

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Meeting Venue:
Committee Room 2 – Senedd

Meeting date:
13 June 2012

Meeting time:
09:00

Cynulliad
Cenedlaethol
Cymru

National
Assembly for
Wales



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Agenda

Private Pre-meeting – (08.45 – 09.00)

1. Introductions, apologies and substitutions

2. Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League – Evidence session (09.00 – 09.40) (Pages 1 – 4)

Welsh Government
CELG(4)-15-12 – Paper 1

Huw Lewis, Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage
Jon Beynon, Sport Policy Branch
Dr Huw Jones, Chief Executive, Sport Wales

3. Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League – Evidence session (09.40 – 10.40) (Pages 5 – 7)

Football Association of Wales (FAW)
CELG(4)-15-12 – Paper 2

Jonathan Ford, Chief Executive
Gwyn Derfel, Welsh Premier League Secretary

4. Legislative Consent Memorandum (LCM) – Local Government Finance Bill: Evidence Session (10:50 – 11:30) (Pages 8 – 14)

CELG(4)-15-12-paper 3 – LCM
CELG(4)-15-12-paper 4

Minister for Local Government and Communities, Carl Sargeant

5. Motion under Standing Order 17.42 to resolve to exclude the public from the meeting for the following business item 6 (11:30 – 11:35)

6. Committee's approach to scrutinising white papers (11:35 – 11:50) (Pages 15 – 23)
CELG(4)-15-12-paper 5

7. Papers to note

Letter from the Minister for Local Government and Communities (Pages 24 – 25)

Further information From Bangor City FC – Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League (Pages 26 – 28)

Evidence paper for the Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage for the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's inquiry into the Welsh Premier League.

I am very pleased to be able to give evidence to the Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee's inquiry into the Welsh Football Premier League.

Football is an immensely popular game in Wales, watched and played by large numbers of people. It provides healthy exercise and enjoyment and can create a sense of national and community pride and prestige. Investing in sport can have a particularly positive impact on young people in many ways such as promoting good health, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and helping them to develop a range of social skills which will help them in later life. Our Programme for Government policies demonstrate that we are committed to ensuring young people are able to access a range of sporting opportunities and that we continue to nurture talent to deliver sustained success in sport from grassroots to elite level.

In order to encourage grass roots participation in a range of sports, Sport Wales is supporting National Governing Bodies of Sport across Wales by investing over £6m this year. This includes over £800k which is allocated to the Welsh Football Trust. This funding is used to support coach education, increasing rates of participation and to nurture our more talented young players.

The detailed funding provided to support grassroots football over the last five years is:

Sport Wales Funding to Support Football: Exchequer Funding Only

		Data	
Sport	SCW Year (Award Date)	Count of Total Payments (All)	Sum of Total Payments (Paid)
FOOTBALL	2007/08	45	884281.48
	2008/09	55	947040.82
	2009/10	55	840492.74
	2010/11	37	1086119.7
	2011/12	4	965850
Total		196	4723784.74

SCW Year (Award Date)	Sport	Budget	Count of Total Payments (All)	Sum of Total Payments (Paid)
2007/08	FOOTBALL	Coaching Plan	1	52200
		NGB Development Support	1	738000
		Regional Grants	7	24031.98
		Sportsmatch	36	70049.5
	Total		45	884,281.48
2008/09	FOOTBALL	Coaching Plan	1	35500
		NGB Development Support	1	746514
		Regional Grants	29	60021.37
		Sportsmatch	24	105005.45
	Total		55	947,040.82
2009/10	FOOTBALL	Coaching Plan	1	25000
		NGB Development Support	1	735998
		Regeneration Challenge	1	5000
		Regional Grants	3	3048
	Sportsmatch	49	71446.74	
Total		55	840,492.74	
2010/11	FOOTBALL	Coaching Plan	1	80000
		NGB Development Support	1	935000
		Regeneration Challenge	1	5000
		Regional Grants	2	34601
	Sportsmatch	32	31518.7	
Total		37	1,086,119.70	
2010/11 Total				
2011/12	FOOTBALL	Coaching Plan	1	80000
		NGB Development Support	2	885000
	Sportsmatch	1	850	
Total		4	965,850	
Grand Total			196	£4,723,784.74

This investment in football has supported the work of the Welsh Football Trust to:

- Support major increases in participation with over 8,000 additional players registered with the FAW over the last two years, over 1,000 of these are from BME communities and 750 are those with disabilities. There are now over 100,000 men and boys and over 6,000 women and girls registered as players with teams and these numbers are increasing each year.

- Help in recruiting over 6,800 extra qualified coaches over the last four years.
- Enable the Welsh Football Trust to implement a club accreditation programme which has helped to increase standards within junior football clubs and which has encouraged coaches to gain the necessary qualifications.
- Provide regional grants to support local football projects.
- Support the improved performance of the National under 16 squad when entering the Victory Shield.

The Welsh Premier League and the professional game in Wales do not receive any financial support from the Welsh Government.

The original targets involving our men's and women's international football teams contained within the Climbing Higher strategy (2005) were revised following the review of Elite Sport conducted in 2009. Sport Wales' Elite Sports Strategy published in 2010 recognised that although the performance levels of the national teams are of national significance, international success will be generated by FAW programmes and the professional football clubs that operate without any direct support from Sport Wales. The new targets set out in the Sport Wales Elite Sport strategy support the FAW's aspirations to improve Wales' position in the FIFA world rankings and UEFA continental rankings and to improve Wales' performances in World Cups and in European Championships at senior and age-group levels.

Huw Lewis AM
Minister for Housing, Regeneration and Heritage

May 2012

[Note: The Victory Shield is a competition for the under-16 teams involving the four home nations.]

Agenda Item 3

Gwyn Derfel's Presentation to the Senedd

I'm fortunate enough to have experienced the WPL from three different perspectives:

Supporter / broadcaster / administrator.

"I firmly believe that we have a good product which deserves better coverage." Not my words – but John Hartson's.

The bold introduction of the "Super 12" format has led to more meaningful and exciting football and the fact that the average WPL attendances since the new format was introduced show a 26% increase while the general European trend shows marginal decline seems to vindicate the decision.

We must accept that there are fundamental challenges facing the future development of the WPL ;

- 1) **Playing Surfaces**
- 2) **Attendances**
- 3) **Sustainability**

- 1) A number of playing surfaces in the WPL are to be commended (some thanks to substantial investment from the FAW). Unfortunately some pitches are unacceptable at certain stages of the season. This does not encourage growth in standards or supporter numbers.
- 2) Although this season attracted the second highest attendance average since the League was formed – we must accept that the WPL must attract more supporters – especially families. The FAW will introduce stringent directives to our referees to clamp down on swearing at WPL matches next season in an attempt to make our games more family friendly.
- 3) Sustainability is essential for all WPL clubs and to lower league teams who aspire to play in our National League. At present one WPL club only generates 7% of its income through the turnstiles. The financial pressures on club committees is substantial and a lot of hard work is required to balance the books on an annual basis.

I firmly believe that the introduction of 3G/4G pitches could contribute greatly to improve all of these three key elements.

In a perfect world, I'd personally prefer to see WPL football played on high quality grass pitches – but we have to live in the real world and there's no doubt in my mind that 3G/4G pitches can transform the fortunes of all of our WPL clubs.

Bangor City could, and would, continue to play on the excellent grass pitch at Nantporth but would place their new generation facility in the car park area. This would offer a permanent home to their nomadic academy, a first class training venue for the first team and would also engage the local community – women's teams and social players. This would increase participation levels and would also place the football club at the heart of the community.

The needs of clubs like Prestatyn, Newtown and Bala Town are very different from Bangor City's. Their 3G/4G pitches would be used as their main playing surface. Their attitude is certainly "If it's good enough for the Ukraine national side – it's good enough for us!"

The introduction of a new generation pitch could annually save up to £60,000 per club and would encourage a higher technical standard of football. At present the vast majority of clubs pay for other training facilities – but the new system could generate income to the clubs and enhance community engagement.

Here are a few examples;

TURKEY – already has a significant 3G strategy and the government has just announced that a further 350 3G pitches are to be introduced.

SWEDEN – The town of Umea is located 70 miles north of Stockholm (Population 100,000). During the past 10 years – the government has invested in 20 3G pitches. This has strengthened links between the town's football club and the local community, increased participation levels which has obvious health benefits and the project has also raised awareness of the importance of being a good citizen which has lowered crime levels in the town.

SCOTLAND – A single payment of £592,000 has been given to Scottish Third Division side Annan Athletic for a 3G playing surface. The finance for the facility includes money seized from criminals in the Scottish government's Cashback for Communities scheme.

NORTHERN IRELAND – (Population 1.5 million).

The government has recently committed £36m towards stadium development in the FAI Premier League and has a specific new generation pitch strategy. There are already 121 synthetic pitches in Northern Ireland and another 207 are planned in their government's present 5 year plan. On average these pitches are used up to 90% capacity.

Crusaders and Cliftonville play their matches in the FAI Premier League on 3G pitches.

Crusaders had to find 15% of the funding for their 4G surface and the remainder was invested by government agencies. The club is responsible for managing and maintaining the facility and is obliged to allow local schools to use the facility free of charge on a weekly basis.

Crusaders are very happy with this arrangement because it has strengthened links with the local community and has reduced ground maintenance costs significantly.

It has also meant an additional annual saving of £12,000 which was paid to other venues for training purposes.

The Crusaders generate income by allowing local community teams to play on the pitch and at the end of its 10 year life span will not require further government assistance to replace it.

Closing Comments

Simply the introduction of their new generation pitch has strengthened links between club and community and has helped make Crusaders a sustainable business.

A similar investment at WPL grounds could offer similar benefits to our National League clubs. It could transform football in our communities, offer sustainability and increase the number of players and supporters involved in Wales' most popular sport.

Diolch am eich hamser / Thank you very much for your time.

LEGISLATIVE CONSENT MEMORANDUM LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE BILL

Legislative Consent Motion

1. "In accordance with Standing Order 29.6 it is proposed that the National Assembly for Wales, agrees that provisions of the Local Government Finance Bill in so far as they fall within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales should be considered by the UK Parliament"

Background

2. The Legislative Consent Motion at paragraph 1 above has been tabled by Carl Sargeant AM, Minister for Local Government and Communities, under Standing Order 29.6 of the Standing Orders (SO) of the National Assembly for Wales (the National Assembly). This Legislative Consent Memorandum is laid under SO 29.2(iii). SO 29 prescribes that a Legislative Consent Motion must be tabled, and a Legislative Consent Memorandum laid, before the National Assembly if a UK Parliamentary Bill makes provision in relation to Wales or an amendment is tabled, for a purpose that falls within the legislative competence of the National Assembly.
3. The Local Government Finance Bill (the Bill) was introduced to Parliament on 19 December 2011. The Bill can be found here:

<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/localgovernmentfinance.html>

Summary of the Bill and its policy objectives

4. The Bill is sponsored by the Department for Communities and Local Government. It is the UK Government's aim that the Bill will reduce the deficit by delivering economic growth and decentralising control over finance.
5. The Bill will introduce a rates retention scheme, enabling local authorities in England to retain a proportion of the business rates generated in their area. This will give local authorities a strong financial incentive to promote local economic growth.
6. The Bill will also provide a framework for the localisation of support for council tax in England, which, alongside other council tax measures, will give councils increased financial autonomy and a greater stake in the economic future of their local area, while providing continuation of council tax support for the most vulnerable in society.

Provisions which require the consent of the National Assembly and policy objectives

7. Since the introduction of the Bill in December 2011, the UK Government has introduced a number of further provisions by way of Government amendments.

8. A number of amendments were tabled by the UK Government on 17 May 2012, this was at the request of the Welsh Government. These amendments proposed that the Welsh Ministers be given executive powers to require specified authorities in Wales to introduce localised council tax reduction schemes in Wales, and prescribe for the parameters within which such schemes should operate.
9. It is the view of the Welsh Government that the provisions referred to in paragraph 8 fall within the National Assembly's legislative competence as set out in Subject 12 (local government finance) of Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006.
10. Amendments tabled on 17 May also provide the Welsh Ministers with executive powers to introduce regulations which provide for powers to investigate and prosecute fraud and overpayment errors in relation to council tax.
11. It is the view of the Welsh Government that the provisions referred to in paragraph 11 also fall within the National Assembly's legislative competence as set out in Subject 12 (local government finance) of Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006.
12. Technical amendments tabled on 14 May, which update out of date cross referencing within section 141 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, correct a previous oversight in the Local Government Finance Act 2003.
13. It is the view of the Welsh Government that the provisions referred to in paragraph 12 also fall within the National Assembly's legislative competence as set out in Subject 12 (local government finance) of Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006.
14. Clauses 7 and 12 of the Bill, which amend Schedule 9 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and Schedule 2 to the Local Government Finance Act 1992, enable the Welsh Ministers, by regulations, to require authorities to publish prescribed information about council tax and non-domestic rating in a prescribed manner.
15. It is the view of the Welsh Government that the provisions referred to in paragraph 14 fall within the National Assembly's legislative competence as set out in Subject 12 (local government finance) of Part 1 of Schedule 7 to the Government of Wales Act 2006.
16. The tabled amendments may be accessed on the Parliamentary website at: <http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/localgovernmentfinance.html>
17. The amendments to existing clauses in the Bill and the new clauses will:

a) Enable the introduction of a scheme to provide support for Council Tax in Wales

The executive powers provided to the Welsh Ministers in the Bill will enable them to make regulations which will require a specified authority in Wales to

make a council tax reduction scheme. In accordance with this regulation making power, Welsh Ministers will be able to impose requirements in relation to matters which are to be included in such schemes.

The matters that can be prescribed for by the Welsh Ministers are broadly similar to those that billing authorities in England will be required to include in their schemes under the provisions of the Bill.

The regulations that Welsh Ministers may make, may:

- Require a person or body specified in the regulations ('specified authorities') to introduce a council tax reduction scheme that specifies the reductions which are to apply to the amounts of council tax payable, along with the dwellings and the persons to which the scheme applies;
- Impose requirements on the person or body making the scheme regarding particular matters that must be included in the scheme; and
- Make other provisions in relation to council tax reduction schemes.

The detailed provisions that can be included within the regulations that may be introduced include:

- The application of schemes:
 - the regulations are to prescribe the dwellings that a scheme must apply to; and
 - the date by which a scheme must be made, and the first financial year to which it must relate.
- Persons entitled to reductions:
 - the regulations may prescribe the classes of person who are entitled to a reduction under a scheme, and/or may allow the specified authorities to determine classes of person who are to be entitled to a reduction under the scheme.
- Reductions:
 - the regulations may prescribe reductions, including the maximum and minimum reductions, to which persons in each class are to be entitled; and
 - under the regulations specified authorities may be allowed to determine such reductions, or the regulations may provide that they may not do so.
- Other matters: The regulations can;
 - prescribe for the procedure by which a person may apply for a reduction;
 - prescribe for the procedure by which a person can appeal against decisions affecting their entitlement to a reduction under a scheme;
 - prescribe for the procedure a specified authority must follow when making a scheme;
 - either require or allow functions conferred by the regulations to be jointly exercised by specified authorities;

- provide for a default scheme that will take effect if a specified authority does not make a scheme in accordance with the regulations;
 - place requirements on specified authorities regarding the review, revision or replacement of schemes;
 - enable reasonable charges to be made for supplying copies of documents relating to schemes;
 - require the specified authorities to provide Welsh Ministers with information about schemes.
- Transitional provision:
 - The regulations can include transitional provisions regarding the commencement of schemes, including treating a person who is or was in receipt of council tax benefit as having made an application for a reduction under a scheme.
 - Guidance:
 - The regulations can provide the Welsh Ministers with the power to issue guidance in relation to the operation of schemes in Wales.

b) Power to investigate and prosecute fraud

These executive powers will enable the Welsh Ministers to make regulations which introduce powers to investigate and prosecute fraud and overpayment errors which are similar to those that can currently be utilised in relation to council tax benefit fraud.

Regulations made using these powers could:

- require the provision of information;
- create offences that may be committed by a person in prescribed circumstances, including:
 - by refusing or failing, when required to do so, to provide any information or document in connection with a person's liability to pay council tax;
 - by making a false statement or representation in connection with a person's liability to pay council tax;
 - by providing, or causing or allowing to be provided, in connection with such liability, a document or information which is false;
 - by failing to notify, or causing or allowing a person to fail to notify, a matter that is relevant to such liability
- make provision for the imposition of a penalty by a billing authority on a person in prescribed circumstances.

c) Technical amendments to the Local Government Finance Act 1988

These amend references within section 141 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 to rectify an omission when previous changes to that Act were made by the Local Government Finance Act 2003.

The 2003 Act introduced amendments to the 1988 Act which allowed the police and unitary authority settlements to be prepared separately in Wales. Consequential amendments to provisions which provided the power for local authorities, through regulations, to set off payments of non domestic rate (NDR) receipts and refunds of Revenue Support Grant (RSG) against payments to them of RSG and redistributed NDR should have been made at the same time.

The amendment corrects that oversight and will ensure that the Welsh Ministers can continue to make regulations which allow for revenue settlement payments to be made to local authorities in the most efficient and common sense manner.

d) Publication of prescribed information relating to council tax and NDR by local authorities

Clauses 7 and 12 of the Bill amend Schedule 9 to the Local Government Act 1992 and Schedule 2 to the Local Government Act 1988 respectively. These amendments allow regulations to be made requiring local authorities to publish prescribed information regarding NDR and council tax in a prescribed manner, for example, on authorities' websites.

Advantages of utilising this Bill

18. It is the view of the Welsh Government that it is appropriate to deal with these provisions in this UK Bill as it represents the most appropriate and proportionate legislative vehicle to enable these provisions to apply in Wales at the earliest opportunity. These provisions will allow the Welsh Ministers to introduce appropriate legislation in accordance with Welsh priorities and concerns, prior to the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in March 2013.

Financial implications

19. The financial implications of any subsequent consultation, legislation or guidance arising from a future decision to exercise the powers to make regulations under the relevant provisions will be subject to full consideration of affordability and to a Regulatory Impact Appraisal which would include an analysis of costs and benefits.

Carl Sargeant
Welsh Minister for Local Government and Communities
May 2012

Jane Hutt AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyllid ac Arweinydd y Ty
Minister for Finance and Leader of the House



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref:

Rosemary Butler AM
Chair
Business Committee
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

29 May 2012

Dear Rosemary,

Business Committee: LCM Local Government Finance Bill

At Business Committee this morning I agreed to circulate a note with further advice on the LCM relating to Council Tax Benefit arising from the Local Government Finance Bill.

In respect of the short timescale, while it has been clear to officials for several months, following the abolition of Council Tax Benefit in the Welfare Reform Act, that Wales will need its own arrangements regarding a new scheme to provide support for Council Tax, it was not immediately clear that the UK Government would agree that the Local Government Finance Bill could be the vehicle for plugging the gap in relation to support for Council Tax in Wales. That agreement was secured and the amendments laid on 17th May. The Minister for Local Government and Communities referred to this and the need for a LCM in his statement to the Assembly on 22nd May.

The amendments to the Local Government Finance Bill will enable Welsh Ministers, by regulations, to establish the requirement for Council Tax reduction schemes to be introduced in Wales. Business Committee will be reassured that these regulations will be subject to the affirmative procedure in the Assembly and therefore will be subject to full Assembly scrutiny.

As for our LCM approach compared with the Scottish model, we hope that procedural changes can be agreed in the future, which will give us greater flexibility to use memoranda to provide information to Business Committee at an earlier stage, while

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respecting our duty of confidentiality relating to detailed negotiations between the Welsh and UK Governments. Our response to recommendation 7 of the Constitutional Affairs and Legislation Committee's report on Powers Granted to Welsh Ministers in UK Laws sets out the changes we believe could be made to Standing Order 29 to achieve this flexibility.

Bethwshe

Jane

Jane Hutt AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Cyllid ac Arweinydd y Ty
Minister for Finance and Leader of the House

By virtue of paragraph(s) ix of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted



Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/06054/12

Ann Jones AM
Chair of Communities, Equality and
Local Government Committee
Ty Hywel
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CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

16th May 2012

Thank you for your letter of 24 April regarding local authority provision of public toilet facilities. I am of course aware of the Health and Social Care Committee's report and of your Committee's interest in this issue.

You asked me for an update on several aspects of public toilet provision by local authorities, which I address in turn below. The law as it stands does not require local authorities to provide public toilets; nor does it give Ministers powers to direct them in this regard, or to issue any form of statutory guidance. The following responses to your questions should be seen within that context.

- Does the Welsh Government have any involvement in strategic level decisions relating to public toilet provision?

Like many other local services this is entirely a matter for each local authority to determine in accordance with local needs, priorities and resources. That said, we are working with local authorities to facilitate greater public access to toilets through the Public Facilities Grant Scheme (see below).

- Does the Welsh Government issue guidelines to local authorities on provision of public toilet facilities, including levels of provision?

The Welsh Government has not issued such guidelines.

- Does the Welsh Government monitor or have a role in reviewing the levels of provision, to ensure they are appropriate?

No, this is a matter for individual local authorities. However, we do monitor take up under the Public Facilities Grant Scheme very closely.

- What mechanisms are available to ensure that local authorities provide an appropriate level of access to public toilet facilities?

Local authorities are not currently under any statutory duty to provide public toilets. They are, however, best placed to assess the needs of their communities working in collaboration with other community planning partners (such as community and town councils) and businesses to ensure that appropriate provision is made.

The Welsh Government is conscious of the impact that inadequate toilet provision can have on the elderly and disabled people in particular. With this in mind, we introduced the Public Facilities Grant Scheme in April 2009. The Scheme was initially for a 3 year period, but we have extended the scheme for a further year from April 2012. It reimburses participating local authorities (to a maximum of £17,500 per authority per year) for payments of up to £500 to local businesses for allowing free public access to their toilet facilities. Since the Scheme's inception, £295,522 has been reimbursed to local authorities, who have until 31 January 2013 to submit claims for 2012-13. The toilet facilities provided must have acceptable standards of safety, hygiene, accessibility for disabled people and provision for both sexes.

There are currently 286 businesses in Wales participating in this scheme. We continue to encourage take up of this funding and hope to see further expansion of the scheme during this financial year.



Carl Sargeant AC / AM

Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities

- Has the requirement for domestic and UEFA licences contributed in any way to improving the infrastructure of WPL clubs, and if so, how?/ A yw'r gofyniad i gael trwydded ddomestig a thrwydded UEFA wedi cyfrannu mewn unrhyw ffordd at wella seilwaith clybiau Uwch Gynghrair Cymru ac os felly, sut?

Yes it has improved the infrastructure of all clubs, as now the ground and facilities have to be up to an acceptable standard to be able to join or continue in the WPL, however, it is an area that needs improving as it seems that this needs to be consistent to all clubs, even if they are established in the WPL. The domestic licence is harder to achieve than the UEFA licence as clubs can nominate other grounds to play their UEFA matches on; these grounds should be WPL grounds that are made available to other WPL clubs at minimal cost; as in the past clubs in the competitions have had to pay substantial sums to non-WPL clubs to use their grounds. The domestic licence in my opinion should cover financial turnover and profit and loss, as has been proved this season with 1 club, a club running by the financial influence of 1 person, is not healthy for the league, clubs should therefore be able to demonstrate their ability to not run at a loss, based on merchandise, sponsorship and attendances; which would mean that player's would not be able to dictate the money they are currently demanding for playing.

- Do you have any views on the FAW Strategic Plan, published in January 2012, and the way in which it relates to the WPL?/ A oes gennych farn ynghylch Cynllun Strategol Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru, a gyhoeddwyd ym mis Ionawr 2012, a sut y mae'n berthnasol i Uwch Gynghrair Cymru?

The strategic plan is good for the game in Wales as it shows involvement from grass root level up to the National Team, the success of the plan can only be measured in years to come with the success of the National Team and Domestic Teams in European Competition. I am of the opinion that in order for the Plan to work that the FAW needs to be stream lined, as to have 37 councillors; most of whom have no interest in the WPL or in Grass Roots Football will hinder rather than help the plan become meaningful.

- You say that the Welsh Government should 'do its bit in supporting our Premier League'. What would be the most effective form of support it could provide and what would you wish to see the Government doing in this respect?/ Yr ydych yn dweud y dylai Llywodraeth Cymru wneud ei rhan drwy gefnogi ein Huwch Gynghrair. Beth fyddai'r gefnogaeth fwyaf effeithiol y gallai ei chynnig a beth yr hoffech weld y Llywodraeth yn ei wneud yn hyn o beth?

The Welsh Government should be supporting the WPL by assisting clubs to fund ground improvement projects, this will allow clubs to be the

focus point of the community, leading to access to football facilities for Disabled and Women's teams. The innovation in 3G facilities as an addition to the grass pitches, which should not be replaced as the main pitch in the WPL, would be a great investment by the Welsh Government; this would mean that every club in the WPL would have access to their own 3G facility, even if it is not on the actual grounds of the club, it could be built within the town/city of the club and would be up to the club to run and manage the facility. In addition to this as the day to day running and administration of the clubs is ever increasing; the Welsh Government could assist by assisting the FAW with innovative ideas on how clubs would be able to fund administrative roles.

- Can you expand on your comments that the Welsh Government should support Wales's independent position within FIFA? What specific actions should it be taking in this regard and what role does the WPL have to play in safeguarding this status?/ A allwch ymhelaethu ar eich sylwadau y dylai Llywodraeth Cymru gefnogi safle annibynnol Cymru yn FIFA? Pa gamau penodol y dylai fod yn eu cymryd yn hyn o beth a beth yw swyddogaeth Uwch Gynghrair Cymru o ran diogelu'r statws hwn?

Wales is an independent country and the Welsh Government should be proud of this independence, especially now that Wales has its own government. Unfortunately due to the fact that the Welsh Premier League only has 1 full time club, the league has very little chance of providing player's into the National Team; therefore, it has a very small role to play in safeguarding this status.

- What are your views on the work the FAW and WPL is undertaking with respect to tackling racism and homophobia in football and in reaching out to more diverse footballing communities (such as women, BME people and LGB people)?/ Beth yw eich barn am y gwaith y mae Cymdeithas Bêl-droed Cymru ac Uwch Gynghrair Cymru yn ei wneud i fynd i'r afael â hiliaeth a homoffobia yn y byd pêl-droed ac i gyrraedd cymunedau pêl-droed mwy amrywiol (megis menywod, pobl dduon a lleiafrifoedd ethnig a phobl lesbiaid, hoyw a deurywiol)?

The Welsh Football Trust and certain employees of the FAW are doing some great work in tackling the above issues; yet as mentioned previously; the 37 councillors show little interest in any of the above. All clubs in the WPL run a two week initiative on 'Show Racism the Red Card' along with an annual event in the community; yet this is run by 'The Show Racism the Red Card'; again this is supported by the FAW employees, yet no councillors or FAW staff attend any of the matches or event to support the clubs. The FAW councillors once elected should be mandated that

part of their responsibility is to support all forms of events that are encouraged by the FAW and WPL.