



12th April 2017

Chris Matheson MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Chris,

Thank you for your letter dated 5th April 2017 to Greg Clarke regarding a discussion that you have had with your constituent, Mr John Eccles, about the ownership of Blackpool Football Club. The Chairman has asked me to respond on his behalf.

I know that Blackpool supporters have been unhappy with the owners of the club for some time but, as you acknowledge in your letter, there is very limited scope for The FA to intervene in such matters. If the club had broken FA rules and regulations, The FA would of course intervene as we did in 2015 when Blackpool FC's owner, Karl Oyston, was sanctioned after sending abusive text messages to a supporter with reference to disability. However, again as you have noted in your letter, Blackpool FC is a privately owned business and The FA does not have the power to intervene in the management of the club unless there is a breach of FA rules and regulations.

As you know the football authorities administer an Owners' and Directors' Test (ODT) which applies to all clubs in the Premier League, EFL and the four leagues below. For clubs in the EFL, the ODT is the responsibility of the League rather than The FA. Those holding positions of responsibility at clubs are required to meet obligations placed on them under law, and in fact the tests do require standards over and above the law in order to better protect clubs and the reputation and image of the game. However it is not possible to add a subjective test about an individual's suitability to be involved specifically in football.

I know that the EFL continues to monitor the situation and remains engaged with both Blackpool Football Club and Blackpool fans in order to try to improve relations between the two parties.

Yours sincerely,

James MacDougall
Head of Public Affairs