parts of the community, and need to be regarded by the police as community partners:

“We allow them [police force] to do fast roads policing...dog searching...covert training...We don't charge anything for that, and yet, there's no joined up thinking in the police. They don't say well, actually, yeah, you give us quite a lot here, so we're going to give you a discount, we have to pay the same amount each time. And there will be a point where the club could say, you want to use our ground for fast roads policing, that's 100 quid a day or whatever it is. So, I think that the club do give the police a lot for free.” (SO1)

The provision within the NPCC (2018; 2020) charging guidance does allow for the police service to apply abatements to SPS charges on the grounds of ‘community benefit’. The definition of community benefit is not present, so this would be

somewhat open to interpretation in terms of how police forces apply this. However, football clubs are likely to be hosting the largest gathering of people on a regular basis within their community. There is a compelling argument for regarding football clubs as a key community partner (as suggested by Hester & Pamment, 2020), as opposed to wealthy organisations that should be contributing more to policing. Even police officer comments highlight how football clubs could and should do more to benefit their communities:

“I would rather have football, the Premier League and Sky, put money into campaigns about reducing crime and disorder, around grassroots football around diverting, you know, if you've got good grassroots football, it diverts kids from gang activity whether that's football related or not.” (DFO2)

This supports the notion which suggests that football clubs have a key role in crime prevention and diversion of young people away from the youth justice system (Groombridge, 2017; Hester & Pamment, 2020; Millward et al., 2023).

4.4.2 Central Home Office funding

Another suggestion was that a levy on football TV rights is used to fund football policing (Haigh, 2017; Furniss, 2019a; 2019b). Neither provide any detail about how such a scheme would work in practice, but a simple explanation would be that the money goes into a Home Office fund which police forces can then bid into, based on how much they have had to expend on resourcing football policing. The football club representatives were broadly in favour of TV rights funding, perhaps in part because it would alleviate the conflicts that occur in relation to SPS negotiations (see section 5.4). The police officer participants were overall more sceptical of this system though:

“For a force like us, I would suggest we would maybe want to dip into that pot the odd Cat B and Cat C games...because we actually can't do those

operations without cancelling rest days and getting people in on overtime to do it...but I think you know whose noses would be in the trough on a regular basis.” (DFO1)

“From a DFOs point of view, I think it would be easier for all of us if we didn't have to have any discussions about money...I don't see that's part of my job necessarily to discuss, or A, to earn money for the Constabulary, or B to, you know, spend loads of money on behalf of the Constabulary. Especially because my main role, obviously, is the safety at these events.” (DFO5)

It is well evidenced (see Bevan & Hood, 2006; Guilfoyle, 2013; Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014; Hester, 2020) that target based cultures can have a negative impact in both the public sector and particularly policing. Research in a football policing context with specific reference to a similar system of bidding for football banning order funding from the Home Office (see Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014; Hester, 2020), is already clear that it drives police forces and those working in a DFO role to generate funding. If such a system were in place, it would likely result in target driven cultures of some police forces maximising their income whilst others would not, as suggested by DFO1. It would also not lead to policing reform, as it has been demonstrated in this research that the police are operating in a risk averse way, in line with existing research (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020). Furthermore, with acute pressures on front line policing due to austerity (Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020), funding for resourcing can result in the policing continuing to over resource football (as suggested by Stott et al., 2018; 2019) because funding is available, not because it is necessary. Instead, police forces should be seeking more efficient ways of football policing, which this research suggests can be achieved through SPS reform. Furthermore, coupled with continued austerity measures, the police may have no

alternative but to seek efficiencies and reform (Innes, 2013; Millie, 2013; Millie & Bullock, 2013; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020).

4.4.3 Revised SPS framework

In section 5.3, a number of concerns were raised from both football club and police participants about the amount of SPS charges that are calculated per head in the NPCC (2018; 2020) guidelines (see Figure 1). Furthermore, there were concerns around the NPCC (2018; 2020) guidelines which mandate that charging periods will be either three or six hours:

“We should move away from three and six hours, we should charge them for when they're there.” (DFO2)

“You've agreed for them to come and be at the turnstiles by one o'clock and they're not on site yet. Or even you want them in the stadium until the fans have gone and all of a sudden you look and you think, well, where have all them police gone, but they've gone outside to do post-match deployment...well hang on a minute, I'm still paying for them officers and you've deployed them off site now.” (SO6)

This could be a realistic amendment to SPS guidelines, where the police actually charge for the time that the resources are deployed. In terms of a business approach to SPS, it seems logical for the football clubs to only pay for the police for the timeframe that they are present, they would not allow a stewarding company to charge for hours they were not working for the football club. The NPCC (2018; 2020) guidelines suggest a six-hour charging period for resources that are exclusively deployed within the footprint, and three hours for those partially deployed in the footprint. It also suggests that this time period should cover briefing and travel time, hence why football clubs are being charged for more hours than actually cover time on the footprint. However, reducing the hours liable for payment would reduce the

income generated by SPS for the police, and be contrary to the argument being put forward by Mark Roberts that clubs should pay more. Furthermore, Mark Roberts wanted to extend the footprint within which clubs would be liable for SPS:

“I've been pushing the Home Office since then [Ipswich ruling] to review it and take a more sensible view. Which, for what it's worth in my position is that the Zone Ex, as defined by the Sports Ground Safety Authority, would provide a sensible footprint. It would be ground specific, but that would provide a footprint where you can make sensible charging based on where the police actually have to deploy...I think it also then encourages clubs to take responsibility...There is a big thing about the polluter pays and whatever the policing bill, it probably isn't going to cover the cost of what will be deployed because we'll have to cover town centres.” (Mark Roberts)

For this to happen, there would need to be new legislation which would then overturn the previous case law and Ipswich ruling. This would lead to a similar SPS system to that of Australia (see section 2.9.1). This would potentially support the notion that football clubs would need to improve their private security to reduce the burden of policing costs, as has happened in Australia (Palmer & Whelan, 2007; Ayling & Shearing, 2008; Dellora & Beck, 2021). However, as in Australia, it would also be subject still to inconsistency and tensions between police forces and event organisers (Palmer & Whelan, 2007; Dellora & Beck, 2021).

“My footprint covers me for my stadium and my car parks around the stadium. It doesn't cover me for covering a road, just up the road...my insurance doesn't cover my staff to go off my footprint. So as far as I'm concerned, Zone Ex is down to the cops.” (SO7)

“Whilst we would encourage partnership working, of course, a lot of the policing happens in Zone Ex, so railway stations, town centres, bus stations, the approach to the ground is generally not within the safety certificate...But there are some issues there Richard, around insurance. Because they're working obviously outside of the red line. They can hide behind that...a lot of clubs are financially strapped at the moment, as you well know. So, they can't afford to do it, and thirdly, they don't have to do it.” (SGSA Rep)

The response from safety officers and the SGSA are indicative of a Zone Ex charging footprint being problematic. The comment from Mark Roberts that the 'polluter pays', is one where the fundamental question of who the polluter actually is key and needs answering. There are a multitude of other businesses contained within Zone Ex, most prevalent to football would be transport hubs and licensed premises. The football event is the catalyst for drawing people into an area, and other businesses will profit from this. But, given that there is a key link between alcohol consumption and football disorder (Dunning, Murphy & Williams, 1988; Giulianotti, 1994; Armstrong, 1998; Dunning et al., 2002; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005; Pearson, 2012, Treadwell & Ayres, 2014; Flint & Powell, 2014), licensed premises could also be considered as a polluter. Under the proposed Zone Ex charging footprint, these other businesses would be receiving a lot of policing on match days and not paying anything towards that through SPS, with football clubs instead footing the bill, which could be argued as wholly inequitable and potentially lead to further issues than there currently are with SPS. It is far too nuanced and complex, to just regard the football club as the polluter and say that they need to pay more, a system of SPS that moved towards that would invariably create more problems than it would solve.

4.4.4 Radical funding reform - Abolition of SPS

A more radical approach to reforming SPS, would be to abolish SPS. This would result in police forces not being able to cost recover from policing football, even though resources may still be deployed inside the footprint, as well as in the environments external to stadia. It can be argued that by the police not receiving any remuneration

for resources being deployed, it will lead to two things happening. Firstly, the police service will take a more pragmatic approach to resourcing, as they are not receiving any funding, they will want to ensure that all the resources attached to an event are required. This will counter the police tendency to be risk averse (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) and lead to more proportionate police resourcing. Secondly, due to the natural withdrawal of high levels of police resources at football events, clubs will have to improve their security operations to fill the vacuum that is left when they are reliant on police resources at higher risk fixtures. When discussing this potential radical reform with the research participants, there was a mixed response.

“As long as the club are doing all they can to minimise disorder and do all the things that that they have to do in terms of the green guide and all the rest of it, then I think there's an argument for them not paying anything. That's probably not the view you're going to get from most police officers.” (DFO5)

DFO5 provides an interesting narrative, although it is problematic to consider how it could be measured in terms of how clubs are attempting to minimise disorder. It could not be the case that if clubs were not fulfilling their duties under the Green Guide, then they would have to pay for policing, instead the SAG would need to take steps to reduce the capacity of the ground or restrict the club's activities in other ways. This is summarised by DFO8, who raises an important point which raises questions on what the role of the police should be:

“Ultimately for me, if they need more SPS, that's because they can't manage it themselves. Well, if that was a nightclub...we'd be saying, really, you know, what are you doing? Can we help you train your staff up...does it mean you need to be through a safety advisory group, don't open that stand then.” (DFO8)

A reasonable question to ask if extra police resources are required through SPS, is whether or not the fixture is safe enough to go ahead in its current form. The reality is a lot more nuanced and complex, however it is important to consider the role of police resources that are required through SPS. If there is specific intelligence to indicate that crime and disorder will occur, then it is an easier case to make for the necessity of having police resources present. Otherwise, the police role could simply be to reinforce societal values (Banton, 1964; Bittner, 1974), or to provide a notion of symbolic justice (Bayley, 1994). It could be simply the case that police resources are present because someone will pay for them, as suggested by Williams (2008). Unless SPS is abolished, the path as suggested by Williams (2008) is a straightforward one for the police to follow, as it provides some financial compensation and allows the police a basis to be risk averse around their deployments (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020). However, there are potential negative consequences to the abolishing of SPS:

“It does set a framework about what is chargeable, and what isn’t. And I think if it is taken away, you almost go back in time...where it could be that the police force their position on the club. I think there would still be a little bit more of a dictation going on there.” (SO6)

“We probably not proposing anything ‘cos there’s always a risk of unintended consequences of a, of a Pandora’s box. I think our fear would be if there were any changes on that front, that we might see it as a threat rather than as an opportunity.” (Head of Communications – PCC’s Office)

The current principle of SPS is that the event organiser has to request the policing presence could be undermined through the abolishment of SPS. The suggestion from SO6 is in line with existing literature which suggests that the police exert their

dominance and seek to control encounters (van Maanen, 1978; Holdaway, 1983; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Bowling et al., 2019). However, it is also in line with findings from this research, therefore it would not be a new phenomenon, but a continuation of existing circumstances. It is expected that the police would not want to be resourcing fixtures unnecessarily, even though research (see Stott et al., 2018; 2019) suggests that they are. The benefit of SPS being abolished and forcing the police down a less risk averse route outweighs the potential negative and unintended consequences. This would allow for the kind of post-austerity policing reform that previous literature (Innes, 2013; Millie, 2013; Millie & Bullock, 2013; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020) has suggested is needed.

At the heart of any decision as to whether or not SPS is abolished, remains the key issue of what the police are for and how police services should be delivered to the public:

“Football supposes that I should, as a taxpayer and a match ticket payer by those routes, pay more for a police presence. It, it’s just, it upsets the balance doesn’t it of what the notion of policing in this country is all about, that because I go to a certain event, I have to pay more for a police presence.”
(Amanda Jacks – FSA)

Answering this philosophical question of what the role of the police is, in terms of football policing, is analysed further in chapter 6. Whilst abolishing SPS may appear a radical change initially, it does require serious consideration as a way forward for the policing of football.

4.5 Key arguments

This chapter has evidenced that the FOI data raises concerns about the reliability of the data on the cost of football policing that has been put into the public domain (see South Yorkshire Police, 2019). In the context of England and Wales, it is of concern that the figures of £5.5m received and £48m spent have been readily accepted as fact in parliamentary debates, without the necessary due diligence or requests for an explanation of the figures being conducted. The true amount that has been received in SPS from football clubs' averages at around £10m each season, as evidenced by the detailed FOI data that was gathered as part of this research. It is difficult to judge the amount that is spent policing football, but the FOI data is indicating that most police forces are not actively calculating this. It also indicates that the £48m figure, is not necessarily accurate and is potentially an overestimate. In order to have a more informed discussion about the cost of policing football, greater transparency about how all the figures in the public domain have been calculated is required. For example, it cannot be known that those police forces that have provided cost data have all used the same methodology. This evidenced that there is a dictatorial approach (see Bowling et al., 2019) by some elements of policing, as well as the a 'them and us' culture being displayed (see Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017). Regardless of the philosophical debate about it, an argument that the football industry needs to pay more for policing cannot be made unless there is robust data to support that assertion.

There is limited evidence to suggest that football clubs prioritise costs over safety, as suggested by Frosdick (1995), with a number of clear cases suggesting the opposite. It was evidenced that financial pressures do still exist in some instances however, but this tended to be the police perception. Of concern is evidence of inconsistent practice in terms of how the NPCC (2018; 2020) guidance, as well as the College of Policing (2018b) guidance is being implemented. It is clear that there are still police forces operating outside of this, although this could be related to general ambivalence towards the College of Policing amongst police officers (Westmarland, 2016; Lumsden, 2017; Brown et al., 2018; Cockcroft, 2020). Of concern though, is that this does leave the police service and football clubs vulnerable to legal challenge. Further legal cases, as evidenced in chapter 2, are not conducive towards a positive relationship between the police service and football clubs. Reforming SPS will help to avoid this in the future, however this chapter evidences that reform is not straightforward. The potential for the notion of business rates being utilised as an alternative funding option, is not necessarily viable. As such, this is not recommended as part of this research for further exploration. Alternative funding streams such as Home Office funding is not viable either, due to concerns that it will create another target based culture, akin to football banning orders (see Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014; Hester, 2020). A tweak to the system of SPS may help to an extent, but the conflict between police forces and football clubs is still likely to occur, due to the prevalence of the 'them and us' police cultural trait (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019). There is clear merit in an abolitionist approach to SPS reform, which will be examined further in chapter 6.

This chapter demonstrates an original contribution in the field of football policing research. It offers a critique of existing data, and as such can be considered of use for politicians and other decision makers when deciding on key policy areas around SPS and football policing. The findings of this chapter are so significant, that they were published in advance of the thesis completion (see Hester & Hobson, 2022). This chapter has shown that a range of key issues linked to SPS remain, which require resolving if progressive change to SPS is going to be implemented. The range of issues are summarised in Table 18:

TABLE 18 KEY ISSUES STILL OUTSTANDING FROM CHAPTER 4

Topic	Issues
The actual cost of policing football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actual cost still cannot be established. • Publicly available cost data is inaccurate and requires challenging. • Where data is known, forces are likely to be calculating this differently
Business rates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not contribute to policing costs. • Inconsistent application across England and Wales • Offers little in terms of being a funding option
SPS charges for football clubs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice is clearly inconsistent across England and Wales • Forces and football clubs are operating outside of SPS guidance and policy. • Both police forces and football clubs receive financial pressure, which can compromise safety
Central funding options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would lead to inequity across policing in terms of utilisation of funds. • Could result in a target based culture, like football banning orders

Chapter 5 – Critical assessment of police, football club and key stakeholder perspectives on SPS and the policing of football

5.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter addresses objectives 1 of this research, by supporting the material in chapter 2, thus allowing for a full review of SPS practices for policing football events in England and Wales. It also ensures that objective 3 of this research is complete, by establishing and analysing participant perspectives in relation to SPS. This examines data that was gathered from the interviews with participants from football clubs, the police service and other key organisations and stakeholders. The chapter is broken down into four sections. Firstly, practitioner utilisation and experiences of SPS policy is examined and strengths and weakness of current practice relating to this are identified. Alongside this, a review of training for practitioners in relation to SPS is considered. Secondly, practitioner and stakeholder perspectives on the principle of SPS and associated case law and legislation is presented and reviewed. This will help to formulate the necessity of the alternative options that are discussed in chapter 6. Thirdly, practitioner perspectives on SPS negotiations between football clubs and police services are examined to identify issues and areas of good practice. Fourthly, perspectives on how effective public and private policing are at policing football are analysed. This is a key area, as it is important to consider not only issues concerning SPS, but the manner in which the services that are being provided through SPS are conducted.

5.2 SPS policy, practice and training

As section 2.8 discussed, there is national guidance that is set out for policing in terms of the NPCC (2018; 2020) *National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services* as well as the Green and Purple guides for football clubs and event organisers. This section critically assesses the implementation of these policy documents, through examination of practice by both police forces and football clubs which appear to deviate from policy, and analyses the level of training available for practitioners to perform their role.

5.2.1 SPS policy and the reality of practice

Football club participants did not offer any comments regarding the Green or Purple Guides in terms of how they approach SPS, and it was reinforced that the Green Guide is not designed with aspects such as SPS as a focus:

“The key reason the Green Guide exists is for clubs to set a safe capacity.”
(SGSA Rep)

Outside of these documents, there is no guidance for safety officers and they have had to develop their own skills and knowledge with SPS:

“No, it’s what I’ve learned over the years, and what I’ve read, and I’ve had to go into it quite deeply on some occasions to make sure that I knew what sort of grounds I had.” (SO7)

Most of the police participants when asked if they had a particular policy that they followed regarding SPS, responded that they just followed the national guidance (see NPCC 2018; 2020), although it could be questioned how helpful this document is in practice:

“Yeah, just national guidance. To be honest, when I came into the role, it was the two other DFOs that taught me. I wasn’t kind of given any real instruction on it, or it was just a kind of look up the national policy and off you go with it.” (DFO5)

This demonstrates that police officers may be left to learn from colleagues, which is not an uncommon form of training and socialisation within the police service (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017). Other police forces had utilised the national guidance in order to develop their own policy on SPS:

“Yes, it’s probably taken the bits from the national document, but actually having attended a number of national SPS conferences...it was an absolute mess. And actually, we took the decision, we’re going to go with our documents. It went through legal services, etc...that is now the basis of our current SPS.” (DFO3)

This particular police force was critical of the national policy, and the piecemeal approach that there was nationally to SPS arrangements in the past, so developed their own policy to follow regarding this, although clearly utilising elements of the national guidance. As discussed in section 2.8, this does reinforce that the NPCC (2018; 2020) national guidance is not actually prescriptive and requires an element of interpretation from police forces in how they administer SPS. This was reflected in a range of local practices involving both football clubs and police forces, which appeared to deviate from this guidance contained within NPCC (2018; 2020) and College of Policing (2018b).

“They [the police] may feel that they need police officers outside, but not in the ground. So, I will say clearly, if we call them up to the ground, we will pay for those resources.” (SO1)

This falls outside of the principles of the guidance, and could lead to issues, tensions and legal disputes between the club and the police in terms of the numbers and duration of officers that are called to the ground and then establishing what exactly is the cost that will be charged. DFO1 describes an example of where police practice

did not follow guidance, this then resulted in legal proceedings between the police force and the football club:

“We realised that some of the charging had been off what might have been described in old times as the footprint...there were some serials deployed in the railway station, which is about half a mile up the road or into the town centre which is half mile the other way been charged. When I came on board, the first act of...the Chief Superintendent at the time was to say right, that’s not happening.” (DFO1)

This was clearly historical, and practice had been updated over time to cease charging in areas that legally the police force were not allowed to charge for policing in. However, this had a residual impact and DFO1 spoke about the legal issues between the police force and the football club.

Other forces were not following College of Policing (2018b) guidelines around not just deploying resources in PSUs or serials, but were seemingly rigid with their resource structure:

“We will get told by POD [Public Order Department] that, you know, you shouldn’t have a serial, we get taught to work in PSUs. So, if you got serial on, you should have this. And also, now if you’ve got a serial, you should have a bronze commander with them as well...So, I wouldn’t say arse covering but they, you know, they go by the book. This is what you’re supposed to do, if you deviate it’s your problem, Sir.” (DFO6)

This supports existing research (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020), as it demonstrates that there are risk averse practices occurring in the resourcing of football matches by the police service, which will be explored further in chapter 6. The College of Policing (2018b) guidance is that the police should be flexible, so there is scope for following a rigid model as long as it is based on risk assessment. Loftus (2008) highlights that the ‘them and us’ aspect of police culture, also applies to

differences between different departments within the police service. So, there is a potential for departments to look to promote their own agendas that do not necessarily take the bigger picture into account.

Other police forces were more rigid regarding their charging structure with which they operated in:

“We meet the club at the beginning of the season, we look at the fixtures, we grade them...come to some sort of mutual understanding...then we have a rolling contract...then in that contract, we have a 21-day review point. So, at that 21-day point, I'll speak to the club, I'll have all the intelligence from the DFOs...and we'll have a conversation and just confirm what our grading looks like. At that 21-day point, that's where that locks in whether or not the club are liable for payment. Because if we change the grading after that 21-day point, i.e. it goes up or down, or we suddenly decide we need to police a match, then actually, by the contract, we can't then charge the club. Although our clubs are very good, and there have been occasions where they've operated outside of the contract, and they've actually said no, we're happy to pay some money towards that game.” (DFO9)

This is an example of a policy that was an apparent outlier in terms of how other police forces operate in terms of their contracts with football clubs. The majority of other DFOs that participated in the research explained that clubs were charged on an event by event basis. This also falls outside of the College of Policing (2018b) guidance, which cautions against operating outside of the terms of the agreed contract. The organisational learning that needs to come from the examples given here, is that if legal guidelines are deviated from, then disputes between police forces and football clubs could occur, resulting in strained relationships (as discussed in section 5.4). It is of concern, that police practices are still occurring which would seem to fall outside of national policy and guidance. The overwhelming amount of case law

discussed in section 2.6, should act as guidance for police forces and football clubs, in how to operate in a legal manner, ensuring that policy is followed.

5.2.2 Training around SPS

A potential reason for this deviation from national guidance, could be due to concerns that the participants raised about a lack of training on how to manage SPS effectively.

“As a sergeant am I qualified to do contracts? Now obviously it goes through legal. I have had no formal training.” (DFO2)

“None at all. I mean, I linked in with a couple of people from our finance department...who had an idea, you know we weren't flying completely blind, but it was all new.” (DFO3)

“No, no. Here's a very confusing Excel document. Use the drop-down menu and come up with a figure...there's no training at all, there's a document, get on with it. But as with everything in the police, you sort of learn to do it quite quickly and just get on with it.” (DFO6)

“No. I kind of picked it up more than anything else. But just merely court case stuff, you know, *Paying the Bill*, *Paying the Bill 2*, all of that kind of the guidance and stuff.” (DFO8)

This demonstrates that a likely position across England and Wales, will be that DFOs and other police officers working in football units will be having to learn how to do elements of their work, such as SPS, with no formal training. The national strategic lead for football policing, Chief Constable Mark Roberts, did not necessarily think that training was required however:

“I'm not sure you really need the training package, it's quite straightforward. If people came forward and said there was a gap then we'd be more than happy to fill it with the UKFPU, but I don't actually think it's that complicated.” (Mark Roberts)

Roberts explained further why he did not think that training was necessary, as briefing documents are sent to DFOs:

“We constantly send out the brief the detail, it'll go out to force leads. I've written to Chief Constables to explain what the position is. DFOs get briefed on it...I think there's really good understanding about what the law is...my advice to all forces is that they mustn't go outside the legislation. I think everyone is well sighted because they've had the guidance repeatedly at various levels.” (Mark Roberts)

This resonates with the experiences that the DFOs have described above, and offers an explanation as to why DFOs are having to upskill themselves regarding SPS, which is a common mode of training through socialisation is a common occurrence (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017). There will be aspects of many occupations that are not given dedicated training time and will require elements of on the job learning, but this requires personal responsibility from the DFOs concerned and will lead to variability in knowledge. However, given the financially significant aspect of SPS and the history of legal issues between police forces and football clubs, there is a strong argument to pay more attention to the training requirement here. This could help to reduce the issues between police forces and football clubs, and lead to better working relationships.

It was not just DFOs that did not receive sufficient training regarding SPS, it was very limited for the football club participants also when they were asked if there was any training for them on SPS:

“I don't think there's certainly anything that comes from the EFL or all the FSOA...I certainly haven't been offered any specific training in it.” (SO2)

“There's not. The FSOA in some respects, it's a good organisation, but I think there's gaps where they could improve. And maybe this is one of the areas that, you know, we could all sort of get together and probably come up with a standard way of operating. I think the FSOA, in a lot of things, could be the platform to try and drive some standardisations.” (SO3)

“I don't think there is anything formal out there, which I think would be helpful.” (SO6)

Even more so than the DFOs, the safety officer participants were being left with very minimal support and had to upskill themselves regarding SPS. Even if the FSOA did offer training on SPS, it could not necessarily be mandated as the football clubs are all separate private organisations. Another safety officer instead suggested that there was more reliance on an individual's network of safety officers to help each other with any issues that arose:

“You were self-educated...If any of the other clubs had an issue, they were always directed to either myself or <safety officer>. That would point them down a path to make sure that A they weren't being ripped off, and hoodwinked. And that did happen...bit seemed to me, once you've given that advice and the police force got the impression whoever they're dealing with knew what they were talking about, they backed off. They tried to use people's ignorance to perhaps get a little bit more.” (SO5)

As with many professions, building up a network of contacts that can be utilised to share knowledge is commonplace, but the lack of formal training is still emphasised. The comment that police forces were trying to 'rip off' football clubs is interesting, and would suggest that SO5, as an experienced safety officer, had witnessed this in their career. This was not however, supported by other safety officers, and the police forces participants were quite clear that they were not looking to profiteer.

Overall, there is still police force (and to an extent football club) practice occurring which is not in line with national guidance (see NPCC, 2018; 2020; College of Policing, 2018b) for policing, which may be caused by a lack of training as all participants had to upskill themselves in SPS. This is commonplace in policing where officers learn from through experience as opposed to formal training (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017). As practice is occurring outside of guidance, it demonstrates a need for more formalised training on SPS, and particularly the case law that informs it. This would

only be required if SPS is not reformed. The upskilling and professional interest from participants led to a range of views on the current principles of SPS, as discussed in the next section.

5.3 Perspectives on the principle of SPS

This section considers what participants think about SPS, and legal rulings related to it. As people that are actively involved in the administration of SPS, it is important to consider their views to propose any changes to the system, as discussed in chapter 6. The section considers all the participant views, police officers, football clubs and stakeholders, in terms of moralising who should pay for policing football, geographical differences, the Ipswich ruling and the costs that are associated with SPS.

5.3.1 Who should pay for football policing?

A key aspect of the discussion with the participants was the moral and ethical question of who should pay for the policing of football matches, linking to the concept of what the police role is within society (Bowling et al., 2019). There were disparate views from the research participants:

“So is it right, that on a high-risk game, when the ground turns round and says...we've got enough stewards, we've got enough SIA, we don't need any police in here, we're all sorted. But yet we've got 15 PSUs sitting outside because of the crime and disorder that might occur, either post or pre-match. So, you know who picks up the cost for all that?” (DFO3)

“I just think football is a business, people are making loads of money out of it, and the football authorities or the clubs should contribute a lot more toward the public costs of what they are doing.” (SAG Chair)

“Because of the case law, then it's kind of on the side of the clubs, if you like. But I have got to say that I think it's entirely unfair that the taxpayer is paying 80% of the costs of what is effectively a private event...they don't pay that in cricket, rugby or any other sport. It's a football issue only I think.” (SGSA Rep)

Some football club participants, although aware of these arguments, were more focused on their legal obligations:

“The worry with <football club> is that they would stop at <town> on the way up and trash pubs there...That's not my issue. Morally probably, but legally not.” (SO1)

“I don't see why, you know, if the club, if the stadium is controlling their own venue, because something happens a couple of hours before or a couple hours after, in a city centre or something somewhere, because groups have come together. That's out of the remit of the clubs to control.” (SO6)

Despite the case law clearly defining the limit of responsibility, some football clubs experienced pressure from the authorities, including the police, to pay for police resources:

“It's an interesting concept about SPS because the safety advisory group can't make me have police officers inside the stadium, and they can't make the police come to the game. However, what they can do is they can determine whether or not it is inherently unsafe without police being there, and they can amend the safety certificate. And they can put restrictions on and they can alter the S factor and they can limit the number of people who are allowed in to such a point that they bully you into having it.” (SO4)

This offers support to the assertion by Skolnick (1966) and Bayley (1994) that police officers seek to exert control and authority, as well as the ‘them and us’ concept (Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017) which is prevalent in policing. This suggests that in some instances, the police are not adopting a partnership working approach with football clubs, as advocated by national guidance and research (College of Policing, 2018b; Hester, 2020; Hester & Pamment, 2020) and that SPS weights the dynamic of the relationship in favour of the police. Conversely, the police service felt the

opposite in that some clubs were acting cynically in order to avoid paying costs, and that left football clubs with all the power and control:

“I think the club's get a great deal, I mean, we are left with a dilemma of you know where there's gonna be some flashpoints. Do you not deploy because it's not chargeable? Well, we can't do that because we've got obligations. The clubs are very well aware of it and some of them are quite cynical, in just leaving it for the police to pick up the tab.” (Mark Roberts)

This was not universally experienced across the country; indeed, some football clubs were or had been previously quite altruistic, recognising their broader impact on the community and attaching obligations to that themselves.

“Before the Ipswich ruling, the <event organiser>, you know, paid for over and above what it has on the footprint, because it knows, and they always recognise that the impact is massive, and it takes a big policing operation to make it safe.” (DFO4)

“We recognise there's issues in the local community beforehand...it is us sort of trying to play our part and say, look, we recognise we've got this game on, we recognise that the police have got to put extra resource on to protect the local community, and they've asked us to help pay for it. You know, it's almost like our concerned citizen hat. And we've sort of agreed to pay it. Yes, they're at the ground, and they're a visible deterrent, which certainly helps. But they're more useful outside and it's our bit to look after local community.” (SO2)

This was an anomaly in the research, and was not broadly representative of how the majority of football clubs operated. It does necessitate revisiting the question of the role of the police, particularly in relation to public reassurance as highlighted by Bowling et al. (2019). Other participants suggested that providing community policing and reassurance, should be seen as taking precedence over the question of who is paying for it, regardless of what the event is:

“The biggest thing in <police force> on at <football club> matchday is around <football club>'s football ground. So, if we need resources there, we need them there.” (DFO8)

“You know, if the police are standing outside a school looking at the traffic, for example, the parking, they're not charging the school. So, I think ultimately yes, I can see the perception of it being unfair that the police can't charge, but I would say why should they charge?” (Amanda Jacks – FSA)

Some of these perspectives will have developed through the participants own experiences of dealing with SPS, from either a football club or police force position. Other views will have developed from participants taking an interest in the topic, as it relates to their area of professional practice. A key aspect is the consideration on what exactly the role of the police should be, and nothing presented by the participants has deviated from the core responsibilities of public safety and crime prevention, as suggested by Bowling et al. (2019). In order to establish who should pay for the policing of football, understanding the role of the police is fundamental. This section has demonstrated that it is nuanced, complex and without a straightforward solution. The following sections show further complexity, which needs consideration before the question of who should pay for football policing can be answered.

5.3.2 Geographical differences

A common issue that was raised by participants is that SPS, for both football clubs and police forces can be regarded as a postcode lottery. This is due to the nuances of geography, stadium designs and ownership of land that can result in football clubs receiving different bills when the police are performing exactly the same function.

“I would say is that it is unfair on the club's essentially, because depending on the geography of your ground means how much you pay.” (DFO2)

“The one size fits all doesn't necessarily work. And, you know, you've got to look at the stadium, you got to look at the environment, you got to look at the you know, the area around it.” (SO6)

“So, where you've got older grounds, probably like Bramall Lane, Goodison Park, that are right in the middle of a town centre or residential area, that limits the footprint of the ground. If you've got grounds like the Etihad, that sit on their own estate, then that brings a lot more in for charging, because it's on land owned by the club.” (Mark Roberts)

“I think from our point of view probably doesn't take account of the wider implications that football has. That it's not just the ground itself, it's the pubs around it, particularly in more sort of older build stadiums that are straight out onto streets, then one gets into complicated place in some of the newer, what I call sort of more island stadiums that, that it actually has relatively little impact.” (Head of Communications – PCC's Office)

These comments reinforce the fact that football clubs incur different amounts of SPS based on their geography. Following the case of Ipswich discussed in section 2.6.6, any police resources deployed outside turnstiles but on public land will not be chargeable under SPS. Whereas for newer football stadiums (of which there are many nationally), that are in areas away from town and city centres, the land is owned or leased by the football club, so they would be chargeable for police resources deployed outside the turnstiles under SPS. This disparity means that in all instances, with the police performing the same function, either the police force or the football club are gaining out of it. There does not appear to be a happy medium.

Some participants were more pragmatic about this:

“Some have gained some have lost. That's the luck of the draw. I always say, if you lose, if you're on the losing side, I think well, think about all the time you've been on the winning side.” (SO5)

However, this may be of little consolation to a football club that is facing significantly different bills to their neighbouring football club in the same police force area, purely based on geography and stadium design.

5.3.3 The Ipswich ruling

The Ipswich ruling (see section 2.6.6) effectively confirmed that police resources can only be charged under SPS on land that is owned or leased by the football club. This was seen as unfair by a number of police participants, although there were also sympathetic views from outside the police:

“I do think it's unfair. I think it was probably a poor, well, maybe a poor judgement.” (DFO2)

“I mean, obviously, from a police perspective, I don't think it's fair...it doesn't affect just football it affects all events.” (DFO4)

“That was a really, for policing that was a bad outcome. And one I actually disagree with, the judges themselves seem to make the point, this isn't fair, but unfortunately, it's the law. So, I think that's been a kind of insult to injury because I don't think the charging regime previously properly recompensed the police for what we have to put in.” (Mark Roberts)

“I think it's totally unfair on the police is my view. I mean, that's right next to the ground, and it clearly needs policing.” (SGSA Rep)

It is to be expected that the police participants would be more critical of the ruling, and regard it as not being in favour of the police. The safety officer participants were not necessarily in agreement with the Ipswich ruling, but did not condone it either:

“Well, from a football point of view, that's good, isn't it? Because it's, as I say, just reinforces the footprint is we pay for people on the footprint. Outside, we don't pay for them, as simple as that. I have sympathy because when you've got a football match on it does cause disruption to the local community...the club should have to pay, make a contribution to policing in the town centres really.” (SO1)

There is some tacit acknowledgement here that aligns with the views of the DFOs, that the Ipswich case was not fair on policing. There were views however, that the Ipswich case could have been avoided if better relationships had been fostered between the police and the football club.

“That probably could have been resolved if you had the right relationship between the club and the police force.” (SO3)

“Bit of a strange one, I think, and I'd like to use that much used phrase, common sense would prevail. But obviously, it didn't if it gets to court.” (SO5)

As is discussed further in section 5.4, the relationship between the police force and the football club is a key aspect, particularly in terms of avoiding issues relating to SPS. Overall, the Ipswich ruling has had a profound impact on SPS and subsequently the policing of football. As a result, this should prompt discussion about the way football is policed. This should be viewed in terms of the role of the football club in policing its own environment, as stewards can be effective with this (Frosdick, 2005; O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020). As well as policing adopting a more liaison based approach that can utilise fewer, more specialised resources (see Stott et al., 2012; 2018; 2019; Hope et al., 2023).

5.3.4 The costs associated with SPS

The Ipswich ruling did not change the costing system and hourly rates for police officers within SPS, which was raised by both police and football club participants as being of concern:

“The economic recovery costs that they strap on to SPS, I think you could argue, make it very unattractive to people that are financially minded...the idea of paying, I don't know, 60 quid an hour for a cop for a football match. That just, I mean it sounds exorbitant.” (DFO1)

“I think that one of the biggest barriers to SPS and working with the police is the cost. The cost is prohibitive. So, if there...was some form of subsidy available. That, you know, £80 odd an hour! So nearly £500 for a police officer, each police officer for six hours!” (SO4)

“The only thing that I'd argue really over the charges is literally the amount that's being charged per hour for a police officer, for a sergeant. I really do because those police officers go through that training anyway [referring to training costs which are factored into SPS]. They don't go through that

training just for football anymore. They go through that training for all sorts of other events.” (SO7)

“If you look at the cost of an officer, compared to an SIA badged security officer, the prices are a lot different...if I was the event organiser, I'd rather pay for more security staff than police.” (DFO7)

This highlights potential issues over the cost that must be borne by football clubs, which can be argued as being exorbitant when viewed by a third party. The costs alone therefore are a reason that football clubs may be reluctant to expend on policing through SPS, and prefer instead to hire stewards at a significantly lesser cost. This does not support Frostdick's (1995) assertion that football clubs priorities finances over safety, but instead seek to fulfil their safety requirements in a more cost effective manner.

In addition to the cost, there was a perception that expensive police resources are not actually having to do an amount of work that is commensurate with the cost, even to the point of a being a source of embarrassment for police officers:

“[Asked if SPS hourly rates are too high] Good god yeah. You see the price of a chief superintendent, you know, silver commander sat in a control room eating a curled up sandwich, you know per hour, watching the game!” (DFO6)

There were other concerns about the quality of the police resources that were being provided:

“I've got no objection to paying for a higher rate for a police officer. What I would prefer, is to pay that rate for far less officers that have got more experience and are more capable.” (SO6)

This supports existing research (see Stott et al., 2019) where police public order resources were found to be ineffective and lacking in engagement with football supporters.

There were other concerns about the value for money that the police were offering, by virtue of the fact that they were not providing policing for the hours that they were charging the club for:

“You'll come on at 10 o'clock, you'll get an hour to travel to a briefing, you'll then brief, you know, you'll then meal. So, you're on three hours before you get to football ground...[clubs] say hang on a minute...how come, we aren't getting our six hours. Where they wouldn't do it for a steward would they, they wouldn't let a stewarding company rock up, you know, for an hour before the game and leave as soon as...but get charged six hours' worth.” (DFO8)

The police countered these concerns with making the point that they are having to pay more for the whole operation than they are receiving back in SPS:

“I certainly had that conversation with, with Chief execs before around that side of things. But then, you know, you could counter that with...the true cost of the policing is still more than you're actually paying.” (DFO9)

“The stuff that is set by government, that doesn't reflect the costs, which is our main thing and we lose money on some of those as well, which is obviously not right.” (Chief Finance Officer – PCC's Office)

This highlights that the issue of the costs associated with SPS is very problematic, in terms of how the payment of SPS may be perceived, particularly by the party that is paying for policing services. Viewed in a transactional way, where the services of the police are being procured, then the football club needs to be considered as a customer, and a customer would have certain expectations about how the service they are paying for should be delivered. This links back to the consideration of the role of the police, which is suggested as preventing crime, preserving order (College of Policing, 2018a; Bowling et al., 2019) and acting as 'peace officer' (Banton, 1964). Football clubs are then paying the police to perform their roles, which it can be argued that they should be doing anyway. The College of Policing (2022) lists

'impartiality' as a core value, which links into the policing principle of 'fairness' in the Code of Ethics for Policing (College of Policing, 2014). This creates a challenge for policing to remain fair and impartial when policing football, when they are being paid by the football club to do so, to the point where one could question whether they should be receiving any SPS at all.

It was clear that some football club participants felt that SPS needed reform, but there were different reasons for this:

"Well, I think it needs reform, going back to the beginning, there needs to be like a national policy on it...otherwise, there's little deals being done all around the country, and that's just dangerous." (SO1)

"It needs massive reform, to be perfectly honest...it needs discussion about the cost." (SO4)

"I would like to see it reformed...we don't have any say on the numbers that are provided. We are meant to ask for SPS on certain games, and we don't have any say over it." (SO7)

The reasons were based on factors that were different from the police participants, and portrayed that they felt it was currently in need of reform due to being unfair on football clubs. The police participants agreed that SPS needed reform, but this was for reasons relating to their perception that the current system of SPS is weighted in favour of football clubs.

"I think it probably does need reform". (DFO2)

"I'd say it needs reform personally." (DFO7)

"Well, I think it needs reform." (Mark Roberts)

Section 5.3 has established that there is a complex and nuanced debate about who should be paying for the policing of football, which is interlinked with a discussion

around what the role of the police is in relation to football. This is further complicated by geographical and design differences in football stadia, resulting in disparity over charging for the same policing function. Although the Ipswich ruling has offered some clarity, it is divisive in terms of fairness and has restricted the utility of SPS. Universally, participants expressed concerns over the costs attached to SPS. Importantly, this section promotes debate over how football should be policed differently, by both public and private actors. In order to examine whether SPS does indeed require reform, it is important to analyse what happens when the police and football clubs work together in order to establish the policing resource requirements for a football match, as well as the level of SPS that is attached to that. The next section examines the participant perspectives on the 'negotiations' in more detail.

5.4 SPS negotiations

This section is key to understanding how football clubs and police forces interact with one another when discussing the arrangements for police resources that will be deployed under SPS. This will incorporate elements of occupational culture from both parties, as well as considerations around what the role is of both the police and private security within a football policing context.

5.4.1 Transparency and relationship building

The participants reflected the importance of relationship building, that is based on transparency on both sides as an effective way of operating with SPS.

“We're fortunate our clubs are very sensible. Because we've got that good working relationship, we've always had it...and there's sometimes a little bit of debate. But it's nothing more than that. We've never really had any kind of serious disagreements with our clubs.” (DFO4)

DFO4 highlights the importance of a working relationship with the football club, but this was not universal across the board, with police forces attempting to be transparent over their resourcing arrangements, but this raised concerns about the football clubs then utilising these resources for their own benefit at no cost.

“They [football club] know that there are resources outside, there are no secrets, effectively I don't lie to the safety officer. If we deem it necessary to put on an op outside for the safety of the general public...I don't gain anything by telling them that we've got no resources outside. I'm always honest in saying that we will be having a policing response, but it will be to deal with the issues within the borough of <town> not at your stadium. Which is a difficult line to walk.” (DFO1)

The final comment from DFO1 is interesting, as it highlights that the police will respond to incidents of disorder within the football ground, even if it is not part of an SPS agreement as it is within the police core duty to do so (see College of Policing, 2018a; Bowling et al., 2019). This can lead to resentment from the police, as they are perceiving that the football club are getting policing for free when they should have paid SPS in the first place, and DFO6 seems to suggest that this practice was occurring:

“Personalities within the clubs, I believe the saying is poacher turned gamekeeper. Where they may know of our tactics on what we may put on a fixture. So, they will say things, nope, we don't need it knowing that we'll have something on.” (DFO6)

Where this practice is occurring, it can result in unprofessional behaviour on both sides, as highlighted by SLO8:

“Something went off at <town> and the police called the ground and went look, this is happening in <town>, you need to have police in the ground. It was either our owner or safety officer went, ‘no, we're not doing

that'...something happened that kicked it off, and at the bottom of the street there were police stood watching it. And fans were ringing 999, but the police were stood at the bottom of the street watching because they were told under no circumstances were they to enter the ground until a 999 call. Because the relationship were, because <police force> were that pissed off with how they've been spoken to." (SLO8)

This demonstrates the 'them and us' police cultural trait (see Skolnick, 1966; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019) manifesting in an operational context, as the relationship has broken down to such a point where both sides are making decisions that could compromise safety. This was also evidenced by DFO1:

"Absolutely to some extent, they [the football club] do hold the cards. And I think the brutal truth of it is that there's an acknowledgment on both sides, that one of these days this will go wrong. And when it does, there'll be some awkward discussions, and maybe even some inquiries that come as a result afterwards." (DFO1)

This supports Frosdick (1995) by suggesting that some football clubs are operating in a manner that prioritises financial and commercial interests over safety, but the current SPS arrangements facilitates this happening, by inadvertently creating a situation where the football club and the police are placed into potentially adversarial positions. Police reform tends to follow from a crisis involving the police, examples such as the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and the death of Ian Tomlinson (Waddington et al., 2017). In order to understand why this reform is needed, we need to consider how the relationships between the clubs and the police can breakdown. A key aspect of this is a perceived lack of transparency on both sides when the police resourcing for a fixture is being planned.

"You know, I'm going in with Minerva [police football intelligence database] from two or three years, arrest reports, banning order figures, you know, the last four times they've played home and away. And then for me, it just saying to the safety officer, how about your safety officers' reports?" (DFO8)

“We don't have a chance to see their Minerva and they don't have a chance, usually to see our Football Safety Officer Association database, but I always share the information, because we've got nothing to hide. I'm fully aware that both extremes you'll have some football officer DFOs who will kind of whip it up...then on the other side, safety officer saying look we need to kind of damp this down a bit. Actually, we don't want to be policed next time so we'll pretend nothing's happened.” (SO1)

“I find sometimes the police will tell you the very bare minimum and it's like getting blood from a stone to get information that actually should be part of the conversation anyway. I do think clubs get frustrated by it. Clubs feel like they haven't got much choice in it, and that they're railroaded into stuff.” (SLO8)

This approach by the police of being unwilling to share information and intelligence fits with the cultural trait of ‘them and us’, as well as that of suspicion and seeking to exert control over situations (van Maanen, 1978; Loftus, 2008; Bowling et al., 2019). By the police retaining possession of intelligence relating to football events, this may help them to retain control of the subsequent resourcing of the fixture. Research from multi agency safeguarding partnerships indicate that the police can be ineffective at information sharing, and that outcomes can be improved with enhanced information sharing (Stanley et al., 2010; Stanley & Humphreys, 2014; Shorrocks et al., 2020). Arguably, if a more transparent approach was taken on both sides, this would help to foster better relationships between police forces and football clubs. There was scepticism from the police around the motives of football clubs for not wanting to share reports from other safety officers:

“There's almost that feeling that if they say that there's a problem, we're gonna say straight away, well you need cops so it's going to cost. So, I think they're a bit entrenched in we daren't tell them anything, it's like every police free game goes well, doesn't it?” (DFO8)

This again supports Frosdick (1995) in that clubs may prioritise financial interests over safety, by not sharing details of incidents of crime or anti-social behaviour with the police for fear of the police seeking to cost recover for future matches. This lends

further weight to the argument that the cost recovery aspect through SPS can act as a barrier to fostering good relationships between police forces and football clubs.

5.4.2 Dictatorial policing

A major factor that was problematic and a barrier to effective relationships being built was caused by dictatorial policing, the potential reasons for this were summarised by safety officers:

“People change in the police more than perhaps football clubs, where you get somebody who's doesn't want to conform to how it used to be. Wants to try and make a name for myself and it all goes to rat.” (SO5)

“It's built on relationship, and there's been times when the relationship between the two hasn't been great. And that is down to who comes in. I'm not talking at DFO level, I'm talking higher...if someone comes in with a different agenda, that can really upset the, you know, the dynamic between the club and the local police.” (SO6)

Cost effective solutions for policing are seen as demonstration of good quality leadership (Fisher & Phillips, 2015; Brain & Owens, 2015; Innes, Tucker & Jukes, 2015). This could lead to those seeking promotion within the police to look to bolster their portfolio by showing that they have decreased expenditure or increased revenue through greater use of SPS charging for example. Although promotion ambition was not explicitly stated as the reason, there were multiple examples in this research of dictatorial policing occurring, observed by football clubs, other stakeholders, and by the police officers themselves. There were clear examples of senior leaders in the police service attempting to influence the SPS process, which did not have a lawful basis to it:

“She [police leader] pretty much reached a point in the SAG where she was proposing to withdraw the provision of any SPS based on ethical arguments around the cost to the taxpayer...her gambit was the club acted as if it's doing us a favour when it pays us SPS, but actually, what we would cover doesn't even cover half our costs. Therefore, in the interests of delivering a proper police service to the general public, we're going to withdraw from that because it doesn't make financial sense. She got her collar felt as a result.” (DFO1)

“The <location> which is the other side of the road, which 2,000 fans are in. So, all of this was those cops are down there, you are going to be charged this, bit bully boy tactics I think by the ACC. ‘Look, you've asked for SPS we're telling you this is how much it's going to cost you...if you think we're wrong, take us to court.’ Literally the words that were used.” (DFO8)

This is a clear example of police cultural traits of exerting dominance (see van Maanen, 1978; Holdaway, 1983; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Bowling et al., 2019), as the senior police officer responsible for negotiating SPS is clearly trying to exert their dominance onto the football club during these encounters by dictating the resource levels. Another example of this, which could also be an explanation for some of these approaches, is the national leadership, as Mark Roberts also displays a similar view that it is for the police to determine the resource level:

“I think clubs will try and argue about the level of resource. But ultimately, if the club are making a request, then it's for the police commander, to set the levels of resource that they feel is appropriate.” (Mark Roberts)

There were other clear examples of this police dominated approach which was expressed by football club participants:

“They wanted to charge the full amount for all their officers from kind of booking on to booking off at night, even though the football game finishes at five o'clock for a three o'clock kick-off, and the officers wouldn't have got off to like eight, nine o'clock at night, they want to charge a full amount. And I challenged that and said, look, morally we should probably pay for it but legally, we don't need to because only on the footprint, and you need to be invited in.” (SO1)

One could question here whether this is a case of the police trying to exert their dominance and seek to recoup as high a cost as possible from the event, or simple failure to follow the national charging guidelines (NPCC, 2018; 2020) that are available to them. Other examples were clearer in terms of the police exerting their dominance:

“I find that <police force> are a very unusual force in their attitude...it's you will do as the police say is pretty much and it's caused some conflict...we nearly had supporters back on Boxing Day [during Covid restrictions]. And we were going to do a pilot event...There were no visiting supporters, and it was stewarded for 22,000...so we were looking at about 100 stewards for 1,000 supporters. And I spoke to the police and said I won't be making a request for special police services, we won't need any police and these are the reasons. And they came back to me said, 'that won't be your decision, we might insist that you have police.' Because as it ended up we stayed in tier three [Covid restriction meaning no supporters were allowed in stadia], but there was no way they could justify having police in there. But it was the attitude of the police...we're in charge, we're gonna tell you what you're having.” (SO4)

This example supports existing research suggesting that the police are demonstrating cultural traits of ‘them and us’, as well as attempting to exert their dominance and control a situation (see Skolnick, 1966; van Maanen, 1978; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017). Alternatively, given SO4 appears to give a clear rationale as to why police resources were not needed, the police are displaying established risk averse practice (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) and failing to appropriately risk assess the fixture to apply the correct resource level, as suggested by Stott et al (2019). Another example was where a police dictatorial approach was met with an equally resistant response from the football club when the police were insistent that police resources were required for a fixture and saying they would escalate to an emergency safety advisory group (SAG) if the club did not agree:

“I went down to the police station, spoke to the superintendent, I said I've been put in a position. You can come and do this game, but you'll stay outside on the carpark. And he said no, that's not happening. He said we're coming in the ground. I said I will put you outside on the carpark you will be outside of one of my main gates to come straight in. There'll be no difference with you working in that pen and working outside that gate. He said no I'm not having that. I said fine, I'm actually handing the game over to you, you're now taking charge of that game for me in its entirety. And he backed off and he said okay. So, we agreed to disagree.” (SO7)

With this example, both parties wanted a safe resolution, but the disagreement, which is over the necessity of police resources being present in the footprint, is based around cost and will lead to longer term issues in the relationship between the police and the football club. This kind of disagreement when negotiating SPS was also evident to third party stakeholders, again demonstrating the police cultural traits of dominance and them and us:

“So that was a really messy situation. Just linked to what the police perceived as poor management by the club, what the club said, was poor policing. So yes, certainly, that went on for a best part of nine, ten months. It was a really quite aggressive stance taken by the police.” (SGSA Rep)

Whilst these examples portray a policing approach of controlling and dominating football clubs, there was also practice which exhibited a more nonchalant approach from the police service, which lacked the spirit of partnership working:

“I've sat around those meetings, and they've [commanders] just said, oh Cat C, but that's so many you know, and they throw PSUs around like, it's chocolate, you know, and you're thinking, but they're sat at that side of the table and a PSU can be 10 grand. We don't ever think in those figures do we, bosses don't, they don't need to. So, they just go, well, I think we need an extra PSU and it should be in the ground and the club are going that's another £10,000 that. So, it's where it doesn't marry up I don't think sometimes.” (DFO8)

This fits with the police cultural trait of being mission focused (see Bowling et al, 2019), where the police service does not feel the need to be constrained by financial

factors, instead focusing on getting the job done. Furthermore, this supports research (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) suggesting the police are risk averse in their approach, by just adding more resource without necessarily applying a thorough risk assessment. This also supports that the police service do not necessarily look to work beyond their boundary in partnership working, instead maintaining their own agenda which can create conflict and tension (Willis, 2012; Crawford & L'Hoiry, 2017). Interestingly, some police participants felt that by pushing for resourcing, it was supporting safety officers who may be battling against increasing commercial interests (see Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019) being prioritised over safety (Frosdick, 1995) at their football club:

“Some safety officers probably appreciate it, that safety advisory groups, etc, when the police do stand up and say, not this ain't right, we're not having that. It actually helps them in I mean, obviously, they're masters of the club. But you know, I suppose it gives them a little bit of support for what they might be saying, but they've got to manage their internal politics and manage the club and the commercial aspects of that.” (DFO9)

This however is not evidence based, and is a further example of police dominance by considering that their approach is correct and not working effectively in partnership with football clubs. Despite significant evidence that police dominance has been occurring in SPS negotiations, there were suggestions that this may be a legacy issue that was being phased out, in favour of more liaison-based approaches as advocated by contemporary research (see Stott et al, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019; Hester, 2020, Hope et al., 2023):

“Some of the old match commanders...who thought actually police are the lead agency, we will dictate to you how many police officers are going to be in that ground, what category of games this is going to be. Has sort of now drifted off, and we're now left with a new type of officer who acts in very

much more partnership working and will actually link in with the clubs and agree with the clubs a lot more than what they used to do.” (DFO3)

Section 5.4.2 has clearly demonstrated that the police cultural trait of dominance, as well as the ‘them and us’ approach is evident in negotiations between police forces and football clubs. This also supports that risk averse practices are occurring in how football policing is resourced, with minimal regard for the cost that may be incurred as a result. These examples highlight problematic practices that are occurring, however it is positive that progress is being made in terms of football policing that focuses on partnership working and liaison is starting to occur. It is important to consider that problems in SPS negotiation are not just generated by police forces, as the next section examines.

5.4.3 Football clubs creating conflict

Despite the issues that were evident from the actions of the police, it was also clear that clubs also created problems in their approach to SPS negotiations:

“They've [football club] got the owner who I can only describe his grip as sort of Kim Jong Un like on the club, if you know what I mean. And it's his train set at the end of the day Rich, and he's a businessman, so I don't really expect anything else...<chairman> is the business equivalent of a salt water crocodile, and I'm happy to be quoted on that. He's not a bloke I would want to climb into the water with, and that's how he got rich. Let's face it, at the end of the day there's no law that precludes him from behaving that way.” (DFO1)

The situation as described by DFO1 was at the more extreme end in this research, however this narrative is in keeping with existing literature (see Frosdick, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019) that capitalist endeavours are the most

important aspect for a football club. When met with the police cultural trait of dominance, SPS negotiations will have the perfect storm for conflict, which goes some way to explaining why the legal cases such as Wigan, Leeds and Ipswich have occurred.

5.4.4 Zone Ex issues

A new concept was the policing of Zone Ex (see section 2.8), however despite current case law (see section 2.6 for the Ipswich Town case) being clear that football clubs are only financially liable for policing within the footprint, police forces were attempting to look for clubs to take greater responsibility for Zone Ex in their SPS negotiations:

“They [the police] want us to run, operate some form of marshalling between the town centre and the stadium and you know about the Zone Ex requirements. Now, I want to know where Zone Ex ends. So, if we're playing <local derby>, do we have to sort of start doing things in <local derby> Town Centre pre match and, you know, so where does it start? Where does it end? You know, it's a difficult one.” (SO4)

It was also observed by stakeholder organisations that the police were trying to influence clubs to do more and have greater responsibility for what occurs within Zone Ex:

“So, there's kind of a disconnect at this particular club, where I would say there's a very aggressive policing stance, which doesn't really understand what Zone Ex is. So, some police forces, including this one, think that the local authority have got powers to abandon the game, prohibit the game going ahead for issues in Zone Ex, well they haven't.” (SGSA Rep)

It is evident that football clubs were willing to consider supporting operations that occur within Zone Ex, but without clearly defined parameters of responsibility, it is not easy to easily agree. Clubs also have concerns that if they offer resourcing in the

way of stewards into Zone Ex, this then may lead to a widening of the footprint and therefore liability towards policing costs through SPS. The debate around Zone Ex provides an opportunity for further discussion around the role of plural policing within public spaces, but supports the notion (see Stenning, 2009; Boels & Verhage, 2016; White, 2016) that there are concerns about who is responsible and accountable for private policing within public spaces. There should be an opportunity here to harness more advanced, private crime prevention technologies that exist (Laufs & Borrion, 2022) within Zone Ex to support policing operations. More research is needed that examines the liminal space of Zone Ex as a policing concept to explore this in further depth.

5.4.5 The use of emergency SAGs

The Safety Advisory Group (SAG) is a body of professionals with representatives from the local authority, fire service, ambulance service, local police and SGSA which act in an advisory role to both the football club and local authority, who are responsible for the issuing of a safety certificate to the football club (SGSA, 2022). If a football club and police force disagree over the resourcing for a particular fixture, an emergency SAG may be called by either party to ask for a resolution in terms of whether a fixture is safe to go ahead with or without police resources being present (The Emergency Planning College, 2019).

As a way of mediating a disagreement between a football club and a police force, there is the potential for this to be problematic in terms of damaging the relationship between the two parties:

“That's where the conflict comes if there's no middle ground, and that's when they march off to it to an emergency SAG. And once you've done that, you've lost it really.” (SO5)

“I think it's gone from a point of trust in terms of who the personnel are at that time. And we, it was actually us that called the SAG on that one to get them involved. And, yeah, I think then, you know, at that point, then relationships were very, very hostile. And that doesn't help anyone, because the club felt isolated. The police felt, and it's not that it's not the officers on the ground, they felt isolated, because they didn't feel supported by, you know, the senior person.” (SO6)

Furthermore, the clubs generally had concerns about the legitimacy of the process, as in line with research suggesting that the police service will be risk averse in decision making (Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020), they felt that the SAG would take a similar approach and not look to overturn a police decision:

“SAG will never come down on the side of a club, they'll always come down on the side of the police.” (SO7)

“The police hold all the power. Because they can just go risk, safety, violence and then you go to emergency SAG. Then the SAG always go with the police.” (SO8)

“All clubs are quite nervous of that because they know the SAG is likely to side with the police. They will think oh the police have got all the intelligence and the club know nothing.” (SO1)

These concerns do not seem unfounded that the decision to go to a SAG will be a fait accompli for the police being backed regarding their decision making, as evidenced by the SAG chair not feeling they had the confidence to oppose a police position on resourcing for a fixture:

“I think on the whole, SAG chairs sort of accept that the police are doing the policing, and it would be hard to argue against their decisions on things. I wouldn't feel competent and I don't think my colleagues would be to intervene, because we don't know enough about the policing side of it.” (SAG Chair)

This supports the notion that as well as the police being risk averse, people that work in the public sector are considered to be more risk averse (Buurman et al., 2012). This was despite a tacit acknowledgement on the policing side, that it can be challenging to present an evidence-based argument, with a decision to apply police resources being based more on experience than meaningful intelligence:

“We went to emergency SAGs with both a couple of our clubs just because actually we were having that problem that they didn't accept the fact that actually they needed to be policed. And we've said well of course they need to be policed...then there was the arguments around the intelligence. Well what intelligence have you got to suggest that? And you know you've worked in the world, you know how difficult it can be sometimes to quantify that intelligence.” (DFO9)

This comment supports notions that policing is considered by some as a practice that cannot be easily explained or taught, but is in fact more of a 'craft' (Charman, 2017) that is based on experience and intuition as opposed to scientific reasoning. If adopted, this notion would then render the SAG not necessarily qualified to argue against the decision of a police force, which was emphasised by DFO5:

“You know, I've got my own opinions about some SAGs, they're not necessarily the be all end all, and not through any fault of their own, but just because they don't have any specific training necessarily.” (DFO5)

The research here brings into question how fit for purpose SAGs are in terms of a resolution mechanism when there is a disagreement over costs negotiated through SPS. At this point in time, clubs are reticent to utilise SAGs for fear that they have an innate bias towards the police, and the police are likely to utilise the SAG to support their potential risk averse decision making. Given the ineffectiveness of this mechanism, it raises two fundamental questions. Firstly, it needs to be considered if the emergency SAG system needs replacing with a more robust, qualified and independent arbitration mechanism to resolve disputes between football clubs and

police forces. Secondly, the very nature of having such a mechanism in the first place could lead to a bigger question of why do disputes occur and if there are ways they can be avoided, such as through the abolition of SPS in its entirety SPS is only part of the issue, how the policing of football occurs by both public and private actors is important.

5.5 Policing reform - Progressive policing

An emergent theme from the data concerned the topic of policing of football matches, as opposed to being purely about the cost or SPS processes. This demonstrates that the manner of policing of football, by both public and private organisations is crucial. In this section, the role of stewarding in terms of plural policing is considered first, followed by the role of the public police.

5.5.1 Plural policing and professionalisation

The data that was received from the participant interviews regarding stewarding can be separated into three areas: issues with stewarding practice; how stewarding can be improved; and identification of potential barriers. There were some concerning issues highlighted regarding stewarding practice, which would need urgent action to ensure that such practice does not continue:

“<Football club> have got a shocking reputation for thuggishness in their response teams. And these are usually door staff, all SIA accredited, that want to go in and fight. And I've seen video of the response teams encouraging and actually starting fights...I want to work to a position where I can reduce the amount of police by having better conflict management trained early resolution officers.” (SO4)

SO4 highlights some serious concerns, however it is difficult to judge without further evidence as to how widespread this may be across the sector, but given the suggestion of it being a reputation, there is likely to be a number of incidents that have led to this. This lends some support to existing research, where O'Neill (2005) found that stewards preferred the 'old days' when there was more disorder at football. Furthermore, it supports Atkinson & Graham (2020) who found that stewards can create problems through poor practice. Potential reasons were offered as to why stewarding practice was not always sufficiently professional:

"I think football clubs for years and years and years were reliant on the police being inside their stadiums. So, I'm absolutely not saying that they didn't train their stewards because I know that they did, but I think the writing arguably was on the wall that the police aren't going to be turning up in numbers inside football stadiums. So, let's concentrate more on stewards. Let's improve their training...let's look at their pay. Let's look at their conditions. So, when the police do withdraw, we are ready to step in and manage events safely."
(Amanda Jacks – FSA)

This comment is in line with existing research which suggests that the police are trying to withdraw resources from certain tasks (Button; 2002; Boels & Verhage, 2016; Atkinson & Graham; 2020). Furthermore, it supports the concerns that have been raised about the lack of training for stewards (Frosdick, 1995; Frosdick & Marsh, 2005; O'Neill, 2005), although contemporary research (see Atkinson & Graham, 2020) highlights that despite training for stewards still being an issue, it has improved more recently. Concerns were raised about the potential risk to safety and public order at football events, when solely relying on stewards as part of the safety operation:

"The stewards will openly say that the safety officer, when briefing them refers to increased levels of tolerance...because we haven't got the police so we can't go in quite as hard...Now that's a double-edged sword. It works, in some circumstances, some fans respond really positively to it and what you

get is a much better atmosphere because some common sense comes in, and people are not heavy handed and these fans walk away saying we were really well treated today and we feel really happy about it...On the other hand, you get some groups that arrive and because the tone seems to be relaxed, they push and push and push, and then the problems start and the stewards haven't got a grip. But that's a two-edged sword mate and that's the line the safety officer is forced to walk." (DFO1)

This supports existing research, which suggests that stewards may be more effective than police officers in dealing with football crowds, because of their intimate knowledge of the football ground they are working in (O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020). However, Atkinson & Graham (2020) caution that the stewards can be ineffective when disorder escalates, as indicated by SO1. As already suggested, a reason for potential ineffectiveness of stewards is the lack of remuneration meaning that more competent people are not attracted to the role:

"It's an interesting idea, if you were to say like, as a safety officer, we've employed 100 extra stewards, we don't want any police...we will manage everything ourselves. Then it's a difficult argument to say, no, we think you need police...the difficulty with stewards is they're paid minimum wage, I guess, and then you will get what you pay for." (DFO5)

This observation from DFO5 highlights a concern that even though football clubs may bolster their security operations, it does not necessarily mean that they are being staffed with the right calibre of people. This resonates with what Atkinson & Graham (2020, p. 445) observe as 'empty jackets', where there are concerns that despite the number of stewards that are employed, they are not necessarily effective. Similarly, evidence from the prison and probation sectors supports that effective staffing is essential in setting the right culture and maintain morale to avoid high staff turnover (Burke & Collett, 2016; Burke at al., 2016; Liebling & Ludlow, 2016; Milling et al., 2019).

There were however, some comments from participants which suggested that effective stewarding methods were in place:

“We've got quite a reliable [stewarding] company to work with us that are compliant with all the regulations and the training needs. So, our stewarding operation was deemed acceptable to the local police. So much so they didn't feel the need to come in and, you know, as they sometimes do with the, we're going to bring loads of cops in cos we think your stewarding's rubbish.” (SO2)

“So, I really do believe in in house stewards because it's much the same as mutual aid with police. They go somewhere, they're not interested in what happens when they've left that area. Whereas with the stewards, they take a pride and a bit of responsibility in looking after their own supporters. And to some degree...they do the police role, as far as I'm concerned. But it's also me having faith in the stewards...I won't have any rag tag bobtail stewarding company come in here. The best stewarding company that I had in here was a group of guys, ex-military, I paid a little bit extra for them. But they were really, really good at the job...We do a lot of in-house training, so that that goes a long way to stewards actually identifying a problem, getting involved very early on, and trying to defuse any situations...it's not just having stewards for the sake of having stewards, it's not the bodies that you want. It's very much like the cops, it's understanding and being able to talk to people. And that's the sort of stewards that I want. Because that then it gives the police some satisfaction that we are doing a good job. And I mean, I went from I think it was 12, 13, 14 games being policed down to about 6 or 8 games.” (SO7)

Both these Safety Officers advocate for the value of having an effective group of well-trained stewards that work regularly at the stadium, and as a result are effective in their role. However, participants indicated future barriers to the effective recruitment and utilisation of stewards at football matches:

“A big concern I have coming up when eventually we have fans back in [following Covid-19 restrictions] is getting the right staff and getting the qualified staff. Because at the moment, there's no funding to train stewards anywhere.” (SO3)

“We've got the <music venue>, they have big concerts and things like that...and they'll chase the money. If they get paid a little bit more at the <venue> than they do at the <football club> and there's a clash, we know where they'll go. Can't blame them. And I think again, it's this thing in football, that we've got to convince the powers that be that stewards are worth a bit

more than average pay or minimum wage. Old adage you get what you pay for is true.” (SO5)

This research has highlighted a genuine concern in the football industry, that there will be a loss of experienced stewards following the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as an overall labour shortage to fill steward vacancies. How this manifests over time will require further research. Interestingly, comments from safety officers show that the police have sought to withdraw resources away from the stadium footprint because of effective stewarding practices being in place, which is indicative of the police desire for more pluralised policing (Button; 2002; Boels & Verhage, 2016; Atkinson & Graham; 2020). Furthermore, this supports existing research (see O’Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) which indicates that an enhancement of both training and pay would result in more effective stewarding operations. With the correct investment and training, effective stewarding provides an opportunity to take a more pluralistic approach to the policing of football. Academic literature (see Innes, 2013; Millie, 2013; Millie & Bullock, 2013; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020) has already indicated the opportunity that austerity has presented to policing to operate more effectively, and what is happening at some football stadiums is in line with Loader’s (2000) assertion that ‘policing’ needs to be done by not just the public police. What is less clear is how stewarding operations at football would be accountable to the public, which is a reoccurring issue with plural policing solutions (Loader, 2000; Stenning, 2009; Boels & Verhage, 2016; White, 2016) and something that needs consideration as part of identifying progressive change for SPS issues. Clearly, plural policing has a role to play to improve football policing, but the research also indicated a range of improvements that can be made in public policing, as discussed in the next section.

5.5.2 Public policing approaches

A major aspect of this emerging theme concerned issues with the public policing of football events, as well as how this could be improved in the future. This section analyses problematic areas of police practice that were identified, concerns with senior leadership in football policing, risk aversion, modified approaches to resourcing and more effective methods of policing football.

The DFO participants were acutely aware of issues with how police were performing when deployed at football events:

“I think it's the quality of what they're getting is a problem sometimes. You know, I go mad if I see cops, no hats on looking at the game not doing their job.” (DFO2)

“I'll say to Silver: ‘Boss, can you have a word with Bronze, because they're just stood there not doing anything, at least walk around the stadium.’ You know, I want us to have that good relationship, I don't want to sit in the next planning meeting with them going well, we're not paying for cops because all they do is stand around or sit in a van.” (DFO6)

These observations clearly cause issues for DFOs, who are then having difficult conversations with football clubs who may be raising concerns about the performance of the police. This supports existing research (see Stott et al., 2019) which suggests that there is minimal engagement between police officers and football supporters. Furthermore, this was also recognised by the football club and stakeholder participants as being an issue:

“The police officers go around in groups of three or four, and just like scowling at the crowd, not say ‘hi, how are you’, you know, ‘enjoy the game’. It doesn't take much does it to do that.” (SO1)

“I've seen police officers perform at football and I wouldn't pay them washers some of them. Shocking and you as a DFO or FIO/FLO you'll have been

shocked at games, won't you? You'll be there wading in dragging people out, and then you'll be looking and they'll be some officer whose only there for the overtime with his thumb up his bum and brain in neutral." (SO4)

"They're standing in a little group chatting amongst themselves...and I have to say to the police commander, could they spread out a little bit, you know, why am I having to ask them to do that? Are you not looking at what your own resources are doing?" (SO6)

"Are the cops on football duty briefed to talk to people? They don't, they just stand there in their little yellow jackets clustered or they stand there looking really bored and pissed off...It's invariably an opportunity missed for all sorts of reasons, so again, these are the conversations that perhaps are more important than the finances." (Amanda Jacks – FSA)

Whilst this will not be happening in every case, and there will undoubtedly be examples of proactive police practice, it is of concern that these experiences appear somewhat widespread in football policing. Furthermore, there were other issues in terms of threat assessment and poor police practice as identified by football clubs:

"There are occasions when you can see that some police forces are gilding the lily...and I'll go and speak to the safety officer of the club and say, well, look, the police are saying this, tell me about it. And they'll say well, it's partially true." (SO2)

"[On an incident] So the police came, but then what I tried to explain what I wanted them to do. They didn't know what to do, and I'm not kidding Richard, I was physically manhandling where I wanted them put. And I'm thinking, we're paying for this what's going on?" (SO3)

"We had quite a serious disorder with <football club> in the ground. The police were the cause of that, and they actually admitted it in the end...what they did is, they rounded up all of the <football club> supporters in the town centre and corralled them all in the town centre and then brought them to the ground." (SO7)

This supports existing research (see Stott et al., 2018; 2019) which states that policing of football is not consistently subject to appropriate threat assessment, and is somewhat over resourced. Furthermore, Stott et al. (2018) found that the police escorting supporters can create more disorder, as described by SO7. As well as concerns around aspects of policing practice, some participants also raised concerns

about the attitude of senior leadership within football policing, and more specifically

Chief Constable Mark Roberts:

“I think that the current head of policing for football, Mark Roberts, is unfit for the role. He is transactional. He is disliked. He is mistrusted by all football authorities that he, yeah, okay. He's not the man for the job.” (SO4)

“I'm, far more in favour of evidence led policing and security. And I think it's clear by Chief Constable Roberts' response to safe standing and drinking in view of the pitch which have been well documented in recent days. I don't think it's an unfair assessment to say that perhaps he's not a great fan of evidence led policing and crowd management and crowd safety. At least from his public pronouncements.” (Amanda Jacks - FSA)

“Mark Roberts is, for police lead, he's very anti football fan. And his idea of what an average football fan is like, a knuckle dragging, coke sniffing, 15 pint drinking person that can't be trusted.” (SLO8)

It is clear from this research that Mark Roberts has been vocal in the media (see BBC, 2017; Homer, 2018; Kopczyk, 2018; Sky Sports News, 2019) in attempting to highlight potential disparity between the cost of policing football and the contribution that football clubs make. This research however has highlighted that some police officers support the position of Mark Roberts. As previous literature suggests that the police utilise the media for image management (Mawby, 2002a; 2002b; Leishman & Mason, 2011) and to garner political support (see Newburn, 2003; Reiner & O'Connor, 2015; Bowling et al., 2019), it is logical that Roberts is seeking to ensure that football policing remains on the national agenda, so that it is given suitable priority against other competing demands within policing. However, it is a concern that opportunities to embed partnership working with football clubs is not being reinforced, and a divisive narrative that epitomises the them and us police cultural trait (see Skolnick, 1966; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019) is developing from senior police leadership.

Another prominent issue that emerged under the theme of policing, was the evident risk aversion that was taking place when the police were planning resources for football policing operations. This was observed by police participants as well as stakeholders:

“We seem to seem to be afraid of disorder happening. We become too good at our jobs at preventing disorder. So, we have a lot of cops to prevent things that aren't likely to happen. We're very risk averse, where something goes wrong, we can learn from it. Rather than yeah, we had a hell of a lot of cops, and we prevented one small fight type thing.” (DFO6)

“We've had more head in hands going: ‘we are stood here and there's far too many cops and we had an opportunity not to have as many and we haven't done the proper process here’.” (DFO8)

“I think the problem is the police are generally too risk averse. And they're not really looking at the threat that actually exists because the threat that exists, as you know as an ex kind of DFO is you're probably talking about 20 to 40 lads, if that. There are far, far too many officers on.” (SGSA Rep)

“You could rightly and correctly say there's nothing more important than the safety. But then when people are being risk averse and overcautious, what's that got to do with safety? Because I think we both know that there are a lot of, I think the police generally, when it comes to football are risk averse.” (Amanda Jacks – FSA)

DFO9 was acutely aware of potential police risk aversion, although offered some explanation as to why that may be occurring:

“Did nothing happen because the police were there? Possibly, could be, or was it never gonna happen? Did we get it wrong? You know, it's a really difficult one to quantify sometimes...I think there's a danger isn't there depending if you get a commander...who doesn't do that many football matches, and you suddenly present them with a package and you think, oh my god, I need I need the whole force on this.” (DFO9)

This resonates with existing research (see Kurland, Tilley & Johnson, 2014; Kurland, Johnson & Tilley, 2014) which suggests that the impact of policing and the various causal factors to offending in the context of football, is highly complex and therefore

it is difficult to assess the preventative impact of police resources deployed at football events. Overall, the findings from this research support existing research (see Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020) which suggest that the police are inherently risk averse.

A solution to risk averse policing would be to ensure a more robust and specialised system of resourcing, which was suggested by some of the participants, firstly in terms of the risk categorisation for the fixture and removal of rigid resourcing structures:

“We've come away totally from categories...we might say to them, look, we've got this many officers on today, we've come away from talking about a category inside the ground, and we just talk about numbers of police officers.” (DFO5)

This practice was less evident at other police forces, even though the College of Policing (2018b) guidance is more in line with the practice as suggested by DFO5. Other police forces were clearly still operating in more rigid ways, as observed by both police and football club participants. This demonstrates more risk averse practices, even though a more flexible approach was desired:

“Let's talk cops for policing an event, if they're not level two, they don't need to come as, you know, Sergeant and seven. If they don't need to come as a sergeant seven, then how many? A Sergeant on patrol might have 25 cops that they're in charge of, and that's across an area of 50 square miles. So why are we looking at a footprint of around a football ground, that everyone feels that they need to have line of sight with six other cops? It could be there's two sergeants and 30 cops are working, and right, go out and deal with stuff...But it's changing that mindset of things. Which I don't think that, for a lot of other reasons, I don't think the bosses are yet there.” (DFO8)

“Do you need 21 cops there, or can you make do with 14? Or can you make do with 16? Or 11?...why do you need to operate in serials and PSUs? Why can't we just have one Inspector? And you know, so I don't like rigidity of police deployments.” (SO4)

“You must have a PSU we can't work with anything less than a PSU.’ Well, we know they can work with anything less than a PSU because there's times when you can just have two spotters. But they were insisting in a public order situation.” (SO7)

The flexibility that was demonstrated by the police force represented by DFO5 needs to be replicated throughout the country, however it is promising that there is evidence of more flexible practice occurring that is more proportionate to threat and risk. Other police forces had taken more radical approaches of completely withdrawing resources from inside stadia:

“We actually went to a default position of no cops inside the ground. So, the thought process behind that was actually we didn't want cops standing around inside the ground, watching the game of football and then going home. At the end of the day, what we wanted is no cops inside the ground, no cops on that particular operation, and actually cops on the neighbourhoods, doing the policing work that they should have been doing.” (DFO3)

Football clubs are seeking to have a self-sufficient plural approach utilising stewarding as its main form of policing. Whilst withdrawal from football grounds may be considered a risk, it can be argued as evidence that police forces are seizing opportunities that have been created through pressure of police resources due to austerity (see Innes, 2013; Millie, 2013; Millie & Bullock, 2013; Lumsden & Black, 2018; Greig-Midlane, 2019; Hester, 2020).

As opposed to complete withdrawal from football grounds, multiple DFOs were advocating for use of fewer resources that are more specialised in football policing:

“If you've got an important search for a murder, you send you search trained officers. If you've got a traffic incident, you send your traffic officers, if you've got a football incident, why don't you send your football officers?...Why would you not choose the trained officers? My view would be use them for every single game, because they're trained, we train them twice a year in football policing. So, they're the best officers to have on the ground...use less police officers who are better trained.” (DFO5)

“Let's have a cadre of cops who always do football...and because we can deal with stuff and less cops means they're more effective, and they'll deal with more things, which ultimately would mean less cops overall.” (DFO8)

The value of spotters as opposed to PSU resources was recognised by both police and football club participants:

“Spotters will see something bubbling, will just stand there. You know, pat someone on the back: ‘hello fella you alright?’ And it will calm that. Whereas a PSU you know, a serial steaming in pushing and shoving could escalate it.” (DFO6)

“I actually think the spotters, who we don't pay for, are the ones that actually we should be paying for. Because they're the ones that actually have got the knowledge, they've got the experience...I would rather be paying for eight spotters every game, than an additional section of police that, you know, the uniforms there, it looks good, strength in numbers. But, actually what they give me I get more from my stewards.” (SO6)

As highlighted by the College of Policing (2018b), this demonstrates the importance of spotters to a football policing operation. A large body of research (see Stott et al., 2012; 2018; 2019; Hope et al., 2023) advocates for a more liaison-based approach to policing football, and it should be argued that police spotters have a vital role to play in fostering this approach. Proposals to increase the use of specialist football police resources, which reduce the overall police deployment of resources, is a sensible policing approach which is difficult to argue against. Safety Officer comments would also lend support to this, even though Mark Roberts offers a note of caution to this approach:

“When you bring police officers into a ground almost in full code one minus their helmets, which is strapped to their belt...they're only there for one

reason and they're there for major disorder. They can actually nip that in the bud right at the start by speaking to people and talking to people on the way in and having a good rapport with them.” (SO7)

“If you think you can always just use liaison, then you're probably gonna get some officers hurt. So, it's about having that mix, deploying the right things at the right time not being too precipitous about deploying public order assets.” (Mark Roberts)

This section has demonstrated that police practice has a number of shortcomings, plus a range of areas for improvement with regards to football policing. Of most concern is the apparent inactivity and wastage of police resources deployed at football events, which is potentially caused by risk averse practices. There were repeated concerns on this from football clubs, police forces and stakeholders. If football clubs are going to be charged for the deployment of police resources, then police forces need to ensure that value for money is being provided through the SPS process. However, some future directions have been proposed which offer a lot of merit in terms of improving football policing whilst reducing the burden on police resources. There is a clear evidence-base for the utilisation of specialist police resources that are deployed to football, with a mandate to engage with supporter communities in attempts to reduce disorder. Football events are the most commonly occurring mass gathering of communities across England and Wales, and by regarding football events as an opportunity to engage with the public, then improved outcomes may occur. To do this, new models for SPS need to be developed, which is addressed in chapter 6.

5.6 Key arguments

This chapter shows that SPS in its current guise is no longer fit for purpose. A range of issues have been identified, which demonstrate that show it is not being applied consistently across England and Wales, which is line with existing research which suggests that nationally there is inconsistent practice in policing football (see Hester, 2020; Stott et al., 2018; 2019). Even if SPS were being applied consistently, the result of the Ipswich (2017) ruling has meant that footprints vary depending on the geography of stadia, as opposed to the role the police are performing. This has created a postcode lottery situation, where some police forces are able to charge, whilst others aren't even though the officers being utilised are performing the same role, such as supporting stewarding operations outside a turnstile. Even if SPS were applied consistently, and there was common ground obtained in terms of what is chargeable and where a footprint is drawn, there are still a range of issues concerning how SPS is agreed. This thesis has demonstrated that the nature of SPS negotiations between football clubs and police forces are adversarial, and can result in the breakdown of relationships (as evidenced by the case law in chapter 2). There was clear evidence of the policing cultural trait of 'them and us' (see Loftus, 2008; Charman, 2017; Bowling et al., 2019) manifesting in negotiations, as well as football clubs prioritising commercial interests over safety (Frosdick, 1995). Participants spoke of a barrier to reform and culture setting in this area being the police lead, Mark Roberts. This research demonstrates that SPS negotiations do not work, and this moves the argument more towards a consideration of SPS being abolished, so that effective partnership working between police forces and football clubs can occur. It is not just SPS that is problematic, this thesis has evidenced that the policing

of football by private and public actors requires improvement too. There is support for existing research (O’Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020) that stewards are both an effective yet problematic way of policing football, and if their role was further professionalised then football policing would be more effective. This research lends weight to the existing body of work (Stott et al., 2012; 2018; 2019) which is critical of policing in terms of the amount of resources used to police football, and the lack of engagement they have with supporters. This thesis demonstrates that there is over-resourcing of football fixtures due to risk averse practices (Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020), using police resources that are ineffective. This can be amended by using more targeted resourcing, which specialises in football and takes a more liaison based approach. The main argument that comes from this work, is that there needs to be a discussion around what the role of the police should be. If viewed in isolation, it is highly problematic that police resources are being paid for by football clubs. For this to be addressed, football clubs need to police their own environment, and police forces need to take a more nuanced approach to the resourcing of football matches. The key issues linked to SPS, which require resolving if progressive change to SPS is going to be implemented. The range of issues are summarised in Table 19:

TABLE 19 KEY ISSUES STILL OUTSTANDING FROM CHAPTER 5

Topic	Issues
SPS policy and practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of training for both football clubs and police forces in terms of managing SPS • Clear examples of practice that operated outside of policy and guidance was evident
Principles of SPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is not a clear agreement about who should be meeting the costs of policing football • The differing nature of football ground design leads to inconsistency in how football clubs are charged

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high costs per hour for police resources generates issues between football clubs and police forces
Negotiating SPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are differing approaches nationally, with greater transparency being required • Personalities in football clubs and police forces can create conflict over agreeing resourcing and costs • The police can take a dictatorial approach, leaving clubs feeling they have no choice but to cover costs of policing • Clubs are hesitant to take a greater role within Zone Ex due to potential argument for charging within the area being made • Emergency SAGs appear ineffective and will result in a decision to support the police being made
The policing of football	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk averse practice towards policing was evident, leading to police over resourcing of many fixtures • Most suitable policing assets are not always deployed, such as spotters • Liaison based approaches to policing football are not always being utilised • Some police resources that are deployed to football matches are ineffective in comparison to stewarding • High quality stewarding is not commonplace, with professionalisation of the role not happening in all areas

This pertinent question remains:

“I guess, socially, there needs to be a decision, is football, you know, something that should be managed by the public funds or not...I guess a decision has to be made, by who I don't know.” (DFO5)

This will be examined further in chapter 6, where progressive changes to the SPS system are proposed.

Chapter 6 – New frameworks for SPS and football policing in England and Wales

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter is the culmination of the thesis, by covering objective 4 of the research. The analysis of material that has been derived from objectives 1, 2 and 3, is utilised to examine new frameworks for SPS and the policing of football. Whilst initially improvements to SPS were sought as part of the research, as the thesis developed it became clear that more radical reform was needed, which in fact abolishes more than it revises SPS. This chapter utilises the findings from this thesis, to analyse a range of different options to amend the current approach to SPS for football policing in England and Wales. In section 6.2 the strengths and weaknesses of alternative funding models for football policing, which were introduced in section 4.4, are comprehensively analysed. This analysis demonstrates that alternative funding options are not feasible, and therefore argues why they should not be considered in the models for reform around SPS. Section 6.3 proposes four different models for how SPS and the policing of football can be amended. Model 1 explores how SPS could be amended, but with the current framework remaining to a large degree. Model 2 explores the merits of the complete abolition of SPS, and the potential knock on impact of that on football policing. Model 3 explores how SPS could remain in its current guise, but instead amendments to the policing of football, both publicly and privately. Model 4 combines Model 2 and Model 3, but regards Model 2 as a catalyst for reforms to policing. Finally, the key arguments for why Model 4 should be implemented are made, and this is linked into the philosophical approach of this

research, as well as how it addresses the unresolved issues that were identified in chapters 4 and 5.

6.2 Critiquing funding related options

Section 3.7.2 showed that politicians and senior police leaders had called for funding reform, in terms of a levy on the TV rights for football being used to pay for policing costs. Section 4.4 examined participant perspectives on how funding reform may work (or not) in practice, and section 4.2 analysed the utilisation of business rates as a funding option. The suggestion that a 1% levy on TV rights could cover the cost of policing football (see Furniss, 2019a; 2019b) is based on flawed data. Section 4.2 clearly demonstrates that the costing data produced by South Yorkshire Police (2019) is neither accurate nor transparent, so any proposal for TV rights to fund football policing needs to be based on credible data.

There are multiple reasons why a TV rights funding would not work. The reality of football as an industry is that football clubs and TV companies that broadcast their matches are all businesses that are seeking to make a profit. Based on the theoretical concept of cost pass-through (see Walters et al., 2014), where increased business costs are passed onto the consumer, and that cost pass-through has been evident in English football clubs (Szymanski, 2021), it seems highly likely that any increased police costs, either directly to football clubs or through TV rights, would be passed onto the consumer. This could be through increased subscription fees to pay-per-view platforms such as Sky Sports or BT Sports, or through increased ticket prices at

football grounds, something the FSA (2022) is vehemently opposed to. This means that funding-based options, that revolve around the football industry paying more towards policing costs are simply not an effective or workable option. Care also needs to be taken to avoid evidenced issues of target driven cultures (see Hopkins, 2014; Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014; Hester, 2020) that are associated with football banning orders, from being transferred onto SPS processes with forces seeking to cost recover from central funding to cover over resourcing, particularly whilst they are subject to austerity measures. It is of concern that there is evidence of the police cultural trait of them and us (see Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017) amongst senior police leadership, which pit the police service against the football industry. Whilst this is prevalent, it will act as a barrier to effective partnership working between the police service and football clubs.

Revisions to the current framework of SPS in terms of a fairer structure of costing and hours of charging, do not seem to solve the issue and will leave the police service further out of pocket in terms of the income they will receive from football clubs through SPS. This would not be well received and could lead to further tensions between the police service and football clubs. Alternatively, expanding the scope of the footprint for SPS does not seem fair, as it is nuanced in terms of where the policing is required inside Zone Ex, who causes that and therefore who is ultimately responsible for that. Making football clubs responsible for the behaviour of people many miles from a football stadium, who may not even be attending the fixture, creates a precedent fraught with more issues than the problem at hand.

The police service can be sceptical about new ways of working and fall back on what they have always done (Goldstein, 1990; Bowling et al., 2019; Murray, 2019), with cultural traits that make policing inherently sceptical towards reform (Bevir & Krupicka, 2007; Loftus, 2008; Bacon, 2013). However, in order to further a resolution to the problem that is created by SPS, the police service will have to consider and be receptive to more radical ideas regarding how the problem of SPS can be resolved. An example of a radical approach that solves the problem of SPS, is the abolition of SPS, which is discussed in the next section.

6.3 New models for football policing

In order for police practice to change, new ways of working need to be proposed. This section considers how different approaches to policing as well as changes to SPS may lead to better outcomes for football policing. As discussed in section 3.2, the research is utilising an evidence-based approach to consider progressive changes to a policing problem. The models explored below are regarded as potential options to alleviate this issue, with an ultimate recommendation being made. It is acknowledged that this is not a definitive solution, and whilst other options are possible, the one being made is based on the evidence obtained from this research.

Referring back to Table 1, the range of different models of policing can be related to football. In particular, hot spots policing (see Bryant, 2008; Sherman, 2009), intelligence led policing (see Tilley, 2008b; Ratcliffe, 2009; Ratcliffe, 2016) and

community policing (see Alderson, 1977; 1979; Tilley, 2008a; Fleming, 2009). The policing of football should be utilising intelligence, to put resources in the correct place to prevent crime, but regarding the fans that are being policed as a form of community, therefore these particular models are highly relevant to the progressive policing of football. What has become apparent throughout this research, is that SPS as a process cannot be viewed in isolation. The practice of policing football is intrinsically linked and cannot readily be disentangled from the SPS process. It could even be argued that in some instances, how football is policed drives the SPS process as opposed to the other way around. These new models are designed with this in mind, so that SPS and the policing of football is considered holistically as opposed to in isolation. Overall however, a focus needs to be on plural policing, as football clubs have a key role to play in terms of policing their own environment and there is much work for this area to be improved. The new models that are proposed are:

1. Model 1 – updating business as usual (encompassing changes to the current SPS process and provision)
2. Model 2 – abolition of SPS
3. Model 3 – changes to policing practice
4. Model 4 – abolition of SPS aligned with changes to police practice

6.3.1 Model 1 – updating business as usual

Although SPS is an imperfect system, section 6.2 has established that alternative funding routes for the policing of football are neither realistic nor viable. It could be argued that in principle, SPS works, but needs refining to improve the system.

Throughout the research, evidence has been provided from the participant interviews which demonstrate a number of issues with the current process of SPS with regards to football policing in England and Wales. This was represented by both police and football club participants as being problematic and a barrier to clubs requesting SPS.

The first recommendation for revisions to SPS, is that the rigid three or six hour deployment costing approach is abolished, and replaced with a more straightforward approach of football clubs being charged for the hours that police resources are deployed on the event footprint. This would prevent the unnecessary charging period of six hours for resources that are deployed at a stadium prior to kick off until a match has ended. It would also allow for resources to be deployed within Zone Ex prior to a match, then deployed to the stadium footprint for a shorter period which covers during and after the match, which may be for a period of two hours for example. Charging SPS based on actual hours deployed in the footprint would allow for a more flexible approach of both the police and football club with regards to deployments and SPS negotiations.

The second recommendation is that the cost of policing resources that are charged under SPS are reviewed. Comments by both police and football club participants evidenced that the high amounts that were being charged per hour for police officers (see Figure 1) were excessive. Furthermore, it was clear that the high per hour costs for a police officer were a barrier to football clubs requesting SPS, as they felt that

these charges were way beyond what they would have to be paying for a steward, who at times may be more effective than the police. Instead, the direct costs would seem to present a more feasible and realistic option that would still provide remuneration for the police service whilst reducing costs for football clubs.

This research does not advocate for any changes to SPS in terms of the footprint that can be charged for. Although it has been suggested that Zone Ex is an area that could be chargeable, there is not an evidence-based argument that should lead to football clubs being charged by police forces for resources being deployed in this area. It is a difficult argument to make, that football clubs should be responsible for events that occur far outside their area of direct influence, although there is a strong argument for football clubs to take a more active role in supporting their event away from the footprint as well. This could be in a more customer service focused way, but this would help to make an event safer and ensure that an appropriate tone is set for the whole event at an early stage. This would require careful partnership working, particularly with the police. No recommendations are being made in terms of redefining the footprint of a football ground. It is acknowledged that this is highly nuanced and complex, and the specifics of each football ground needs to be considered locally and a charging area agreed between the local police and the football club, based on the land that is owned, leased or controlled by the club, as per the current legal guidance.

Despite these recommendations for Model 1, it is expected that a range of the issues that have been highlighted as part of this research would still occur. There would still be disagreements between police forces and football clubs over resourcing, which are caused in a number of different ways linked to police and football club cultures. There would still be the tendency of the police to over resource football matches with an ineffective threat assessment process, simply because there is the availability of SPS to offer remuneration for some of this resourcing. Even though Model 1 would go some way to improving the current SPS status, more radical approaches may be required, as discussed in Model 2.

6.3.2 Model 2 – abolition of SPS

Section 4.4.4 discusses in depth the arguments for and against the progressive change of abolishing SPS, along with participant perspectives. Despite the potential drawbacks and unintended consequences that have been highlighted, this research indicates that there are clear merits in the abolition of SPS from football policing events. This evidence-base is indicating that the potential merits of abolishing SPS outweigh the potential risk associated with doing so. This may be an unpopular model for policing, particularly with the views from Chief Constable Roberts that football should be paying more towards policing. The question should not be why are football clubs not paying more for policing, but how does policing reduce the amount of resource it is deploying into football operations. The dual benefit of abolishing SPS is that police resourcing will become more considered and efficient, and that clubs will have to take more ownership of policing their own environment. This is clearly the direction of travel that needs to be taken for football policing in the future.

Abolition of SPS will also eradicate the disagreements and costly legal disputes that have occurred between football clubs and police forces, and should foster a more positive working relationship between the two parties. A strong recommendation of this research, is that it is abolished completely from football events, however it is acknowledged that more research is required to considered whether the wider abolition of SPS from other events (such as music festivals) is required.

6.3.3 Model 3 – changes to policing practice

This research has presented an evidence-base which clearly indicates that there needs to be a more modernised and progressive approach to the policing of football in England and Wales, both in terms of the public police and private policing. Section 5.5.1 has demonstrated that in terms of stewarding, there needs to be an enhanced package of training, as well as more attractive terms and conditions to improve the standard of stewarding and ultimately safety at football matches. This lends support to the work of O'Neill (2005) and Atkinson & Graham (2020), in calling for a more professionalised stewarding role. This needs to be combined with a move away from public order based enforcement policing, into liaison-based policing that utilises more specialised resources that are skilled and experienced in the policing of football. The evidence from this research is indicating that there are too many resources allocated to football, who do very little in terms of policing, but are considered as being required in order to prevent something that may or may not happen. By utilising fewer, more specialised resources as advocated by Stott et al (2012; 2018; 2019), this will lead to a reduction in the overall number of resources (and the overall cost to the tax payer) and those resources that are used will be doing

more meaningful tasks that help to build trusting relationships with communities. This model could occur in isolation of the other models, but it would need the strategic vision from senior leadership within the police service, as well as buy in from football clubs to make it happen. A catalyst for this reform is required.

6.3.4 Model 4 – abolition of SPS aligned with changes to police practice

The reality is that reform will be slow to occur, and that there needs to be a clear trigger for reform to happen. Model 1 could be implemented in isolation, but it is less likely to provide longer term progressive change to the issues that are associated with football policing. Model 3 could also be implemented in isolation, but it is unlikely that this would happen. Model 4 seeks to implement both Model 2 and Model 3, but is also acknowledging that the implementation of Model 2 will have the effect of triggering Model 3 organically. The drastic nature of abolishing SPS will have a snowball impact on how football is policed, however this also needs to be phased in such a way that the outcomes can be controlled and further evidence created to justify this approach. The controlled way in which this would occur is through advocating for a cultural change in how football is policed with an emphasis on more liaison-based approaches (as suggested by Stott et al., 2018; 2019; Hope et al., 2023) that utilise fewer, but specialised resources and moves away from a focus on public order policing. Experimentation to build a further evidence-base should then occur whereby a sample of police forces operate for a season by not charging police forces under SPS, and instead deploying enhanced spotter operations for games that are considered to present a lower level of threat and risk. The police force is likely to find that they have reduced both the amount of resources and their overall spending on

football policing, as well as enhanced the skills of officers tasked with policing football. By the natural withdrawal of public order policing units from inside stadium footprints, this will also result in football clubs enhancing their own security operations and becoming less reliant on the police service.

Once this pilot research has been conducted, it could be expanded nationally and be combined with the abolition of SPS for football policing on a more formal basis. This would then result in specialised football resourcing becoming the norm, allowing other resources to be allocated to the other competing demands there are for police services. The police service clearly wants to be spending less money on policing football, Model 4 provides a clear pathway for that to happen which increases efficiency and results in less wasted policing hours. This research recommends that Model 4 should be implemented, and it offers the best path to reform when compared with the other models proposed here.

6.4 Reflecting on the research

6.4.1 Completion of the research aim and objectives

The aim and objectives of the research were as follows:

Aim

To develop evidence-based progressive change for Special Police Service (SPS) football policing in England and Wales.

Objectives

1. To critically review current SPS policy for policing football events
2. To critically evaluate the cost of policing football in England and Wales
3. To critically assess the suitability of current SPS practices, evaluating views from key police and football club practitioners that are engaged in the SPS process
4. To identify opportunities for progressive change to SPS arrangements for football policing in England and Wales

The aim of the study has been met through the whole research process. The critical review of SPS policy can be seen in chapters 2, 4 and 5 specifically. This has been gained by both reviewing the existing policy and guidance that is in place, and also how this policy and guidance is implemented at a practitioner level. The development of policy in terms of SPS can be seen in chapter 6, where four new models of practice have been proposed, as well as a clear recommendation for a model to be adopted moving forwards. For this aim to be met, the specific objectives have been achieved in the following ways.

Objective 1 has been most specifically addressed in chapter 2, where SPS policy and guidance for both police forces and event organisers has been reviewed. Furthermore, the legislation and case law underpinning SPS has been analysed in detail, and a contrast has been made with cost recovery processes in other international jurisdictions. This objective has also been a constant throughout the whole thesis as well, with data being gathered on how SPS works in practice, this has led to continual reflections back to objective 1 and critical considerations of how SPS

works in practice. The overall critical review of SPS policy, is that it is not fit for purpose and that reform of this area of policing should be considered. This is in part justified through the gathering of data that meets objectives 2 and 3.

Objective 2 has been met through chapters 2 and 4. Chapter 2 produced some previous data, mainly through media coverage and political narratives, which indicated the cost of policing football, as well as how much has been received in SPS. Of note was the data produced by South Yorkshire Police (2019) claiming that football policing costs Around £48m, with only £5.5m recovered through SPS. Chapter 4 demonstrates that these figures are not reliable, and that the actual amount of SPS received averages around £10m per season. This has been generated by an extensive Freedom of Information exercise, demonstrating that the exact cost of policing is difficult to establish.

Objective 3 has been realised through the gathering, analysis and presentation of data that is contained within chapters 4, 5 and 6. This was met through the extensive range of interviews with football club, police officer and key stakeholder interviews. These interviews provided rich qualitative data, that allowed for an in-depth analysis of all the issues that are relevant to SPS, but also considering what strengths there are of the current system. The participants could all be considered as knowledgeable on the topic of SPS and football policing, either through professional interest or because of their role where SPS processes form a regular part of their employment. As such, they were all able to provide data that is both meaningful and specialised to

the topic. This means that objective 3 has been comprehensively met, furthermore allowing in part for objective 4 to be met also.

Objective 4 has been exclusively met in chapter 6 of this thesis, and is drawn from the overall analysis of the entire research. This has been achieved in part through the qualitative interviews, where alternatives to current SPS arrangements have been discussed, but participants were also provided with the opportunity to propose their own ideas on how SPS can be reformed. However, the models that have been proposed as part of this research have been drawn from the analysis of the data that has been provided. Instead of data that was specific to how SPS can be reformed, it was the analysis of comments which indicated that policing of football, both public and private, needs reform, and that SPS can be used as a trigger for that reform. Objective 4 also provides focus for this chapter, as the key conclusions form recommendations for how both SPS and football policing can be reformed.

6.4.2 Original contribution to the field of study

The scale of the task of finding alternative options to the problems that are created by SPS was neatly summarised by one of the police officer participants:

“So how did you make it fairer then do you think for clubs, the police, and the communities?” (Researcher)

“Million-dollar question isn't it.” (DFO3)

As chapter 2 has demonstrated, there is a range of material available on SPS, case law, media and political discussion, as well as policy guidance. Although there has

been academic research that has considered SPS, it has tended to be in isolation, occurring after a particular legal case for example, and it is not far reaching as a subject in academia. Furthermore, it has not tended to focus exclusively on football policing. This research therefore provides an original contribution to the field of study, by being a comprehensive review of SPS through the lens of football policing. It has examined a range of issues that are pertinent to SPS, which other pieces of academic enquiry have not considered. Furthermore, since the latest legal ruling in the Ipswich Town case, the field of SPS has changed and no academic work has sought to explore this at all. Therefore, this research is not only original but also a timely contribution to this area, as it examines the impact of the latest in a long list of legal cases that have impacted on SPS.

This research also provides an original contribution to the field of football policing, which there is a large body of work already in existence as explored in chapter 2. The existing research has examined football policing more in the context of how football is policed. Whilst this thesis has explored the question of how football is police, this was not necessarily the sole focus and the approach was to consider this from a cost perspective. This approach therefore allows for an original contribution, because even though some of the conclusions are in line with existing research (see Stott, Hoggett & Pearson, 2012; Stott, West & Radburn, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019; Hope, Radburn & Stott, 2023), it has been approached from a unique angle regarding the cost and SPS process. Furthermore, my positionality as a researcher with a background in football policing also adds a unique dimension and original

contribution to the field. That is not to say that because I have an abundance of frontline policing experience that I will know more about the topic than other scholars, but that my positionality is unique and therefore can bring an original perspective to the field that others cannot by virtue of my previous professional experience.

The FOI data is a further unique contribution to the field. Firstly, this is in terms of the data set (see Table 16) that provides detailed information of five seasons worth of data on SPS that has been received by police forces. There are some existing disparate pieces of FOI data on SPS from football clubs that are available on the internet, but there is no other research which explores this or provides as comprehensive a data set on SPS received nationally. Furthermore, this data set also helps to challenge the accuracy of existing data on SPS received and the cost of football policing that has been discussed in Parliament. This finding is valuable to the field of study, and helps to broaden the debate on not only how much football policing costs the tax payer, but also how it is policed.

The final unique contribution to the field of study is the development of four proposed new models of operating with SPS for football policing. Section 6.3 discussed these models in detail, and the relative strengths and weaknesses. No other research provides such a comprehensive review of SPS that also includes proposals for reform. Through the recommendation that Model 4 should be implemented, this presents a radical and unique contribution that challenges the

current status quo and seeks to offer a vision of a more progressive future of how football can be policed.

There is something that unfortunately this research cannot necessarily answer, although it can contribute to the discussion about this, is the question of what are the police for and what should they be doing. As a society, we should be concerned about what the police do and want to know that police resources are being utilised effectively, efficiently and to the areas of business where they are most needed. There is no doubt that there are multiple occasions during the course of a football season where there is a clear requirement for police resources to be present in order to maintain order. However, this research has found that there are also a large number of occasions when police resources are seemingly deployed to football unnecessarily. We should be questioning whether there should be police resources deployed into the footprint of a football match at all, and we should be questioning whether the game is safe enough to go ahead if it cannot be managed by the security operation at the stadium. Instead, it is apparent that there is a risk averse approach from the police service, which manifests in (potential) trouble being managed out through sheer weight of police numbers. Whilst we can be critical of this risk averse approach, it also needs to be appreciated why this may be occurring and it is easy to externally criticise when you are not the individual having to make the decision about resources.

Instead, football clubs should be regarded as community partners that are a conduit for allowing police forces to engage with a proportion of society on a regular basis. Football is considered as the national sport in England, and there are no other regular gatherings that attract such a large number of people across the country. The police should be regarding this as an opportunity to engage with the public, as opposed to an event where policing of the public is necessary. That is why the recommendation of this research is that police forces should be looking to utilise a smaller number of better trained officers, which are experienced in football policing to regularly police football events. This would be a much more effective cost saving measure, than simply asking football clubs to pay more for policing. To support this though, football clubs do need to play a key role in reforming how football is policed. This research identified that there is evidence of good practice regarding clubs that are operating with very effective and better trained stewarding operations. Unfortunately, this is not currently a uniform picture across England and Wales. This research is calling for stewarding operations to be improved through better training and more proportionate remuneration, so that football clubs can police their own environment in a more effective way and therefore be less reliant on police resourcing.

6.4.3 Limitations of this research

Reflexive research is important for ensuring that any findings are transposed against the limitations in which the data has been gathered. It is also important for professional development as a researcher, and throughout this journey I have learnt a lot through the entire doctorate process. The main areas for discussion are my researcher positionality, the methods used, as well as the data set.

Firstly, an inescapable strength and limitation of the research is my own positionality. As a former DFO, I have no doubt that has helped me to access participants that other researchers may have struggled to reach. This is a clear strength of the research, and allows for both a comprehensive, and unique data set. At the start of the research process, I had been engaged in football policing within the past five years, I could be considered as current in terms of my knowledge and experience of football policing. As time passes, it is critical that as a researcher I am aware that my knowledge and currency will degrade, and I would not necessarily be able to negotiate the same access that was available in this research. My gender and ethnicity being the same as the majority of the participants may have also influenced this research in complex ways. The main drawback of my positionality is the unknown impact of it, but acknowledging this as a limitation is important. In my former professional life as a DFO, I felt a sense of frustration with SPS and did consider that the system seemed unfair on the police service. My view would have echoed that of Chief Constable Mark Roberts. At the start of the research process, I was intent on approaching this in an objective way to discover as much information and opinion as possible, and adopted a position of SPS being something that did not work, and needed reforming to make it fairer for all. As the research developed, I reflected on what I was finding and started to question the role of the police service in policing football, and how this instead of SPS was the route to reform. How I have influenced the research through this is unknown, I have tried to mitigate against this by remaining as neutral as possible, but there will always be some subliminal impact on the interactions with the participants, and how I analyse the findings. The evidence-base that I present

however, is what is repeatedly being said by participants. Despite my positionality, I consider that these findings are comprehensive and evidence-based.

With any methodology, there is always going to be alternative ways of gathering the data, and chapter 3 covers in detail the strengths and limitations of the data collection methods that were used in this study. The research data that has been gathered can be regarded as indicative, as opposed to representative of the research population. The interviews naturally reached a saturation point, and despite efforts to recruit more participants, the numbers plateaued. With more participants a more comprehensive data set could have been obtained. An alternative could have been to create a survey that was distributed to all police forces and football clubs, as this could have helped to gather more data on issues pertinent to SPS. However, this option was precluded as richer, qualitative data was more likely to yield information which could help meet the objectives of this research. Another population which could have been researched as part of the thesis was stewards employed at football clubs, with a specific role of match day safety. As discussed in section 5.5.1, an emergent theme of the research was the need for better training and professionalisation of the stewarding role. It was considered to expand the research population to this group, however it was precluded as they are not directly involved in the SPS process, but clearly they could have added value to a specific element of this research.

The FOI data obtained in the research provided interesting results, and assisted in challenging existing information concerning the cost of football policing in England and Wales. However, an issue with this data is that it does not actually provide any solid evidence of how much police forces are spending on policing football. If access to the existing data set and methodology used by South Yorkshire Police (2019) had been available, then a more critical enquiry into this data could have occurred. An alternative method could have been to negotiate access to a police force, where it could have been established how much they were spending on policing football by recording the number of resources they deployed to football operations. This was tentatively discussed with some police forces that participated in the research, but nothing further materialised from this. If achieved, it would have added value to the research in terms of providing a comparison with the South Yorkshire Police (2019) data, however it would have had limitations in terms of not being easily extrapolated to other police forces.

Overall, the limitations of the research do not necessarily detract from the results that have been obtained. In spite of these limitations, the research has achieved a comprehensive evidence-base with which to challenge existing approaches on SPS, and allow for debate on different ways of operating. These limitations however, do provide for opportunities for further research, as discussed in the following section.

6.4.4 Opportunities for future research

This research thesis has uncovered original data, but has also raised questions as well as providing answers. Some of these questions are bigger than this or other research projects could reveal, such as what the role of the police should be. However, in three main areas more work is needed relating to the policing of football, both public and private, as well as establishment of the actual cost to the public purse of policing football.

As discussed in sections 2.4 and 5.5, the work of O'Neill (2005) and Atkinson & Graham (2020) have contributed to the knowledge in terms of the role of stewards in policing football. A clear gap has emerged from this research, where the football club, police officer and stakeholder participants were calling for more training and professionalisation of stewards at football. This research found isolated examples of good practice in this area, which could be explored further and broadened nationally. As such, a follow up research project from this thesis could be to do interviews, surveys and ethnographic observations of stewards. This could help to understand the nature of the role they are performing, how this role could be enhanced and identifying areas of professional development that would be beneficial for their role.

It is clear from the majority of participants that the policing of football can be improved, in terms of being more efficient and less resource intensive. How that looks exactly, whilst suggestions have been made in this research, there needs to be further research which actually measures and assesses the impact and nature. An

effective methodological approach to this would be to work with a police force, and implement a pilot study which utilises a policing model as suggested by the large body of research that advocates a liaison-based approach (see Stott, Hoggett & Pearson, 2012; Stott, West & Radburn, 2018; Stott, Pearson & West, 2019). This could run for an entire season and involve a focus on utilising liaison-based resources such as police spotters, as opposed to reliance on public order policing units. The level of disorder and number of arrests could be directly measured compared to previous seasons. This could be supported by ethnographic observations as well as qualitative interviews with key practitioners, such as police spotters, DFOs, safety officers and head stewards to provide qualitative feedback on how the process worked over the season, and to identify further areas for improvement. Furthermore, an addition to a pilot study could be to remove the SPS arrangements, to examine the impact of not having any SPS for the season and contrast this against a police force that is continuing with SPS. This would allow for a comprehensive review of Model 4 that is proposed as part of this research. There are a range of complexities involved with this, which would require a close working relationship between the researcher, police force and football club.

Another aspect of further research that is essential, is the establishment of the exact cost of policing football in England and Wales. This research attempted to identify this cost, through the collection of FOI data. Useful data was gathered from this, which helped to challenge existing data on this topic, but it did not succeed in establishing the true cost of policing football. It did however provide clear data on

the amount that police forces receive through SPS. This could be met by a comprehensive and transparent national process, where there is a measurement of the exact resources deployed to football throughout the season. This would need the support of organisations such as the UKFPU, with clear terms of reference establishing so that the data could be considered as accurate. This would be of value to policing more broadly, as a key public service it is important that the tax paying public are aware of how money is being spent by the police service, as this does need to synchronise with their strategic priorities.

This research has focused exclusively on football, which was intentional. A different research approach which could support the findings here, could be to utilise a similar methodology but apply it to other events, such as horse racing and music festivals. This would help to understand the nuances that exist between disparate events that are relevant to SPS. Furthermore, the study has not sought to provide a comprehensive international comparison in terms of SPS and user pays policing. Whilst comparisons to other countries have been drawn, a further comparative analysis of SPS systems in other jurisdictions would be of value for policing in England and Wales, and potentially globally. Despite these limitations, which have led to opportunities for further research, there is a considerable volume of work in this thesis which provides an original contribution to the field of study.

6.5 Key arguments: reformed policing through SPS abolition

There are three main arguments that this thesis is making, which is based on the evidence provided in chapters 4 and 5:

- **SPS should be abolished**
- **Private policing of football requires reform**
- **Public policing of football requires reform**

This forms the key basis of Models 2 and 3, but when combined together provide a more powerful and effective reform in Model 4. The narrative below, provides a clear rationale as to why Model 4 is being proposed.

A glaring issue with SPS is that it is based on the 'land owned, leased or controlled' concept. This means that police resources that are, for example supporting a stewarding operation outside of a ground, may be chargeable at an older ground that is in a residential area, but not at a newer island site ground. This is a perverse situation, which should not be allowed to continue, as it is inherently unfair for both football clubs and police forces. A wider Zone Ex charging area is not suitable, due to the wider businesses in the area that are benefitting from the football event, but also generating issues for policing. Abolishing SPS would ensure a level playing field for all clubs and police forces. Through the abolition of SPS, it will also alleviate the potential for the police and football clubs to disagree over police resourcing and associated costs. The abundance of case law (see section 2.6), which has been borne out of police forces and football clubs disagreeing over costs, should serve as evidence enough that SPS requires reform. The repeated case law was entirely predictable,

and Weatherill (1988) made such a forecast following the Harris v Sheffield United Football Club [1988], calling for SPS to be reformed so that there was greater clarity and future disputes could be avoided. More than three decades later, and the warning from Weatherill (1988) has not been heeded. Although some positive working relationships were evidenced in this research, it is clear that this is not the case across the board. The police look to exert their dominance in a range of policing activities (van Maanen, 1978; Holdaway, 1983; Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Bowling et al., 2019), and this research has evidenced that their approach to SPS negotiations and football resourcing is often no different. This can be explained by the 'them and us' police cultural trait (Loftus, 2008; Cockcroft, 2012; Charman, 2017), which was found in multiple examples in this research. The clearest example of this comes from the senior leadership in football policing, Chief Constable Mark Roberts. His comments in the media (see Kopczyk, 2018; Homer, 2018; Sky Sports News, 2019) were reinforced by his comments in this research (see section 4.4.1), which clearly pit the police service against football clubs in terms of the cost of policing football. Football clubs however are not beyond reproach, this research demonstrates that some clubs will attempt to minimise or avoid policing costs, even if this may compromise safety. This lends some support to previous research which suggests that football clubs can prioritise commercial interests over safety (Frosdick, 1995; Fitzpatrick, 2015; Busse & Damiano, 2019). The abolition of SPS would almost eradicate these issues between police forces and football clubs over costs, furthermore it would also act as a driver for reform. It should not be forgotten that the football industry generates a lot of revenue in tax for the UK Government, so it

can be argued that this is a police funding issue, as opposed to a question of football clubs simply paying more.

It is evident that many policing activities are risk averse (Heaton, 2011; Constable & Smith, 2015; Crawford & Cunningham, 2015; van Dijk et al., 2015; Black & Lumsden, 2020), and this research has evidenced that risk averse decisions are being made over the police resourcing of football matches. A reason for this is that football clubs are paying (albeit not for all the resources), so police decision makers can look to over resource because they know an element of the cost is being recouped. Furthermore, there are multiple examples of the police resources that are deployed being ineffective and unnecessary, which supports existing research (see Stott et al., 2019). Through the abolition of SPS, it will require the police to be more nuanced in their resourcing, and not just resource a range of public order assets just in case. It is currently too easy for the police to apply extra resourcing because clubs will pay for it, as previously suggested by Gans (2000). If the bill is being met by the police then this will require them to have a more considered approach to ensure there is no wastage of resources at football, perhaps with a greater emphasis on policing the wider community. This supports a growing body of evidence (see Stott et al., 2012; 2018; 2019; Hester, 2020; Hope et al., 2023) that advocates for the police to be more liaison based in their approach to policing football, utilising specialist resources that seek to communicate with supporter groups. Although evidence (Kurland, Tilley & Johnson, 2014; Kurland, Johnson & Tilley, 2014) does indicate that football events generates crime, including violent crime, a greater focus on liaison based resources

as opposed to public order assets is required for football to be policed more effectively in terms of both reducing crime and costs.

Through the withdrawal of police resources from the stadium footprint, it will require football clubs to become better at policing their own environment. This can be problematic, as this research provides evidence of poor stewarding practice and potential retention issues, supporting existing research (O'Neill, 2005; Atkinson & Graham, 2020). This can be overcome by greater professionalisation of the stewarding role, through more enhanced training, as well as greater terms and conditions, this can be achieved (Button, 2002; Rogers, 2017). This research provides evidence of good practice occurring in stewarding operations, these should be applauded and encouraged by the police service, although as White (2016), oversight and accountability of private policing is required. There are clear accountability mechanisms in place already for football clubs, through Safety Advisory Groups, so this type of reform should be straightforward to achieve. As suggested by Button et al. (2023), it is important that an informed debate about the future of private football policing occurs, so it does not happen by stealth.

What is clear is that SPS as an issue within policing does not occur in isolation, and as Gans (2000) highlights, there is ambiguity as to what should actually constitute SPS. Although case law, and in particular the *Harris v Sheffield United Football Club* [1988] case, has offered guidance on what SPS is in terms of an additional requirement for policing, the very notion of SPS should be questioned. If the core functions of the

police are widely accepted as protecting life, preventing crime and preserving order (College of Policing, 2018a; Bowling et al., 2019), then it should lead one to question how SPS policing is any different in reality. From the evidence-base in this research, it cannot be said exactly what the role of the police should be in society, as well as the role of private policing within that. It is clear that there is scope for private policing functions to take work away from the public police in a football policing context. This adds to the debate on the broader pluralisation of policing, as well as other criminal justice functions. The research provides an evidence-base that the policing of football should be regarded as an extension of the normal policing role of engaging with local communities. Football is the most popular sport in the UK, and football clubs are key partners in local communities. It is not in dispute that the football industry can be doing more to support communities and police their own environments more effectively, but policing needs to start looking at football clubs as key community partners and not an inconvenience that takes resources away from other areas of policing. Although not explicitly the purpose of this research, it has raised wider context considerations about the role of football clubs within society.

TABLE 20 ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES FROM CHAPTER 4

Topic	Issues	Response
The actual cost of policing football	Actual cost still cannot be established.	Hester & Hobson (2022) have already demonstrated that existing costing data is inaccurate. Research should be commissioned to produce a robust and transparent costing exercise, alongside publication of existing data that was produced by South Yorkshire Police (2019). This will assist police forces in reflecting on the most appropriate level of resource.
	Publicly available cost data is inaccurate and requires challenging.	
	Where data is known, forces are likely to be calculating this differently	

Business rates	Does not contribute to policing costs.	Business rates should not be considered as a funding option. Local authorities should reflect on the data to ensure a fair and equitable approach is being used nationally.
	Inconsistent application across England and Wales	
	Offers little in terms of being a funding option	
SPS charges for football clubs	Practice is clearly inconsistent across England and Wales	Through the abolition of SPS, a range of issues connected with SPS are alleviated.
	Forces and football clubs are operating outside of SPS guidance and policy.	
	Both police forces and football clubs receive financial pressure, which can compromise safety	Through the abolition of SPS and removal of these associated financial considerations, this will enable football clubs to focus more on stewarding operations, ensuring they are appropriately professionalised
Central funding options	Would lead to inequity across policing in terms of utilisation of funds.	Through the abolition of SPS, central funding routes would not be utilised, alleviated any risk of a target driven culture amongst policing.
	Could result in a target based culture, like football banning orders	

Chapters 4 and 5 highlighted a range of key issues that required resolving which had been identified through this research. Tables 20 and 21 demonstrate how the abolition of SPS, alongside the implementation of more effective plural and public policing (Model 4) provides progressive change to the issues.

TABLE 21 ADDRESSING KEY ISSUES FROM CHAPTER 5

Topic	Issues	Response
SPS policy and practice	There is a lack of training for both football clubs and police forces in terms of managing SPS	The abolition of SPS for football policing would negate this issue, although professional development and training for both football clubs and police forces in how they manage their relationships would still be beneficial.
	Clear examples of practice that operated outside of policy and guidance was evident	

Principles of SPS	There is not a clear agreement about who should be meeting the costs of policing football	The abolition of SPS alleviates all these issues, and allows for a focus on the policing of the event to occur by both the police and football clubs. By focusing on the income generated by taxation of the football industry, a broader debate around police funding is required.
	The differing nature of football ground design leads to inconsistency in how football clubs are charged	
	The high costs per hour for police resources generates issues between football clubs and police forces	
Negotiating SPS	There are differing approaches nationally, with greater transparency being required	The abolition of SPS alleviates these issues. There is still a requirement for dialogue between the police and football clubs, along with terms of reference for how and when police resources may support football club security operations within the footprint of the stadium.
	Personalities in football clubs and police forces can create conflict over agreeing resourcing and costs	
	The police can take a dictatorial approach, leaving clubs feeling they have no choice but to cover costs of policing	
	Clubs are hesitant to take a greater role within Zone Ex due to potential argument for charging within the area being made	The abolition of SPS should encourage football clubs to engage within Zone Ex more, and assist in setting the tone for the event at an early stage.
	Emergency SAGs appear ineffective and will result in a decision to support the police being made	The requirement for emergency SAGs will be reduced the abolition of SPS. However, SAGs should ensure that a more intelligence led approach is being taken by the police, and challenge any risk averse practices that are occurring.
The policing of football	Risk averse practice towards policing was evident, leading to police over resourcing of many fixtures	The abolition of SPS will result in the police service being more nuanced in their approach to the policing of football, alongside utilising more specialist resources. The abolition of SPS should result in less risk averse police practice occurring. The increase in plural policing will ensure that fewer police resources are required.
	Most suitable policing assets are not always deployed, such as spotters	
	Liaison based approaches to policing football are not always being utilised	
	Some police resources that are deployed to football matches are ineffective in comparison to stewarding	

	High quality stewarding is not commonplace, with professionalisation of the role not happening in all areas	A more professionalised approach to the steward role is required, with better training and terms and conditions. This will be essential if SPS is abolished, as it will place a greater emphasis on football clubs policing their own environment.
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The fundamental issue at the beginning of this research, which stemmed from the ruling of the Ipswich Town v Suffolk Police (2017) case, was the argument from the police service that the football industry should contribute more financially to the cost of policing football. The evidence from this thesis is simply that if you are not happy with how much is being spent on football policing, then reform your policing practice so that you are spending less. The question should not be how much it costs, but how it is policed. It is the hope of this research that in ten years' time, the Ipswich Town case will be reflected on as a watershed moment that led to the reform of football policing, both publicly and privately. Time will tell whether that proves to be the case.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – participant information sheet



Participant Information Sheet Interviews

School of Natural and Social Sciences

Researcher: Richard Hester

[Redacted]

Supervisor: Dr Jon Hobson

[Redacted]

Study Title: Critically examining Special Police Service (SPS) arrangements for football policing in England and Wales

I would like to invite you to take part in my research study. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Talk to others about the study if you wish. Ask me if there is anything that is not clear.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study is designed to look at the issue of the cost recovery process for policing football, and gain an understanding of how this issue is being managed by police forces and football clubs in England and Wales. The aim of the study is 'To critically examine the Special Police Services (SPS) arrangements for policing football events in England and Wales in order to develop policy and practice'. This is for my completion of a PhD in Social Sciences at the University of Gloucestershire.

Why have I been invited?

A sample of football officers, safety officers and stewards from across England and Wales is required, so the researcher can gain an insight into the first hand experiences of practitioners dealing with this issue in an operational context. Views from other key stakeholders are also sought.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide to join the study. I will describe the study and go through this information sheet. If you agree to take part, I will then ask you to sign a consent form.

What will happen to me if I take part?

The interview will last approximately 30-60 minutes, and will involve discussion between the participant and the researcher. This will be recorded to allow the researcher to review the information afterwards. Names of participants and any specific persons that are mentioned will be sanitised in the research. Identities of police forces, football clubs, football grounds, geographical locations and any other sensitive information will also be sanitised in the research.

Expenses and payments

N/A

What will I have to do?

The researcher will set out a list of topic areas to discuss during the interview, and it is expected that you will discuss your experiences and views in relation to this particular issue.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

This will involve you giving up around an hour of your time to participate in the study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Upon completion the research will be shared with relevant police forces/professional bodies/participants, as well as contributing to a series of articles that will be published in journals. This may also provide insights which assists you in managing this issue in your own force area.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

As above, the information provided will be sanitised in the research. Direct quotations may be used, but not attributed to a named individual, as participants will be allocated a pseudonym.

If you join the study, it is possible that some of the data collected will be looked at by authorised persons from the University of Gloucestershire. Data may also be looked at by authorised people to check that the study is being carried out correctly. All will have a duty of confidentiality to you as a research participant and we will do their best to meet this duty.

- The data will be collected by audio/video recording the interview.
- It will be stored securely on University of Gloucestershire secure servers.
- It will be used for this particular PhD research, but may be retained for use in future studies.
- The researcher, supervisor and other relevant persons from the University of Gloucestershire will have access to the data.
- It will be retained until such time it isn't required and it will be disposed of securely after 10 years.
- Participants have the right to check the accuracy of data held about them and correct any errors.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

You do not have to continue to participate in the interview once it has started and may leave at any time. Once the interview is complete it will not be possible to remove your personal contribution from it, and this data will continue to be held for the purpose of the study, however any contributions made by you will not be used in the final report.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of this study, you should ask to speak to the researcher or their supervisor, who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by following the guidance in this link: <https://www.glos.ac.uk/docs/download/Governance/public-complaints-procedure.pdf>

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The final research will be shared with relevant police forces, participants and other professional bodies that have contributed to the study, as well as excerpts from the thesis being published in journals.

Who is organising and funding the research?

This research is sponsored by the University of Gloucestershire.

Who has reviewed the study?

Research in the University of Gloucestershire is looked at by independent group of people, called an Ethics Committee, to protect your interests. This study has been reviewed and given a favourable opinion by the School of Natural and Social Sciences Research Ethics Panel.

Further information and contact details

<https://www.glos.ac.uk/research/Pages/research.aspx>

<http://www.polfed.org/>

<https://www.fsoa.org.uk/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/security-industry-authority>

Thank you for taking the time to read the information sheet. If you decide to participate you will be provided with a copy of the information sheet to keep as well as the participation consent form.

Appendix 2 – interview consent form



Participant Consent Form

School of Natural and Social Sciences
Researcher: Richard Hester
[Redacted]
Supervisor: Dr Jon Hobson
[Redacted]

Study Title: Critically examining Special Police Service (SPS) arrangements for football policing in England and Wales

Name of Researcher:Richard Hester.....

Please tick box

- 1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated October 2020 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- 2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, and that any contribution made won't be used in the final report.
- 3. I understand that data collected during the study, may be looked at by individuals from the University of Gloucestershire or from regulatory authorities.
- 4. I give permission for these individuals to have access to my data.
- 5. I agree to my interview being audio recorded.
- 6. I agree to being quoted verbatim
- 7. I agree to the data I contribute being retained for future, REC approved research.
- 8. I agree to participate in the study.
- 9. Where required I confirm that I have permission from my employer to participate in this study.

Name of Participant:

Date:

Signature:

Name of Person taking consent:

Date:

Signature:

Appendix 3 – example interview questions



Draft Interview Questions – semi structured

School of Natural and Social
Sciences

Researcher: Richard Hester

Supervisor: Dr Jon Hobson

Study Title: Critically examining Special Police Service (SPS) arrangements for football policing in England and Wales

Objectives

1. To critically review current SPS policy for policing football events
2. To critically assess the suitability of current SPS practices, evaluating views from key police and football club practitioners that are engaged in the SPS process
3. To develop models of equitable best practice for SPS arrangements in England and Wales

Football Club Safety Officers

OPENING	
Question	Objective
Tell me about how long you have been engaged in match day safety	N/A
COSTS	
Question	Objective
How much do you spend each season on paying SPS bills?	1,2
How do you pay the police force (by event or on a direct debit basis)?	1,2
Do you discuss this with other clubs, how does it compare?	1,2
What event(s) has been your biggest expense in the past few seasons?	1,2
Are you allocated a set budget for paying SPS?	1,2
Do you receive pressure to keep policing costs to a minimum?	1,2
POLICY & TRAINING	
Question	Objective
Do you have a local club policy on SPS?	1,2

Is there any policy or guidance from the FSOA or elsewhere that you follow?	1,2
Tell me about the training / policy inputs you receive from the league / FA etc	1,2
NEGOTIATIONS	
Tell me how the pre-season categorisation process works from your point of view	1,2
Tell me how the planning meetings for specific games work from your point of view	1,2
How are the costs for each game agreed between the club and the police?	1,2
What happens if there is any disagreement between the club and the police over costs?	1,2
How often do disagreements occur between the police and the club?	1,2
Are negotiation processes detrimental the relationship between the police and the club?	1,2
SPS PERSPECTIVES	
What are your expectations of the police when they are deployed on match days under the SPS arrangements?	1,2
What are the police's expectation of the club during a match day when police resources are deployed under SPS?	1,2
Has there been any times when the club or police did not meet one another's expectations?	1,2
What did you think about the Ipswich ruling?	1,2
(Summarise discussion from this section) Does the current SPS process work or does it need reform?	1,2
ALTERNATIVES	
How has Covid-19 changed the SPS situation for clubs and the police?	2,3
Given the Covid-19 situation, how do you view SPS when football with fans resumes?	2,3
Tell me how you think the SPS process can be improved	2,3
Senior police officers suggest that a solution is football clubs paying more for policing, what do you think?	2,3
What do you think of a levy system where clubs pay into a league fund that goes towards the cost of policing, with more being paid based on league status?	2,3
What about a ticket based system where part of the ticket price goes towards a policing fund?	2,3

Police Officers

OPENING	
Question	Objective
Tell me about how long you have been engaged in match day safety	N/A

COSTS	
Question	Objective
How much SPS do you receive each season from football clubs?	1,2
How much do you spend each season on policing football?	1,2
How do the clubs pay the police force (by event or on a direct debit basis)?	1,2
What event(s) has created the biggest SPS bill in the past few seasons?	1,2
Are you expected to obtain a set amount of SPS from clubs each season?	1,2
Do you receive pressure to maximise SPS income from football clubs?	1,2
POLICY & TRAINING	
Question	Objective
Do you have a local force policy on SPS?	1,2
Do you follow any national policy or guidance on SPS?	1,2
Does the SPS process vary within your force area? Eg. Between clubs or different events?	1,2
Tell me about the training / policy inputs you have received on SPS	1,2
NEGOTIATIONS	
Tell me how the pre-season categorisation process works from your point of view	1,2
Tell me how the planning meetings for specific games work from your point of view	1,2
How are the costs for each game agreed between the club and the police?	1,2
What happens if there is any disagreement between the club and the police over costs?	1,2
How often do disagreements occur between the police and the club?	1,2
Are negotiation processes detrimental the relationship between the police and the club?	1,2
SPS PERSPECTIVES	
What are your expectations of the club when resources are deployed on match days under the SPS arrangements?	1,2
What are the club's expectation of the police during a match day when police resources are deployed under SPS?	1,2
Has there been any times when the club or police did not meet one another's expectations?	1,2
What did you think about the Ipswich ruling?	1,2
(Summarise discussion from this section) Does the current SPS process work or does it need reform?	1,2

ALTERNATIVES	
How has Covid-19 changed the SPS situation for clubs and the police?	2,3
Given the Covid-19 situation, how do you view SPS when football with fans resumes?	2,3
Senior police officers suggest that a solution is football clubs paying more for policing, what do you think?	2,3
Tell me how you think the SPS process can be improved	2,3
What do you think of a levy system where clubs pay into a league fund that goes towards the cost of policing, with more being paid based on league status?	2,3
What about a ticket based system where part of the ticket price goes towards a policing fund?	2,3

Other organisations

NB. – these may be sent as a request for written responses

OPENING	
Question	Objective
Tell me about how your organisation is involved in match day safety	N/A
COSTS	
Question	Objective
How much are football clubs within your jurisdiction paying the police for SPS each season?	1,2
How much is spent on policing football clubs in your jurisdiction each season?	1,2
Have football clubs raised SPS costs with you as an issue?	1,2
Have police forces raised costs of policing football with you as an issue?	1,2
Do clubs pay any kind of membership fee to you?	1,2
POLICY & TRAINING	
Question	Objective
Do you provide any training / policy inputs for football clubs about SPS?	1,2
NEGOTIATIONS	
Have you been asked to get involved with SPS negotiations between football clubs and police forces?	1,2
Have you been made aware of any disagreements between football clubs and the police over costs?	1,2
Is this negotiation process detrimental to a positive relationship between the police and the football club?	1,2
SPS PERSPECTIVES	

What are your expectations of the football clubs when resources are deployed on match days under the SPS arrangements?	1,2
What do you think the clubs expectation is of the police when they are deployed under SPS?	1,2
What did you think about the Ipswich ruling?	1,2
Does the current SPS process work or does it need reform?	1,2
ALTERNATIVES	
Senior police officers suggest that a solution is football clubs paying more for policing, what do you think?	2,3
Tell me how you think the SPS process can be improved	2,3
What do you think of a levy system where clubs pay into a league fund that goes towards the cost of policing, with more being paid based on league status?	2,3
What about a ticket based system where part of the ticket price goes towards a policing fund?	2,3

Appendix 4 – ethics approval form



School of Natural & Social Sciences School Research Ethics Panel

Francis Close Hall
Swindon Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire GL50 4AZ
01242 714700
nssethics@glos.ac.uk

22nd April 2020

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your application to the School of Natural & Social Sciences – School Research Ethics Panel (NSS-SREP).

Following institutional ethical review, I am pleased to confirm ethical clearance.

Please keep a record of this letter as a confirmation of ethical approval for your study (detailed below), reviewed by the School Research Ethics Panel of the School of Natural & Social Sciences, University of Gloucestershire, on 12th March 2020.

Project Title:	Critically examining Special Police Service (SPS) arrangements for football policing in England and Wales
Start Date:	22 nd April 2020
Projected Completion Date:	30 th October 2025
NSS-REP Clearance code:	NSS/2003/004

If you have any questions about ethical clearance please feel free to contact me. Please use your SREP clearance code in any future correspondence regarding this study.

Kind Regards



Dr Rachel Sumner
School Research Ethics Lead
School of Natural & Social Sciences

Appendix 5 – Local authorities that did not provide business rate Freedom of Information data

Local authority	Club(s)	Response
Barnsley	Barnsley	Refusal over privacy
Burnley	Burnley	Did not respond
Bolton	Bolton Wanderers	Refusal over privacy
Brighton & Hove	Brighton Albion	Refusal over privacy
Cambridge	Cambridge United	Refusal over privacy
Cardiff	Cardiff City	Refusal over privacy
City of Bristol	Bristol City & Bristol Rovers	Refusal over privacy
East Staffordshire	Burton Albion	Refusal over privacy
Exeter	Exeter City	Refusal over privacy
Haringey	Tottenham Hotspur	Refusal over privacy
Hartlepool	Hartlepool United	Refusal over privacy
Hillingdon	Wealdstone	Refusal over privacy
Hyndburn	Accrington Stanley	Refusal over privacy
Ipswich	Ipswich Town	Refusal over privacy
Kirklees	Huddersfield Town	Refusal over privacy
Leicester	Leicester City	Refusal over privacy
Lewisham	Millwall	Refusal over privacy
Luton	Luton Town	Refusal over privacy
Middlesbrough	Middlesbrough	Refusal over privacy
North East Lincolnshire	Grimsby Town	Refusal over privacy
North Lincolnshire	Scunthorpe United	Refusal over privacy
Nottingham County	Nottingham Forest	Refusal over privacy
Portsmouth	Portsmouth	Refusal over privacy
Sheffield	Sheffield United and Sheffield Wednesday	Refusal over privacy
Shropshire	Shrewsbury Town	Refusal over privacy
Stevenage	Stevenage	Refusal over privacy
Stroud	Forest Green Rovers	Refusal over privacy
Swansea	Swansea City	Refusal over privacy
Torbay	Torquay United	Refusal over privacy
Watford	Watford	Refusal over privacy
Wigan	Wigan Athletic	Refusal over privacy

Appendix 6 – example refusal from a local authority

From: Furniss Spencer (CEX) <Spencer.Furniss@sheffield.gov.uk> **On Behalf Of** FOI
Sent: Wednesday, April 7, 2021 4:13 PM
To: HESTER, Richard <rhester@glos.ac.uk>
Subject: Response – Freedom of Information Request – Reference – FOI / 2021-22-2011

CAUTION: This email originated from outside the organisation. Only click links or open attachments when you can confirm the sender and know the content is safe. If unsure, contact ithelpdesk@glos.ac.uk

Dear Richard Hester,

Thank you for your recent request for information relating to football club business rates which we received on 01/04/2021.

Please find Sheffield City Council's response to your request set out below:

We publish some business rates information on our Open Data website at the following link: <https://datamillnorth.org/dataset/scc-business-rates>.

Please note that the data we publish is limited and does not include all of the information you requested.

In case EA/2018/0055; Sheffield City Council vs Information Commissioner and Gavin Chait, the First-tier Tribunal (General Regulatory Chamber) Information Rights upheld the Council's appeal against the Information Commissioner's decision (decision notice FS50681336 <https://ico.org.uk/media/action-weve-taken/decision-notices/2018/2258231/fs50681336.pdf>) that the Council should publish this information. Consequently, the Council maintains that this information is exempt from disclosure for the following reasons.

Section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000

The information you have requested is exempt from disclosure under section 41(1)(a) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Under section 41(1)(a), information is exempt from disclosure if its disclosure would constitute an actionable breach of confidence. To demonstrate an actionable breach of

confidence, the information must have the necessary quality of confidence, must have been shared in circumstances which give rise to an obligation of confidence and its disclosure would have to lead to an actionable breach of confidence.

In this instance, information provided to a local authority for the purposes of calculating rates or reliefs is information that a reasonable person would regard as confidential. It is not already in the public domain and therefore it has the necessary quality of confidence.

The information was shared with the Council in circumstances which give rise to an obligation of confidence as individuals would not expect that information held by the Council for the purposes of calculating rates or reliefs would be used for other purposes or be published.

Disclosure of the information would lead to an actionable breach of confidence as, if the Council were to disclose the information, it would breach the general common law principle of taxpayer confidentiality. Consequently, the information requested is exempt from disclosure under section 41 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

If you have any queries about this response, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The information provided in this response is available for re-use under the terms of the Open Government Licence v3.0. The terms of the OGL can be found [here](#). When re-using the information, Sheffield City Council requires you to include the following attribution statement: "Contains public sector information obtained from Sheffield City Council and licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0."

If you are unhappy with the response you have received in relation to your request, you are entitled to have this reviewed. You can ask for an internal review by replying to this email. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days from the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your internal review, you can contact the Information Commissioner's Office. Please see <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/official-information-concerns-report/official-information-concern> for further details.

Kind Regards,

Sheffield City Council

PO Box 1283

Sheffield, S1 1UJ

Email: FOI@sheffield.gov.uk

Appendix 7 – Thesis timeline

The PhD process started in October 2019 and the intention to submit was sent in January 2023, the below summarises the key timeline activities of the thesis:

- October 2019 – commenced PhD study and enrolled on MR401 and MR402 research modules
- December 2019 – completed initial Postgraduate Certificate module on ‘Philosophy and Approaches to Research’
- March 2020 - completed initial Postgraduate Certificate module on ‘Methodologies and Methods’
- April 2020 – Ethics approval granted
- October 2020 – Project Approval granted
- November 2020 – February 2021 – research interviews conducted with DFOs and Safety Officers
- February 2021 – initial pilot Freedom of Information Requests sent
- March 2021 – May 2021 – further Freedom of Information Requests sent
- May 2021 – March 2023 – analysis and writing up of thesis
- October 2022 – publication of article ‘The true cost of policing football in England & Wales: Freedom of Information data from 2015 to 2019’ in *Police Practice and Research: An International Journal*
- February 2023 – intention to submit completed and revisions of thesis