

Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee

Inquiry into the Welsh Premier League

Response from Matthew Davies

I am a very keen Football fan and have always been very interested in the Welsh National Teams and Domestic Leagues for a very long time. I noticed the enquiry that has just been raised in regards to the future of the League and I felt as though I needed to express my opinion as it is quite an important aspect to my sporting life and I always enjoy the League.

I know this is much easier said than done and pretty obvious although there really does need to be a really big investment in many aspects of the sport. There are so many kids out there that play football in Wales but never get the support and the right enthusiasm in some of the effected areas in Wales (using Aberdare as an example). There are a lot of great, small local clubs around although there is no end target or goal for them as players apart from playing for Man Utd or Liverpool. I'm not saying that Welsh Premier and Football league Clubs can compete with the likes of Man Utd although these kids have no idea these clubs exist and therefore playing in the Welsh Premier has not entered their mind.

I feel that it boils down to 2 factors:

1. Development Academies located in regions (More 5 a side/7 a side centres, encouraging more kids to play, FAW trained coaches doing regular sessions, Giving the kids the dream of playing in the Welsh Premier League).
2. A Major Marketing Strategy (Giving Clubs the chance to Re Brand their clubs to gain more exposure)

I spent a couple of hours last night looking at the Web presence of our Football Clubs and the Clubs in England and overall I feel it is an embarrassment. Some clubs have good websites and some Clubs don't even have a website which I think is terrible. The Media is so important now and I think our coverage on the Internet is awful. If I was a business who was approached for sponsorship, the first thing I would do is check out their website and in conclusion I really would not have invested in hardly any of them. There is a sense of an old fashion mentality at a lot of Clubs and they are afraid to let us "youngsters" get our hands dirty. The League has no Facebook Page which I think is disgusting in the modern world of Media. I think the future of a lot of clubs are in danger because the Next Generation of Fans and Club members are not being reached. If their local Club can communicate with them by the use of Social Networking etc then over the

years there will be better crowds and a following. I hope we don't leave it too late!

I'm aware it is not going to happen overnight and I know that getting any investment is hard at the moment. If I was a multi-millionaire then my local Club of Aberaman Athletic would be an incredible force on and off the pitch through the use of local young talent. It just needs some enthusiasm and ambition for these kids to get involved, they are our future!

I hope that this has been helpful and I am very happy to help Welsh Football any way. I look forward to hearing what issues have been brought up and how we can help.

Many Regards
Matthew Davies