

FLR: Background briefing (Embargoed: 10pm on 24th November 2021)

The FSA welcomed the Fan-Led Review into Football Governance (FLR) and helped shape a format which saw all FSA affiliate and associate supporter organisations given the opportunity to present evidence to the FLR panel, along with the football leagues, FA and other important stakeholders.

Our [evidence submission](#) ran to 226 pages covering football governance, the scope of an independent regulator, club ownership, supporter rights, supporter engagement, football finance, protection of assets, women's football and more.

Prior to the FLR's launch in April 2021 we had four basic questions against which we planned to measure the final report: Does it put measures in place to better protect clubs from insolvency? Does it stop a future ESL breakaway? Does it embed supporter engagement into football's power structures? Does it redistribute football's wealth in a more sustainable manner?

Summary of the final report's recommendations:

- **Governance:** an independent regulator for football (IREF) which has the necessary investigative and enforcement powers is needed to prevent the recurrence of such developments as the European Super League.
- **Finance:** football's model is unsustainable with too many clubs making losses. Pre-emptive action is needed and a regulator will impose stronger financial controls.
- **Engagement:** proposals to embed democratic supporter organisations and engagement within the heart of domestic football.
- **Heritage:** football stadiums, club badges, location, colours and competitions all deserve special protections. Fans to have a veto on these assets at every club via a "golden share" which is held by a democratic, legally-constituted fan group. These protections confer many benefits of ownership without supporter groups being required to raise capital.
- **Reform:** half of the FA Board should be made up of independent non-executive directors, to reduce elite club influence. The FLR also recommends reform of the FA Council.
- **Distribution:** the removal of restrictions on FA spending meaning more money redirected towards grassroots, non-league and women's football.

The FSA believes the FLR report offers an unprecedented opportunity to overhaul the power structures of the domestic game – giving fans a voice at the heart of football. We urge all supporters' groups to get behind it.

Analysis

Does the FLR commit to action on every single issue which the FSA and our affiliated supporter groups raised during the review? Of course not. Will elite club owners and many executives oppose it with all their might? Most probably.

Today is the day to look at the bigger picture, rather than picking at the detail and providing football's executives with the wiggle room they desperately crave.

We do not want to give them the opportunity to pretend there is not an overwhelming call for reform from supporters. The FLR represents the biggest step forward in almost 30 years of football governance campaigning. We must give the Government confidence that fans are unified on this issue.

The FLR acknowledges that supporter ownership is a legitimate model for many clubs – and we believe this is worthy of further consideration by Government. We will continue to support the community ownership model and work with fans to take their clubs into supporter ownership where it is a solution to their problems.

We also support the FLR's recommendation that a new review is set up to specifically explore the challenges facing the women's game. Those challenges may or may not require a different approach to the men's game but they must be examined thoroughly and independently. We look forward to being involved.

The first half is over and supporters are winning - but games can turn. The second half of the process will involve lobbying and Parliamentary scrutiny. The voice of FSA members will be vital as we seek to steer legislation through Parliament in 2022. The FLR is a huge step forward but it is not the end of the journey.

What can supporter organisations do to support the FLR?

1. Familiarise yourself with its recommendations upon publication.
2. Support the FLR and its recommendations in any communications – follow [@WeAreTheFSA](#) on Twitter for regular updates and messages.
3. Contact your local MP to let them know you support the FLR.

Further reading:

- The FLR report should be available from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport [website](#) from 10pm on 24th November 2021.
- You can find out more about the Fan-led Review via the [FSA website](#) and download our 226 page [evidence submission here](#).

The FLR report will be released by the panel at 10pm on 24th November 2021.