



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

### **Response to FA Governance Reform (9th February Debate) – February 2017**

Thank you for contacting me about the governance of the Football Association (FA).

I understand your strong feelings on this subject and welcome the Government's desire for reform. The Government published its Code of Governance for Sport in October last year, to help ensure that all sports governing bodies are creating the most effective environment for their sports to thrive. Bodies, including the FA, that fail to comply with the Code will not be eligible to receive public funding after the Code comes into force in April.

Public money helps the FA deliver important initiatives on the ground, but it should come with conditions. Non-compliance with the Code would result in the loss of its £30-40m of public funding to the FA. Sport England and UK Sport are currently in the process of working with football's relevant governing bodies on reforms needed to ensure compliance.

At the grassroots level, the FA has been slow to evolve in line with people's playing habits and lifestyles; and for too long the FA failed to realise the true potential of women's and girl's football. By the end of March, the FA should have in place an action plan agreed with Sport England setting out what steps it is taking to become compliant with the code.

I do think we need to be careful that we do not tarnish the growth and success of English football because of concerns about governance at the FA. However, I am encouraged by the Sports Minister's reassurances that if legislation is something that has to be considered in the longer term, then that is something the Government will do. Although, I hope that threatening to cut public funding will drive the FA to act before that step becomes necessary.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP