



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

14<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Dear Conifer,*

**RE: NEWCASTLE UNITED FOOTBALL CLUB.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Newcastle United and the Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia; your comments upon which I have read with great interest and as an avid fan, I completely understand your concerns.

It is my understanding that a proposed takeover bid for Newcastle United FC involving Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund has been withdrawn.

Like you, I am a huge sports fan, and I shall continue to watch closely any future developments. I appreciate that many Newcastle fans – and there are many in my constituency – were hoping this takeover bid would go ahead and can understand their sense of disappointment.

However, this was entirely a matter for the parties concerned, with no involvement from Government. Ministers did not hold any discussions with national governing bodies, or sports rights holders, on the potential sale of Newcastle United FC. Any sale is a matter for the interested parties, and for the Premier League to assess under its 'Owners' and Directors' Test'.

I have seen the recent email sent to Newcastle fans from the Independent Football Ombudsman and agree with their conclusion that the Premier League should make a statement on this case. I am pleased that the Ombudsman has committed to advising the Premier League to provide a statement. There must be clarity on why there was a significant delay in a decision being made, and on the reasons why the consortium decided to withdraw their bid.

I would like to assure you that Saudi Arabia remains a human rights priority country for the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, particularly because of its use of the death penalty and restrictions on women's rights, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion or belief. It is right that the UK Government continues to raise its concerns with the Saudi Arabian authorities using a range of Ministerial and diplomatic channels of communication, including through its Ambassador and the Embassy team in Riyadh. The Foreign Secretary raised the UK's concerns with Saudi Arabia during his visit in March this year.



On the specific issue you raise, I wanted to let you know that I have written directly to Richard Masters, the Chief Executive of the Premier League, as per your request, passing on the concerns of all those constituents who have contacted me about this important issue. I will of course let you have sight of any response that I receive.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*  
*Tom*

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**