

## **Special Initiative or Mainstream Activity?**

A large number of the best practice schemes referred to in Section 4 – and perhaps especially the most innovative and challenging – appear to have been the product of special initiatives, pilots or pathfinders. On occasion they have had little to do with the statutory agencies and depend upon the voluntary effort and good will of community activists.

However, the possible mainstreaming of community cohesion approaches is gradually being seriously considered. For example, the Department of Media, Culture and Sport (DCMS) produced *Bringing Communities Together Through Sport and Culture* in 2004. This was little more than a collection of ideas, resulting from a seminar and involving an array of government agencies, which reported that they had managed to help participants in their various programmes to feel differently about people of other cultures and backgrounds and to break down the barriers between them, but it did begin to point the way.

Much of the present funding on community cohesion is short term and limited to specific areas or activities. Local councils, their partners, sports associations, governing bodies and the sports infrastructure provided by Sport England in particular needs to consider how community cohesion principles can be embedded in all its work.

However, just as importantly, LSPs, local authorities, Crime and Disorder Partnerships, Regeneration agencies, RDAs, LEAs and schools, colleges - and universities and many other bodies responsible for the various aspects of societal relations - must also consider how they can use sport to achieve their aims of a safer society in which individuals can engage reach their potential and in which communities are more at ease with each other.

It is to be hoped that the bringing together of the various Government programmes within the new Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), together with the establishment of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, will create a stronger sense of purpose and clearer focus within all mainstream services.