

City Matters Full-group Meeting (3 of 5)

Thursday 20th February 2025

2024/25 Season

City Matters Representatives present

Name	Role
Michael Ash	Over 65s Representative
Samantha Gill	Seasonal Hospitality Representative
Lee Broadstock	LGBTQ+ Representative
Daniel Bowdler	Families Representative
Alex Howell	Under 25s Representative (Chair)
Jayne Comer	Women's Representative
Mohammed Ullah	Black, Asian or of Mixed Heritage Representative
Howard Cohen	Disabled Fans Representative
Brian Worrall	Cityzen Matchday Member Representative
Kevin Parker	Official Supporters Club Representative (Vice Chair)

Manchester City Representatives present

Name	Role
Danny Wilson	Managing Director – Manchester City Operations & Nominated Board Level Official for Fan Engagement
Jonathan Lingham	Director of Commercial & Fan Support
Heather Leigh	Director of Product (Online)
Serena Gosling	Director of Integrated Fan Experience and Retail & Licensing
Sanjeev Shewhorak	Director of Technology – Fan Solutions
Scott Williams	Head of Product – Ticketing
Josh Hore	Head of Product – Membership
Derek Harvie	Head of Fan Technology Solution Design
Matthew Williams	Senior Communications Manager
Rachael Lomax	Head of Fan Journey – Matchday Experience
Elliot Ward	Head of Corporate Communications
Francine Warburton	Head of Fan Support
Jo Becker	Accessibility Lead
Amelia Carter	Fan Engagement Executive
Mike B	Ticket Compliance Manager

Apologies – City Matters

Name	Title
Angela Worrall	Season Ticket Member Representative

Guest attendees – Manchester City

Name	Role
Luke McDonnell	Director of Safety and Security
Steven Robinson	Senior Commercial and Inventory Planning Manager

Agenda

1. **City Matters Agenda Item.**
 2. **Technology – Fan Solutions Update.**
 3. **AOB.**
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Introduction

Danny Wilson shared the agenda of the meeting and thanked City Matters representatives for their attendance.

City Matters Agenda Item

The Chair of City Matters introduced the item, noting that fans are extremely concerned about away fans in home areas. They cited impacts on the atmosphere, security and fan experience. This is of particular concern to supporters following incidents at Anfield and Portman Road, whilst there have been reports of away fans in the home end against Feyenoord, Manchester United and Real Madrid. This tabled agenda item followed previous discussions on this subject (for example, see December minutes).

City Matters tabled the subject of away fans in home areas at the Etihad Stadium, which they said was particularly relevant following recent matches. The Club agreed that this should be the focus of the meeting to ensure it could be discussed in depth, and they had developed a detailed presentation ahead of the meeting to discuss with City Matters.

The Club started by stating that they want all general admission seats in home areas to be occupied by Manchester City fans, and they never knowingly sell tickets to away fans. However, the Club recognises that on occasions some away fans have been able to access tickets in the home general admission areas, and they are working hard to address and reduce the ways in which this may happen.

To provide context, the Club started by sharing data on memberships explaining there are 37,000 Season Ticket Members and 140,000 Cityzens Official Members, with the geographic breakdown. The Club also shared percentages of the average number of Season Ticket Members who list on Ticket Exchange or use Ticket Transfer per match, as well as information on the no-show rate.

City Matters queried the average no-show rate, and the Club explained how this number varies depending on the fixture, with higher attendance rates for higher profile, weekend fixtures. The Club advised that on average, a home Premier League match sees 15% of Season Ticket Members transfer their ticket to a friend or family member, 10% list on the Ticket Exchange and 8% of Season Ticket Members do not attend.

There is a similar level of no-show rates for Season Ticket Members and Matchday Members. No-show rates have reduced since the Club introduced Ticket Exchange and Transfer. The Club clarified that all Flexi-Gold Season Tickets and Matchday Member tickets can be refunded up to seven days before

matchday. Some representatives expressed concern about Flexi Gold Season Tickets, as tickets cannot be transferred or exchanged, which may result in an increased number of no-shows. The Club confirmed that it will continue to evaluate the first season of Flexi-Gold Season Ticket usage.

The Club then shared Seasonal and match-by-match Hospitality figures and explained that there are a significant number of private individuals that purchase hospitality alongside businesses. The Club are aware that on occasion, there are some away fans in Hospitality who are invited or guests of the seasonal member or match-by-match buyers but this is managed through several measures. These include enforcing that no away colours are worn and that they do not behave in a way that would identify them as a fan of the visiting team. The Club reiterated that the vast majority of those in Hospitality areas are City fans.

City Matters raised feedback that fans in Hospitality areas such as Kits and Joe's have previously seen poor behaviour from away fans. The Club agreed to follow up on this with the Hospitality representative to discuss it in greater depth.

The Club went on to explain how it sells tickets for Premier League and Cup matches. Since the 2023/24 season, the Club share all game criteria with the City Matters Chair and have sought feedback from the group before going on sale with matches. While the Club and City Matters agreed this has been a positive step, there was an acknowledgment that both parties do not always agree on the criteria.

- Premier League Tickets:
 - The first release of tickets are placed on sale in July as part of 'All Games on Sale'.
 - The second release of tickets include seats listed by Season Ticket Members, Flexi-Gold Season Tickets which are not taken up during the three week window and tickets cancelled by Matchday Members who purchased earlier in the season. These are made available from approximately three weeks prior to the respective match.
 - If any tickets remain available, one week prior to the respective match the Club will often extend the sales criteria to allow Season Ticket Members and Cityzens Matchday Members the opportunity to purchase additional tickets.
- Domestic and European Cup Tickets:
 - Season Ticket Members can join an optional Cup Scheme for each competition which guarantees their ticket.
 - Match tickets are then sold to Season Ticket Members not on the respective Cup Scheme and Members via priority windows.
 - Enhanced sales restrictions are added for some matches – some are due to security concerns, others due to Member prioritisation.

The Club then shared the priority windows for the UEFA Champions League matches this season, including the recent match against Real Madrid at the Etihad Stadium. Some matches went to low criteria of general sale or allowing Members to purchase up to four tickets each.

City Matters suggested that the criteria had been quite robust. However, they also pointed out that the fact that games such as Inter Milan and Real Madrid went through the entire criteria may mean that many supporters have chosen not to purchase a ticket. They suggested that wider ticket pricing may have been a factor.

The Club went on to talk about the Real Madrid game in more detail. Real Madrid sold 1,200 tickets, which was 40% of the visitors allocation. Real Madrid retain responsibility for the behaviour of their own fans within the away end of the Etihad Stadium and prohibited fans who are not official Real Madrid Members from buying tickets from the away allocation. As a result, (we now know that) some Real Madrid fans purchased tickets in the Manchester City home areas. The Club were asked why these fans were not relocated to the away end, given the availability of seats. However, Manchester

City did not have the authority to move these fans into the away end once they were identified in home areas during the match, due to Real Madrid's buying restrictions, outlined above. The Club therefore sought to eject Real Madrid fans from home areas upon identification.

The Club then shared an indicative breakdown of tickets for home UEFA Champions League fixtures. The Club outlined that allocations vary based on the fixture and stage of the competition.

- Stadium capacity – 52,500.
- Season Ticket Member Sales (Cup Scheme and Non-Cup Scheme) – up to 37,000. The number which attend game by game is generally up to 25,000 of which we typically see 3,500 transferred to friends and family. There are 20,700 Season Ticket Members on the UEFA Cup Scheme.
- Member Sales – up to 15,000 depending on the number of Season Ticket Members who have purchased.
- Official Supporters Clubs – up to 800.
- Hospitality and Premium Seats including Offsite Packages and Official Resellers (10% of Hospitality and Premium Seat allocation) – up to 5,500.
- Group Tickets – up to 1,500.
- Internals including Directors Box and invited Club guests, Club Partners, Football Management, Players, Academy, Women's Team, Club Officials, Staff, Former Players, Media seats, charitable causes, City in the Community, and seat kills – up to 2,000.
- Visiting supporters – up to 3,000.
- UEFA Allocations (Champions Club, Category 1, purchased tickets located in home blocks) – up to 2,600.

City Matters enquired about third-party sites claiming to sell tickets. The Club explained how it uses eight official resellers which are all account managed and closely monitored to review how they sell tickets. The Club also made it clear that all official resellers are required to sell tickets to Manchester City fans only. Any third-party site which fails to stay within the terms and conditions of their contract, will be investigated and their contract may be terminated.

However, the Club highlighted that there are numerous fraudulent sites that claim to be selling legitimate tickets. This may make it appear as though more tickets are being sold through official resellers compared to the allocation. The Club explained that it has previously issued and will continue to issue legal 'cease and desist' letters to these fraudulent sites.

The Club further explained its proactive approach to addressing the issue of touted tickets, with the Ticketing Compliance Manager outlining the number of accounts that have been suspended or banned. In total, so far this season:

- 354 accounts suspended. This includes 154 accounts suspended as a result of the Real Madrid investigation.
- 223 accounts being closely monitored.
- 165 accounts have received a ban for touting.

The Club also highlighted the measures that they are undertaking to tackle ticket touting and the matter of away fans in home areas. City Matters suggested that the Club should share more information about this work with fans.

City Matters said a key concern with the recent Real Madrid match is that fans were starting to feel unsafe and uncomfortable. The Club made it clear that matchday safety is its priority, with the Club employing one of the league's largest number of stewards on a matchday. The Club's Director of Safety and Security subsequently went through the matchday operation at the Etihad Stadium. The process for away supporters identified in home areas is as follows:

- Any away supporter found to be attempting to gain entry to home areas of the Stadium are refused admission at the turnstiles.
- Any supporter identified as an away fan in a home section inside the Stadium is asked to leave. If they refuse, they are ejected for their own safety and the safety of others. The Club does not allow away fans in home areas to move to the allocated away section.

The Club noted that it had received feedback that on occasion some fans may assume that there are away fans in home areas simply based on appearances and/or behaviour.

To ensure that we do not eject Manchester City fans suspected of being 'away fans', we speak to the fans in question to establish who they support. If we are satisfied with the answers they provide, they are allowed to return to their seats for the remainder of the match.

City Matters agreed that there can be incorrect perceptions amongst fans which is increasing as the number of international City fans grows. They also noted that this is exemplified by the increasing number of international Official Supporters Club Members, from which many members attend European matches and sometimes speak a different language, generating an incorrect assumption that they are a fan of the visiting team. Feedback from international Official Supporters Club Members has often been shared that they have been treated unpleasantly as a result. City Matters noted how fans act towards other fans can vary based on the match result.

Technology – Fan Solutions Update

The Club shared some of the technology solutions that are being developed and introduced to improve the fan experience.

The Director of Technology for Fan Solutions presented the recently announced partnership with Veritrans. As the Club's Official Fan Identity Partner, Veritrans' technology will integrate with the Club's existing infrastructure, enhancing processes and transactions for fans across key areas such as registration, memberships and ticketing, ensuring a smoother fan experience.

In the future, fans may be asked to upload an official identification document (passport or driving licence) to verify their account with the Club. This will prevent one individual creating multiple accounts under different names and email addresses.

Fans can read the announcement here, www.mancity.com/news/club/veritrans-partnership-announcement.

The Director of Technology for Fan Solutions detailed new app features, which will allow fans to manage their tickets via the mobile app. This will firstly be available to Season Ticket Members and allow them to:

- View matches they have tickets for.
- Transfer tickets at the same price point.
- List tickets on the Ticket Exchange.
- Donate tickets to City in the Community.
- View Friends & Family inside of the Ticket Transfer journey.
- View additional purchased tickets, but not transfer, exchange or donate them.
- View tickets for matches already played.

The new features will also allow Seasonal Hospitality Members to view matches they have tickets for, distribute tickets, recall tickets and view past matches.

In the Ticketing Sub Group meeting in February, the Club went through the fan journeys of how to transfer, donate, exchange or cancel tickets on the app. City Matters representatives were encouraged to use the 'Managing Ticket' section in the mobile app and share their feedback.

AOB

One of the City Matters representatives raised concerns about a recent experience they had using the text report service and mentioned that it needs to be evaluated and improved. The Club agreed to follow up on this specific issue with the representative.

Another question City Matters raised was about the Club's partnership with Socios and the purchase of fan tokens. The Club said it would be happy to answer any specific questions about Socios and encouraged fan representatives to email in any questions from fans.

City Matters asked whether the #StopExploitingLoyalty banner would be allowed inside the stadium at the home match against Liverpool. The Club said it would have to be compliant with the safety requirements (e.g. fire safety certificate and size) and they would look into the request.

Finally, City Matters asked for the date of the extraordinary meeting regarding Season Ticket Renewals and requested for this meeting to be in person rather than online. The Club said they will keep City Matters informed and share an update on meeting schedules over the next seven days.