**Supporter Ownership and Engagement Expert Working Group**

**Introduction**

The coalition government’s *Programme for Government* made a specific promise to ‘…encourage the reform of football governance rules to support the co-operative ownership of football clubs by supporters’.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Select Committee Football Governance Inquiry (2011) and subsequent reports have recommended that there was a need to set up an expert working group to explore the barriers to increased supporter ownership and provide solutions.

With the backing from Helen Grant MP, the Minister for Sport & Tourism, the Expert Working Group was launched on 21October 2014. The Group will build on and develop the earlier work carried out by the Select Committee. The Expert Working Group will develop practical approaches to the barriers to supporter ownership and engagement.

**Terms of reference**

**Aim of the Group**

The Supporter Ownership Expert Working Group’s aim will be to identify solutions to current barriers preventing greater collective supporter share ownership of football clubs and explore the greater facilitation of supporter engagement and involvement in the governance and running of football clubs

**The Group should:-**

* Identify current legal, financial, tax and insolvency barriers preventing greater collective supporter share ownership of football clubs;
* Consider ways in which greater levels of collective supporter shareholdings can be obtained in light of current legislation and football rules;
* Identify ways in which supporter groups can build capacity to be in a position to gain greater levels of shareholding in football clubs;
* Explore the greater facilitation of supporter engagement and outline models by which fans and clubs can successfully be involved in the governance and running of football clubs
* Ensure that measures suggested by the expert working group do not adversely impact on the sporting integrity of league competition and
* Report to DCMS and other relevant departments on what steps can and should be taken, and how to implement them (including the content of any legislation).

**Method of Working**

**Membership**

Core Membership of the Group will comprise representatives from:

* Supporters Direct
* Football Supporters Federation
* the Football Association
* the Premier League
* the Football League
* The Football Conference
* Department for Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS)

Attending the group’s meetings as expert witnesses will be trusts from:

* Portsmouth FC
* AFC Wimbledon
* Wrexham FC
* Swansea City AFC
* Any other clubs/trusts as appropriate

Along with DCMS, the following Government Departments will be advised of the groups programme of activity, and attend or contribute expertise as appropriate:

* HM Treasury
* Business, Innovation & Skills / Insolvency

There may be occasions when the subject matter under discussion could benefit from input from other specialist representatives. When such occasions arise the Group may agree additional representation including from additional Clubs and Supporter Groups / Expert organisations

**Chairperson**

The Group will be chaired by Joanna Manning-Cooper.

**Timescale**

The first meeting will take place in November 2014.