

Government announces terms of reference for fan-led review of football

The review will be wide-ranging in nature and will examine the potential for changes to ownership models, governance, how finance flows through the game and how to give supporters a greater say in the running of the game.

The launch of the fan-led review comes following a number of high profile collapses in recent years including Bury Football Club that went into administration last year after being expelled from the Football League in 2019. It also comes after six of the game's leading clubs moved to initially support a proposed European Super League which was roundly condemned by supporters, the Football Association, the Premier League, UEFA and the Government.

Following the breakaway attempt, on Monday Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden announced he had "no choice" but to move quickly and launch the Government's manifesto commitment of a fan-led review.

The review will seek to make recommendations on how the governance of the game can be improved, putting fans' interest and experiences first. The review will engage with groups across the country to hear views of fans and what they think needs changing in football governance.

The Terms of Reference will look at the existing Ownership and Directors' tests and whether they are fit for purpose and if there is further scope to extend the criteria. While foreign ownership has undoubtedly benefited the development of the game, the review will seek to test whether existing oversight is sufficient to protect the interests of the game.

In addition, the review will assess the need for an independent football regulator, charged with implementing regulation and compliance, and how that might work within the existing framework provided by the Football Association, Premier League and English Football League. It will also look at ownership models, including but not limited to the fan-owned model in Germany, and examine the merits of these.

The review will add to the recommendations of the English Football League's Governance Review and the Government's 2016 Expert Working Group on Football Supporter Ownership and Engagement. It will also look at football governance around the world and how models of ownership and dialogue structures can be integrated into the game to improve the fan experience.

The review will seek to:

- Assess existing scrutiny of club finances and administrative reporting
- Appraise financial flows through the whole football pyramid

- Examine geographical, historical and identity protections for clubs
- Examine club interests and league systems and how these interact within the pyramid

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

Football begins and ends with fans and we have seen that passionately displayed this week. It must be a watershed moment in our national game.

We must capitalise on this momentum. Clubs are the beating heart of their local communities and this important review will help put football on a surer footing for the future where supporters voices are heard.

Tracey Crouch MP said:

Football means so much to so many people in this country and my review will be firmly focused on the fans.

It will look closely at the issues of governance, ownership and finance and take the necessary steps to retain the game's integrity, competitiveness and, most importantly, the bond that clubs have with its supporters and the local community.

Ministers will work closely with the Chair to set out the next steps for the review in the coming days. The Chair will then meet regularly with the Minister for Sport to keep him informed of progress of the review.

The review will then make final recommendations on what steps can and should be taken, and how they should be implemented which could include both legislative and non-legislative means.

The report will then be presented to Minister for Sport and Tourism Nigel Huddleston, Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Oliver Dowden, and The Football Association before being laid in Parliament.

ENDS

Read the [Terms of Reference for the fan-led review of football](#).