

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League

Response from Anthony Delaney

1. What support, financial or otherwise, have you had from your National Government or Local Government in developing your club?

The national association would receive grants from the Government which would filter down to the clubs. There would also be Sports Capital Grants available which the clubs would apply for. These would generally be infrastructural in nature. Some of the local councils have developed stadia where the league clubs would play also.

2. What are the advantages, in your view, that come from having 3G/4G pitches? Can you give us some information on how this has benefitted your club? Are there any disadvantages? If so, what are they?

My personal view on artificial surfaces is that I would be a football traditionalist and I do not like them. There is one premier league club over here that uses one competitively and I find that it is a poor alternative to grass. I do see the benefits in using them though as there is less likelihood in games being abandoned. They can also be of benefit in relation to being able to train on them and not having to worry about pitch quality, and also the opportunity to rent them out. There is obviously the cost in maintaining them, and the hours for which they can be used. We have looked in to it in the past, but the cost is restrictive at the moment, and also feedback from supporters, players and the manager is that grass is preferred.

3. What is your view on summer football (the WPL plays during the Winter)? What are the advantages/disadvantages?

As you may know, our league takes place from March until the beginning of November. I find that due to playing in the summer months, it is easier to maintain pitches and they also suffer less damage from hosting games as the weather is generally better. I feel that this is one of the main reasons why we only have one artificial pitch in the league. Playing during the summer months means that we as a league are not in direct competition with most European football, and I feel that that contributes towards attendance figures. Better weather also helps. I feel it also gives us an advantage when it comes to UEFA competitions because the qualifying rounds take place in July/August and

we are in mid season, where as the majority of our opposition are in pre season. I suppose the negative side of playing summer football is that you may clash with World Cups, European Championships and Olympics and it is also a time when people go on holidays.