FA x FSA STRUCTURED DIALOGUE MEETING

2pm – 4pm
Tuesday 6 October 2026
Wembley Stadium

FSA Attendees

Martin Cloake (Tottenham Hotspur - Premier League)
Simon Colebrook (Portsmouth – EFL)
Mark McKeown (Everton – Premier League)
Matthew Kempson (North Ferriby – Non-League)
Tom Greatrex (FSA Chair and FA Councillor)
Chris Paouros (FSA Vice Chair and FA Councillor)
Darren Bernstein (FSA Head of National Game and Community Ownership)
Thomas Concannon (Free Lions/ FSA Premier League Network Manager)
Deborah Dilworth (Free Lionesses/ FSA Head of Women's Game)
Katrina Law (FSA x FA Structured Dialogue Lead)
Kevin Miles (FSA CEO)

FA Attendees

Andy Ambler (Director of Professional Game)
Chris Bryant (Managing Director, UK & Ireland 2028)
Mark Bullingham (CEO)
Joanna Manning-Cooper (Director of Marketing, Communications and Public Affairs)
David Newton (Head of Player Status & Competitions)
Nina Smith (PA to the Director of Marketing, Communications and Corporate Affairs)
Richard Weekes (Senior Memberships & Operations Manager)

Apologies

Sophie Levin (Structured Dialogue Lead and FA Senior External Affairs Manager)
James MacDougall (Head of Corporate Affairs)

MEETING REPORT

This meeting followed on from the March 2026 session at Wembley Stadium as part of the FA x FSA commitment to Structured Dialogue, outlined by the Terms of Reference linked here. It took place ahead of the England v Czechia Nations League match on Tuesday 6 October 2026.

1. Men's Internationals

i) FIFA Men's World Cup 2026 review

The group reflected positively on the 2026 FIFA Men's World Cup, highlighting the strong working relationship between the FA, FSA and UK football policing partners, which was described as being stronger than ever. Regular communication and close collaboration helped address a number of operational challenges throughout the tournament, including travel arrangements, venue logistics and scheduling changes.

England supporter behaviour was praised throughout the tournament, with fans responding well despite some challenging circumstances. Ticket pricing remained a significant concern, although the successful introduction of lower-priced ticket categories following extensive FA engagement with FIFA was welcomed.

The group also discussed the distribution of England supporters within stadiums, noting that future conversations with FIFA should seek to improve supporter visibility and cohesion within venues.

Looking ahead, there was cautious optimism that ticket prices for the 2030 World Cup in Spain, Portugal and Morocco could be more affordable than those experienced in the US market.

ii) UEFA Men's Euro 2028 update

Managing Director, UK & Ireland 2028, Chris Bryant, shared a presentation with the group. The update focused on preparations for UEFA EURO 2028, with the qualifying draw in Belfast in December identified as the next major milestone.

Plans are progressing across tournament operations, including community engagement, volunteer recruitment, ticketing, fan activations and host city planning. Stadium readiness remains on track, with venue-specific operational challenges being addressed, while host cities have demonstrated strong ambition and enthusiasm for fan zones, public screenings and wider city activations.

The community programme, Together 28, is taking shape around social and environmental initiatives, including a UEFA climate fund and grassroots football projects.

Discussions also highlighted a strong focus on fan experience, affordability, accessibility and transport, with ongoing work to improve rail capacity, journey planning and sustainable travel options.

Overall, organisers reported positive progress, although significant planning work remains ahead of the tournament.

iii) ESTC ticketing

The group discussed feedback from a recent ESTC member survey, which generated c. 1,000 responses and highlighted home England ticket sales as the primary area of concern. While acknowledging that some issues, such as away allocations, sit outside the FA's control, members reported dissatisfaction with the online purchasing experience, particularly during periods of high demand when website performance struggled under volume.

FA reps outlined ongoing work to improve both ticketing platforms and membership system integration, noting that recent sales had shown signs of improvement before technical issues affected the user experience.

ACTION: It was agreed that further discussions would take place outside of this meeting, with an update to be provided on planned improvements to the ticketing experience.

2. FIFA relations

The FA outlined the work alongside UEFA and other leading national associations in coordinating an early and unified response to FIFA's proposed FFE initiative.

FSA reps raised the relative strengths of FA's and UEFA's public response to the proposal.

The FA emphasised that the approach, which ultimately prevented the proposal advancing, was based on coalition building and behind-the-scenes engagement. The FA remains actively involved with discussions and will continue this approach to promote greater accountability and transparency within the game.

3. Regulations and Governance

i) Disciplinary sanctions and points deductions

FSA reps raised concerns about the consistency and transparency of regulatory outcomes across English football, citing differing sanctions and disciplinary processes as a source of supporter frustration, leading to an erosion of trust in the integrity of the game.

The FA explained that responsibility is divided across multiple governing bodies, with the Premier League and EFL enforcing competition-specific regulations and the FA overseeing a separate set of whole-game rules. The Independent Football Regulator will have its own oversight powers in accordance with its objectives.

While acknowledging the confusion this creates for supporters, there was agreement that greater clarity around regulatory responsibilities, disciplinary processes and sanctioning frameworks would help improve understanding and confidence in the system.

Action: FA to explore how the different roles of the FA, Premier League, EFL and Independent Football Regulator can be explained more clearly to supporters, alongside greater clarity around disciplinary processes.

ii) Club badge changes

The group discussed the processes used to consult supporters on proposed club badge changes, with concerns raised about whether some recent consultations had provided supporters with meaningful choices and adequately reflected supporter sentiment.

The FA clarified that its role is not to approve badge changes but to ensure clubs can demonstrate that they have undertaken thorough consultation and secured majority supporter backing for any proposed changes.

Discussion also covered the use of independent third parties to conduct consultations, the challenges presented by alternative and commemorative crests, and the importance of developing clearer expectations around what constitutes robust supporter engagement.

There was broad agreement that sharing examples of best practice could help strengthen consultation processes and supporter confidence across the game.

Action: FSA to produce best practice guidelines for supporter consultation for consideration by the FA.

iii) Club licensing and unincorporated clubs in the National League system

The group received an update on the continued work being undertaken to improve the sustainability and governance of clubs across the National League System and the women's game, with thanks recorded to the FA's non-league team for their ongoing engagement on the issue.

Concerns were raised about the number of unincorporated clubs and the risks this can create, particularly for long-term financial resilience.

The FA explained that while mandating incorporation had previously been considered, practical barriers remain for some clubs, including potential increases in operating costs. In the women's game, incorporation is already required at certain levels through club licensing arrangements.

The FA outlined its current focus on education and support, including engagement through club development programmes and webinars, while continuing to review whether further measures may be appropriate in the future.

iv) Under-14 attendance policies and supporter ID schemes

FSA reps raised concerns about recent measures introduced by some leagues and clubs in response to youth behaviour issues, including requirements for under-14s to attend matches with an accompanying adult and the use of supporter ID card schemes.

While there was recognition that clubs are facing genuine challenges, concerns were expressed that some measures may be disproportionate and could become more widely adopted without a clear understanding of their effectiveness.

The FA acknowledged the challenges clubs are seeking to address and agreed that solutions should focus on education, engagement and practical support alongside any regulatory measures.

Action: FA, FSA and league representatives to convene a roundtable in November to discuss youth behaviour, supporter ID schemes and other related issues, with a focus on identifying practical and developmental solutions for clubs.

v) Perimeter walls update

The group received an update on the significant progress made since the review launched following the death of Billy Vigar in September 2025. More than 900 grounds across the men's and women's national league systems have been assessed, with around 160 sites identified as having brick, block or concrete perimeter walls requiring further review.

The FA outlined the risk assessment work undertaken with independent health and safety experts, the introduction of new ground grading requirements and the creation of a £5m funding programme to support necessary improvements. It was confirmed that these types of perimeter walls will no longer be permitted in the National League System from next season, with mitigation measures required where walls cannot be removed.

FSA reps welcomed the progress made to date and the ongoing engagement with affected clubs, leagues and Billy's family, while noting the importance of ensuring clubs can access the support needed to complete any required works.

Action: FA to continue working with affected clubs to support the completion of required safety improvements and provide FSA reps with further updates on the perimeter wall review programme.

4. Women's Internationals

i) England Plus and Lionesses membership

FSA reps shared feedback from Lionesses supporters regarding the launch of the England Plus app, with some feeling that regular women's away travellers had been overlooked. The FA explained that the initial launch was focused on the FIFA Men's World Cup 2026, including the migration of ESTC members, and confirmed that a dedicated Lionesses membership proposition remains in development ahead of the Women's World Cup in 2027.

Further communication will follow to clarify England Plus membership plans for Lionesses supporters so travelling fans understand how they will be recognised and supported within the membership programme.

Action: FA to review communications around the forthcoming Lionesses membership programme and issue additional updates for supporters.

ii) Safety, security and matchday experience

FSA and FA representatives discussed the different challenges faced by supporters travelling to women's internationals, including venue locations, transport, matchday operations and personal safety. Particular consideration was given to the experience of women travelling alone or in small groups, as well as broader safeguarding and supporter welfare issues.

The FA outlined ongoing work around supporter security, background-checking processes and enhanced planning for away fixtures, including earlier engagement with local authorities and venue operators. There was broad agreement on the importance of continued collaboration between the FA, FSA and policing partners to ensure supporter safety remains a key consideration as attendances and travel numbers continue to grow.

Action: FA and FSA to continue discussions on safety, safeguarding and supporter arrangements for women's international fixtures, including ahead of future tournament travel.

iii) International fan experience

Concerns were raised about inconsistent and unclear information for away supporters visiting England, following confusion around ticketing arrangements for the upcoming Greece fixture. FSA reps proposed that future England match communications include dedicated guidance for away fans, directing them to relevant ticketing and travel information.

Ongoing discussions with FSA/ FSE aim to establish a consistent standard for away fan communications, positioning the FA as a potential best-practice example and strengthening the case for a formal UEFA-wide approach.

iv) Women's World Cup 2035

FSA reps received an update on the UK bid for FIFA Women's World Cup 2035. The FA noted that plans are being developed in partnership with Government stakeholders and that the FSA will be kept informed as arrangements progress.

Action: FA to provide FSA with a further update on the Women's World Cup 2035 bid once confirmed.

v) Brazil FIFA Women's World Cup 2027

The group discussed preparations for the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup, including supporter travel, engagement and tournament planning. The FA highlighted ongoing work to develop the supporter programme once qualification and draw arrangements are finalised and confirmed that budget would be made available to support FSA activity around the tournament, building on the collaborative approach used at recent tournaments in Switzerland and Australia.

FSA reps also emphasised the importance of clear communications, safety planning and supporter involvement as preparations progress.

Action: FA to confirm budget for FSA activity at FIFA Women's World Cup 2027.

5. Men's Emirates FA Cup

The group received an update on away ticket pricing, allocations and prize funding within the Men's Emirates FA Cup. The FA reported that away ticket prices across the competition have remained largely within the £10–£30 range, with only a small number of fixtures exceeding this level.

The FA reiterated its ambition to increase club allocations at Wembley and advised that pricing arrangements for the 2026–27 semi-finals and final remain under review.

Discussion also revisited concerns about qualifying-round prize money, which has not returned to pre-COVID levels. The FA acknowledged these concerns but highlighted the wider funding available to clubs across the National League System through FA, Premier League and Football Foundation investment, as well as the significant financial benefits available through FA Cup participation, prize money and broadcast revenues.

Action: FA to provide FSA reps with a further update on 2026–27 semi-final and final ticket allocations and pricing once discussions have progressed.

6. Policing of football

i) Alcohol in view of the pitch

There was a discussion on the recent national debate following suggestions that the ban on drinking alcohol in view of the pitch at football matches could be removed. FSA reps put on record their concern that some comment from the police had linked alcohol consumption directly with

crowd disorder, and that it had also referenced Hillsborough, which indicates a failure to accept the findings of the Hillsborough Inquiry.

The FA shared feedback gathered from different supporter groups, including concerns about the impact on the matchday experience.

FSA reps noted that much of the supporter discussion had focused less on alcohol consumption itself and more on whether football should continue to be subject to a specific legal restriction that does not apply to other sports. It was suggested that any future approach should consider whether decisions are best taken by individual clubs and competitions rather than through football-specific legislation.

ii) UK Football Policing Unit (UKFPU) liaison

The group discussed personnel changes within the UKFPU and the potential impact on relationships built with England supporters and stakeholders. While acknowledging the positive working relationships developed during recent tournaments, concerns were raised about increased staff rotation, upcoming retirements and the loss of operational knowledge and continuity.

FSA reps highlighted the value of long-standing relationships between police officers, FSA and FA staff, particularly at major tournaments and overseas fixtures, and emphasised the importance of maintaining institutional knowledge during periods of transition. The FA confirmed it would raise these points during upcoming discussions with new UKFPU leadership.

Action: FA to raise the importance of continuity, relationship building and knowledge retention with UKFPU leadership during future liaison meetings.

7. AOB

i) Head Injuries and CTE

FSA reps raised the issue of head injuries and CTE in football. The FA agreed to provide a verbal update at the next meeting.

Action: FA to provide a update on work being undertaken across the game around CTE at the next FA x FSA Structured Dialogue meeting.

ii) Next meeting date

Dates for the next FA x FSA Structured Dialogue meeting to be agreed as soon as possible.

Ends.