

Fan Advisory Board Q&A



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED...

Everton's Fan Advisory Board held in-person and online engagement sessions with Evertonians in January with the aim of sourcing questions that could be put to the Everton Board of Directors.

In the interests of openness, transparency and dialogue the Everton Board committed to answering the fan questions.

The questions were submitted to the Club by the Fan Advisory Board in January.

Everton arranged for the Chair of the Fan Advisory Board to interview Mr Moshiri so the majority shareholder could answer directly the fan questions most pertinent to him.

[>>>Click here to watch the interview>>>](#)

The Club has also remained committed to answering the remaining questions as thoroughly as possible without breaching commercial sensitivities. The Board of Directors were determined to give the questions the respect they deserved and ensured they were answered by Board members with input from members of the Everton Leadership Team (C-Suite) and Senior Leadership Team.

A very small number of questions did not receive an answer. In some cases, this was due to a need to avoid commercially, or competitively sensitive information being made public. For other questions, this was because it was felt the answer had been provided in response to another question.

To help with the collation of questions, they have been broken down into categories.

EFC's Strategic Vision and Objectives

Why wasn't there any external involvement in the Strategic Review of Football?

The review was conducted with input from multiple departments within the Club. It included extensive benchmarking and an analytical review of best practice from across football and the wider sporting sector. Senior Club representatives also utilised qualitative input from industry experts. A clear action of the review was to appoint a Director of Football with experience from the Premier League and proven success in wider footballing projects. Supported by the Board, Director of Football Kevin Thelwell is delivering and shaping the key objectives of the review.

Why has the football strategy not been shared?

The finer details of the football strategy can't be shared publicly due to competitive sensitivities. The Fan Advisory Board had a presentation from the Director of Football on the overarching strategy in October and, in the near future, Kevin Thelwell will take part in content on Club channels providing further insight on our wider football plan. He will also be in attendance to present in greater detail aspects of the review at the next scheduled FAB meeting.

Although the full plan has not been shared, many of the outputs of the review have been communicated throughout the year in our CEO's matchday programme column, which is also posted online.

It is important to note the outputs of the review stretch beyond the affairs of the Men's Senior squad – and cover all areas of our footballing operations at Finch Farm.

There have been evident, tangible and visible outputs of the findings of the review being implemented, which included, as a key first step, the employment of a Director of Football. There have also been widespread further changes across the Club's football operations at all levels – including recruitment staff, Academy and players. These changes have led to 26 new staff members being appointed across football departments at Finch Farm with 12 staff moving to new posts as part of the implementation of the review, allowing the best talent to progress and grow.

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The Director of Football has outlined and is managing a detailed plan for football to support the strategy which is prioritised based on short, medium and long-term actions and objectives. This plan covers the entire football operations spectrum at Everton and not just the Men's Senior squad.

Why was the business side of the Club exempt from the strategic review?

The business operations of the Club are reviewed on a regular basis. The strategic review you refer to was a comprehensive analysis specific to the football operations of the Club. It was clearly focused on the need to improve and enhance football operations at all levels, ensuring a more aligned and defined way of working across recruitment, coaching, performance analysis and Academy development. The aim of this more aligned football operation is to create the best possible pathway for development of players at every level, driven by collaborative structures, the highest level of professional expertise and decisions guided by data-driven insight.

In terms of the rest of the business we have a clear overarching vision, which is to re-establish Everton amongst football's elite.

However, in order to achieve this, the Club aims to co-ordinate efforts across several short- and medium-term goals covering key strategic areas:

- Footballing identity – Develop an identity that allows the Club to improve and progress on the field.
- Commercial growth – Further expand the commercial growth achieved over the past decade. Maximise opportunities offered by Everton Stadium and the Goodison Legacy Project.
- Placing supporters at the heart of our planning – The Club is regarded as having robust and advanced Fan Engagement channels that mirror 'best practice' recommendations identified as part of the independent Fan-Led Review. The Club will further utilise the authentic channels of communication with fan groups, integrating the voice of supporters to inform strategic decision-making.
- Best professional services – Develop the best possible professional services with the highest levels of expertise to support the Club's pursuit of financial excellence and on-field success.
- World-class facilities – Creating environments where Club staff, supporters and the community can grow, thrive and be part of a successful Everton family.

Our strategy is underpinned by the culture of the Club, characterised by the core values of Ambition, Authenticity, Determination and Family and the behaviours defined in line with those values.

We were making inroads in Africa, where there is a market of 150 million. Since Covid and the end of the SportPesa sponsorship, it all seems to have been left and we have missed opportunities, which other premier league teams have taken up. What is the strategy for Africa?

The Club continues to make inroads in Africa and has not abandoned activity or engagement on the continent.

As part of our International Strategy we have looked at the audience growth and revenue generation potential of all territories.

That research has shaped a plan that aims to maximise the Club's global audience growth opportunities as well as commercial revenue pathways – through partnerships, marketing activations and our affiliate programmes.

This research has led to much of our effort being focused on the US – where we have started to see benefits from our approach – but this does not mean there are no plans for Africa.

We recently announced that Ghanaian club Ridge City, based in Accra, will become our first African and all-women's football club to join our International Academy Affiliate Programme (EIAAP). This

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agreement, covered by BBC Africa and BBC World Service, gives us the opportunity of engaging in a new territory to new audiences while also helping the growth of the women's game in Ghana. We have also confirmed in the last week an Everton International Soccer Schools programme in South Africa that will launch in April and accommodate thousands of youngsters. It will be the first of our Soccer Schools programmes to be delivered on the continent, and will be based in Cape Town catering for young people aged six to 15.

We are confident additional EIAAP and Soccer School agreements will be announced in Africa in the coming months.

Is there a back-up plan, in the event we get relegated?

The Club plans for all scenarios based on all potential Premier League final positions, given the significant financial implications league placings have.

EFC's Plan for Broader Supporter Engagement

Will key people within the Board/Club agree to be interviewed by independent journalists?

Members of the Club's Board have previously been interviewed by journalists, and Board members will no doubt be interviewed by journalists in the future.

There is also regular and direct communication from the Club to fans, including in home matchday programmes, through direct email communication and via posts on the official Club website.

Why doesn't the Fan Advisory Board meet with the full EFC Board of Directors?

The Fan Advisory Board (FAB) meet with at least one Board Director and members of Everton's Leadership and Senior Management teams each quarter. Depending on the agenda, there will be occasions where two if not three Board members could be in attendance.

Is the Club using the FAB as a point-scoring exercise?

Not at all. The FAB is a very important part of the Club's engagement with supporters.

The purpose of the FAB is to focus on in-depth consultation with the Club's hierarchy – Board Members, Executives and Senior managers.

Everton's CEO asked supporters' groups to devise what fan engagement with the Club's hierarchy could look like. Supporter and stakeholder groups from across the fanbase came together to not only devise the FAB but also structure the selection / election process.

The FAB is not chaired by the Club but by a supporter elected by fellow members.

Everton's FAB is widely regarded as the only supporter-devised and created FAB in the country.

Will the Club reinstate General Meetings?

While the Club has no plans to reinstate General Meetings, we are fully committed to engagement and collaboration with shareholders and fans.

The Club has closely monitored the findings of the Government's Fan-Led Review which identified 10 strategic and 47 detailed recommendations for football. The Club is confident it will be able to implement all the club-facing recommendations, with many of them already in place at Everton.

As part of that commitment, the Club's Fan Engagement team is continuing with plans to give all supporters a stronger voice in the Club through structured dialogue with a diverse range of supporter groups including the Fan Advisory Board (FAB).

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Through the FAB, the Club will receive input and feedback from supporters as well as take in suggestions, ideas and be made aware of opportunities from the global fanbase. The FAB will be able to challenge the Club's most senior representatives in an appropriate manner.

Alongside the FAB, ongoing liaison with fan and stakeholder groups will continue including the Everton Shareholders' Association. Each supporter and stakeholder group has structured dialogue with the Club at the most appropriate level, be that with the Board Members, the Fan Engagement Team or at a more operational level.

The groups with structured dialogue represent more than 100,000 supporters around the world and includes the Everton Fans' Forum, the Everton Heritage Society, the Supporters' Club Committees in the UK, The Americas, EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) and Asia-Pacific, the Junior Fans' Forum, the Everton Disabled Supporters' Association as well as the Everton Shareholders' Association.

In addition to the tangible and regular direct dialogue with fan groups, the delivery of a multi-tiered series of engagement events aimed at delivering experiences tailored for supporters of all ages – and locations – is part of the Club's ongoing engagement planning.

The FAB are modelling what honest engagement looks like right now. Why don't EFC do meetings like this?

The FAB engaged with the Club's Fan Engagement Team in advance of the meetings taking place. The Club was fully supportive of the meetings and the crucial role the FAB can play in gathering the views of supporters. The Club provided a venue to the FAB to deliver face-to-face sessions and the Board also confirmed it would answer the questions raised by supporters. Indeed, the Club actively endorses and encourages constructive and structured feedback via a transparent and fan selected/elected group. The Club also hosts dozens of meetings with fan groups and fan committees throughout the year as part of activity delivered by the Fan Engagement Team.

What is the Club's communications strategy, apart from surveys that ask about food and parking?

Everton is committed to engaging and communicating with fans, both through fan groups and broader communication via official Club channels, directly by email and indirectly through media and fan media. As the results of the independent Premier League Fan Survey of supporters from all 20 clubs each season reflect, Everton's communication and engagement with supporters compares favourably with other Premier League clubs.

The Club will always try to engage and seek the feedback and thoughts of supporters on key fan-related matters at the appropriate time through many of the fan groups we have structured dialogue with.

Board members will communicate on strategic matters with the Fan Advisory Board, giving an insight into the decision-making and clear governance structures, as well as the future direction of Everton. This will be communicated to supporters appropriately by both the Club and FAB.

The Club's Engagement and Insight teams will continue to engage supporters and key fan stakeholder groups on the direction and future of our new stadium. Supporter input has positively impacted the design process and each key stage of the project to date – and that will not change as we move forward. Fan feedback will help shape the matchday experience and migration process from Goodison Park to Everton Stadium.

What are the Club's Engagement Team doing to connect with fans?

The Club's Fan Engagement Team is highly regarded across the Premier League and the Club was recently recognised for our work ahead of other clubs in our league via the independent Fan Engagement Index, where we ranked joint best in the Premier League alongside Brentford for Fan Engagement. The work of the Fan Engagement Team continues seven days a week, liaising directly with fan groups and committees – and supporting the delivery of matchday experiences and activity

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both in terms of individual fans and groups of supporters, such as those involved in matchday atmosphere.

The Fan Engagement Team worked closely with supporter groups helping set-up what has become the first self-governed and fan elected FAB in the country.

Through the FAB, the Club will receive input and feedback from supporters as well as take in suggestions, ideas and be made aware of opportunities from the global fanbase. The FAB will be able to challenge the Club's most senior representatives in an appropriate manner.

Alongside the FAB, the Fan Engagement team have been continuing their ongoing liaison with fan and stakeholder groups. Each group has structured dialogue with the Club at the most appropriate level, be that with the Board Members, the Fan Engagement Team or at a more operational level.

The groups with structured dialogue represent more than 100,000 supporters around the world and includes the Everton Fans' Forum, the Everton Heritage Society, the Supporters' Club Committees in the UK, The Americas, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia-Pacific, the Junior Fans' Forum, the Everton Disabled Supporters' Association, Everton Women's Supporters Club as well as the Everton Shareholders' Association.

The Fan Engagement Team manage the day-to-day relationship with over 141 Supporters' Clubs around the world and the activation of affiliation benefits. The team also have regular contact with over 72 School Supporters' Clubs which is a key focus for Junior Fan Engagement development.

In addition to the tangible and regular direct dialogue with fan groups, a key area of focus for the Fan Engagement team is the delivery of pro-active and reactive events and experiences tailored for supporters of all ages – both on matchdays and non-matchdays at Goodison and Walton Hall Park.

From facilitating insight driven fan campaigns, school visits, co-ordinating special days at Finch Farm for terminally ill supporters to overseeing the Club's charities function and creating once-in-a-lifetime experiences for Blues.

Can the Club assure the fans that, following the strategic review, they will bring in further help to improve communications?

The Strategic Review was focused on football operations. In terms of communication, the Club is constantly reviewing methods and channels of communication and is always seeking to improve engagement through the analysis of a variety of metrics managed by the Club's Insight and Data teams. We also utilise external support and guidance if needed to further enhance those communication activities.

Would the Club be prepared to initiate quarterly video updates from EFC Board members, to put on the website?

Thank you for this suggestion. We will always look at new and different ways of how the Club's hierarchy communicates with fans. This is something we can look to introduce in the future.

Will the board authorise having a fan at press conferences, who is able to ask a question?

As I am sure you will appreciate, this isn't within the Board's gift. Press conferences are governed by rules put in place by the Premier League and can only be accessed by accredited media.

What can you do to offer more communication for overseas fans?

Through the Supporters' Club Committee, the Fan Engagement team communicates directly with international fans.

The initiative was designed to help bring international Supporters' Clubs closer to Everton with meetings set on a quarterly basis in their geographically based groupings.

Representatives of supporters' clubs meet in four groups – UK, EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), The Americas and Asia-Pacific.

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Meetings focus on matters relevant to their members and their locality and include everything from ticketing and retail through to promoting supporters' club matchday gatherings and international memberships.

International fans also have access to the Club's website and social media channels as a way of staying close to the activities taking place at Finch Farm, Goodison Park, Walton Hall Park and across the Everton in the Community campus. In addition, there are dedicated social media platforms in key global territories and in multiple languages.

Stadium Relocation and the Goodison Legacy Project

Is the new EFC stadium owned by EFC or a holding company?

The new Everton Stadium is owned by 'Everton Stadium Development Ltd' which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Everton Football Club.

Is Bramley-Moore Dock financially separated from the Club's finances?

Everton Stadium Development Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of Everton Football Club. The company sits within the Everton group of companies. Moving forward the Club is putting place a 'StadCo' structure which is commonly seen in stadium financing.

How has the cost of the new stadium risen by 50%?

The cost of the new stadium has not risen by 50%. The construction costs of the stadium have not changed. In April 2022, the Club signed an agreement with Laing O'Rourke that provided cost certainty on the stadium.

Following a recent interview with Mr Moshiri on TalkSport a figure was referenced which considered the costs not just associated with the build of the stadium but also the planning and preparatory stages of the project, financing, ancillary and potential developments in the local area. As per the budget the Club has in place for the project, there has been no change in the costs of constructing the stadium.

Finance and Revenue Generation

Why doesn't the Club have any money to spend?

The Club does have money to spend but must work within the financial parameters set by the Premier League and UEFA.

Over the last seven years, the Club has undergone a period of transition and significant investment both on and off the pitch. In line with other clubs who have benefited from such investment, the early stage of that investment does not usually generate immediate financial returns, which is reflected in the losses reported within annual accounts.

Is the Club under-funded? Has the club considered funding streams that include fans, such as Arsenal's debenture scheme?

Mr Moshiri's investment and commitment to Everton has ensured the Club is not underfunded. There are currently no plans to issue a debenture scheme.

Is there any truth in the rumour that the club has been placed in special measures by the Premier League?

The football club is not under any special measures but has always continued to work closely and transparently with the Premier League, as is the norm for all Premier League clubs.

Are the Board going to come out and be open and honest about our finances?

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The Club is very transparent about its finances. Each year the Club publishes its annual report and statement of accounts.

These annual reports go beyond statutory requirements, incorporating detailed reports from members of the Board and further in-depth details of the Club's running. In addition, regular communications throughout the year from the CEO and other key Club personnel have included updates and further insight into key commercial activity.

To view Everton's annual reports and statements accounts dating back to 2003 please [click here](#)

Where is the money coming from to keep the Club afloat? Is it only from the owner, or are there other investors? Does Mr Usmanov have any financial interest in EFC?

The Club's accounts clearly demonstrate the structure of the Club's finances, with revenue generated as part of matchday incomes, commercial partnerships and broadcast media rights.

The Club's debt level compares very favourably with other clubs in the Premier League.

Mr Usmanov does not have any financial interest in Everton.

Will the Club enhance revenues by taking catering/retail 'in house'?

The Club currently has good commercial contracts in place for both catering and retail provision.

There are no plans to bring either of these in-house. The Club is currently exploring the most various models for catering services as part of the stadium development package procurement process. Our decision making will be supported by feedback from fans as part of ongoing surveys.

EFC Board

Who runs EFC (Chairman or Owner)?

Everton is not run by one single individual. Both Mr Moshiri and Mr Kenwright deliver in their respective roles as majority shareholder and Chairman at the Club. The operational decision-making process of the football club is handled by the Club's C-Suite Executive Leadership Team (ELT), with ratification and sign-off on key decisions provided by the Board of Directors.

What is the point of having a Board, if Farhad Moshiri makes all the decisions?

It is an incorrect assertion that all the decisions at the football club are made by the majority shareholder. The Club's Board ensure the business is appropriately managed, providing the support and supervision to the Club's C-Suite Executive Leadership Team (ELT). The ELT leads the strategic decision-making of the Club's core operational activity.

Why won't the Chairman relinquish the Club?

The Chairman is not the Majority Shareholder of the football club.

What is each Board member responsible for?

The Board has a balance of expertise and utilises that expertise to inform the process of ratifying recommendations and proposals presented by the Club's C-Suite Executive Leadership Team.

Everton has the longest serving Chairman in the Premier League. As well as chairing the Board, which ratifies and signs-off on key decisions made by the C-Suite Executive Leadership Team, Mr Kenwright supports the Director of Football and the Club's football department in negotiating transfers for players both coming in to and out of the Club.

The Club's CEO is a respected figure across sport and business that has occupied senior positions at Everton for more than a decade. In her role as CEO, Denise initiates, develops, implements – in conjunction with Club's C-Suite Executive Leadership Team – strategies and processes which aim to

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achieve sustainable commercial success for the Club. This includes leading Everton's Executive team in delivering the new stadium project.

Grant Ingles has occupied senior roles within other clubs domestically and internationally. As Chief Finance and Strategy Officer, Grant is responsible for all financial aspects of the Club, including the regular communication of financial performance to the Board, driving the profitability of the Club, overseeing all banking and funding arrangements, managing the Club's cashflow position, supporting and maintaining governance structures that ensure the financial assets of the Club are protected and ensuring that the Club complies with all statutory regulations.

More recently Grant has been working with the majority shareholder and CEO on delivering the financial business plan for Everton's move to a new stadium.

With more than 40-years of expertise at Everton as a player, engagement officer, ambassador and now Non-Executive Director, Graeme Sharp provides input into the Club's football strategy as well as challenges to the Board and Executives on matters. Graeme is the Nominated Board Liaison Official and attends Everton's Fan Advisory Board meetings.

More information on the responsibilities of each Board member can be found on the [Everton website](#).

Are the Board numbers set so low to prevent a high turnover?

The minimum number of Board members in terms of the Club's Articles of Association is three.

However, the Club always encourages and welcomes new voices and perspectives – and is always keen to ensure there is an appropriate blend of expertise. This is reflected by the fact there have been nine changes to the make-up of the Board of Directors in the last six years.

What was the process that led to Denise Barrett-Baxendale being a director on a Premier League Board of Directors?

Denise Barrett-Baxendale was appointed to the Board of Everton in June 2018.

As CEO of the football club, she represents the Club at Premier League Board meetings.

Invited to the Board by Mr Moshiri and Mr Kenwright, Denise has played a leading role in driving some of the Club's most important projects, including restructuring the organisation, relocating the Club to its Royal Liver Building HQ and progressing the development of the Club's new stadium during an unprecedented period of global economic uncertainty.

Denise is widely respected across football, sport and business. She is the recipient of an MBE as well as several prestigious business awards, reflecting both the level of respect from her peers and her acumen as an experienced leader.

What was the process that led to Graeme Sharp being given a non-executive director role on the Board of Directors?

Graeme Sharp was invited on to the Board of Directors in January 2022.

In his role as a non-executive director, Graeme brings a unique skillset which combines a wealth of knowledge of the game with his deep understanding of Everton. He provides valuable challenge and support for the Board and football departments in relation to footballing operations and performance.

The Board of Directors seem to have members fulfilling multiple roles and they are spreading themselves too thinly. Are the Club considering bringing others in, to share the load and allow skilled people to dedicate themselves to their specialist areas?

As the majority shareholder confirmed in his interview with the Chair of the Fan Advisory Board, the appointment of additional board members is something that would not be ruled out if it was felt an additional skillset would benefit the Board.

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What would the Club do if a Board member's health prevented them from being effective in their role?

Should this scenario ever happen then the appropriate steps will be taken in line with company law.

Our board are said to be the 2nd highest paid in the Premier League, so why is the club so badly run?

This isn't an accurate reflection of the situation. Boards across the Premier League are made up very differently. Some have more directors employed than others, while others may have non-executives on the Board. Therefore, it is impossible to have or make a direct comparison. The figures, taken from Everton's 2019/20 accounts to arrive at this hypothesis, include the wages paid to the Club's previous Director of Football. For most other clubs in the comparison cited, the role of Director of Football did not also include a position as a Board member, and so was not incorporated as part of board remuneration.

It must also be known that this accounting period included the monies owed to Directors, senior club staff and players following their deferment of wages during the immediate financial impact of the Covid pandemic in 2020. This show of unity in deferring wages enabled the Club to maintain salaries of all Everton and Everton in the Community full and part-time employees and enabled the Club to continue to pay its directly engaged matchday and non-matchday casual staff throughout lockdown, despite the significant impact on the Club's finances following the break in Premier League football.

Football

Why is transfer business left until the end of the transfer window?

We are sure this is a question that many supporters ask of their clubs.

We can assure you Kevin Thelwell and his team began to identify potential January targets as soon as the summer window closed. Recruitment is an ongoing process that never stops.

From the outset, we had a clear plan for the January window, which was to focus on adding players who could significantly and immediately improve our starting XI. That was always going to be challenging in what was a very limited marketplace (reflected by the nature of some of the fees that were commanded).

As was widely reported, one of our primary targets was the Villarreal forward Arnaut Danjuma, who not only fitted the profile of player we wanted to bring in but also offered the best value for money in an over-inflated market. After extensive negotiations, we had a deal in place and the player was heading to Finch Farm to complete the formalities, only for another club to step in at the 11th hour.

With that deal no longer viable, the reality was that there was only a very small pool of available players who would have improved our first XI. We worked hard on securing players of the right quality - but were unable to reach agreement with the clubs we were liaising with. Our efforts were hindered by the fact our negotiating power was impacted by our responsibility to also remain compliant with profit and sustainability rules. We could have added players that we knew to be available but that we also knew were not of the necessary quality to positively impact our team. When Sean Dyche was appointed as our new manager, he shared the view that any new signings had to be capable of making an immediate impact to the first XI and improve the options already available to us. Sean also felt the squad he inherited has more quality than our league position at the time of his arrival suggested.

Is it true that Mr Usmanov was present during interviews with potential new managers?

Mr Usmanov has never interviewed potential managerial candidates for Everton Football Club - or candidates for any other position within the Club.

Uncategorised

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What is Mr Prentice's role and will we ever hear from him?

David Prentice is the Senior Communications Manager working within the Club's Communications department. His role is focused on liaising with broadcast and written media and supporting wider Club communication activity and output. His role does not require him to work as part of the Club's Fan Services team in managing direct fan communication through pathways open on Twitter, via email or through the Contact Us link on the official website.

Did Sheikh Mansour make an offer to buy EFC? Was there a requirement for Bill Kenwright to remain as Chairman/on the Board of Directors?

There was no offer by Sheikh Mansour to buy Everton Football Club.

There has never been a requirement as part of discussions with any party relating to the sale of the Club for Bill Kenwright to remain as Chairman.

If the security classification of the Southampton match was High, why bring players in collectively by coach and allow them to leave individually?

The security measures in place for the fixture referenced were deemed appropriate and adequate in line with the security level for the game. The risk assessment and procedure for players and footballing staff was separate to the process conducted for other Club staff and senior personnel.

Were Board members advised or ordered not to attend the Southampton fixture on 14 Jan? And was this by an EFC employee?

As the result of a thorough security review and risk assessment, the Board were instructed to not attend the Southampton fixture.

The responses above do not cover the questions specific to Mr Moshiri, which the majority shareholder answered in person in an interview conducted by Jazz Bal, Chair of the Everton Fan Advisory Board, in January.

The full transcript is below. Alternatively watch the interview by [clicking here](#).

Are you aware of the campaign group and their activities – what would be your message to them and other Evertonians unhappy with where things are at?

I have read all their concerns, as listed to you before the interview. Every point raised by every fan group is in my diary. I am sensitive and deal with everything.

In comparison to other clubs or organisations we have a small board in terms of numbers and some fulfil executive roles. Would you consider adding more expertise to the Board be that in a football or business capacity?

All aspects of a football operation are not run by the board. We have a Director of Football. A substantial part of expenditure in a football club is incurred on the football side. Kevin Thelwell, the Director of Football, is primarily responsible for recruitment, academy development and medical science. All these facets of the football business are run by Kevin Thelwell. Under the board, there are 26 additional appointments recently made after our review. It has been an exhaustive review, and I am going through every part of the review that was made.

In some areas, we haven't progressed as much as we wanted, such as recruitment, but we are dealing with it and are making additional appointments. Every part will be considered. We are not complacent, we understand where we are. Whenever you try to make dramatic changes, the results will not appear the next day. We need patience, but they will come true. If we need additional personnel, we employ. If we think the board needs additional executives with different, more diverse skills - we'll appoint them. But we cannot just appoint them under pressure and disrupt the business.

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You recently expressed your faith in the Board of Directors, while there are some supporters who question their competence and ability. Can you talk about where your faith in them comes from and how you measure their performance as Board Members?

I think it is a great time to be able to talk to fans. I have sent a few open letters and would actually like to meet fans in person, to have a face-to-face with them. This is the most critical time in our history and almost an existential point. Bill Kenwright is one of the most loved and respected men in football and Denise [Barrett-Baxendale], I have seen first-hand the work she does on the stadium and all facets of Club development. We have a very able finance director, who is a chartered accountant, and one of our former legends on the board; the skillset and mix is good. I have faith in this board. In the past, I have removed directors and have appointed directors... I am not shy to make changes. We make changes when there is a need, and we will be ruthless.

We need calm and we need to go past our current position on the pitch. I feel the pain, I hear what the fans say; they have points and we will be addressing them. I don't miss out anything, I have a list of all the points and I deal with everything. I am committed to this Club, not just the stadium but to join the elite. But I need your help: the fans are the most important part of the Everton institution and we need to go through this together. Only we can go through this together. Everton has been dependent on Goodison and the twelfth man. I know we are much weaker without the full-hearted support of the fans and I will do whatever it takes to get fans on board. I will meet them, you can talk to me, but I am on it 24 hours a day. It is not a position which is sustainable for a Club of our standard. We just need to address it, but we can only address it together.

Is a fan on the Board something you or the Club has ever considered?

In my industrial businesses, from time to time, I have had members of trade unions to sit on the board and it is never a bad idea. I think the same objective must be shared among us and we need to believe in that. Board representation is not a solution, it is not a bad idea and I am open to it. But more forums, more dialogue, more communication, maybe selected numbers of fans talking to the director of football and going to Finch Farm to understand the extent of work which is being done to revamp. Remember this is an old, historic Club. When I bought it I said 'I don't want to preside over a museum, we want to be competitive'. I thought to change the culture you need a symbol, and I still believe in it.

As a club in the North West, with the most modern and most impressive stadium, we have something to fight for, a home to fight for. But a glossy stadium and great masterpiece in architecture will not support us alone on the pitch, and we are aware of that. I support the addition of recruitment and we will get there, but we can only get there together. Players cannot be worried before going into a match at Goodison. These are our players, they wear the Everton shirt. We need to fight for them. We need a striker, and we will get one. We strengthen the team and I have no doubt the second half of the season will be stronger. Any deficiency in team performance will be dealt with - that is the objective. The objective will be achieved, together.

Under your ownership, what are your goals and ambitions for Everton?

Ambition for Everton is to always be among the elite. We were part of the elite. Our goal is never to be in the bottom three, our ambition is to play European football. We haven't succeeded today, but we have laid the foundation to do it. Not just through communication and hollow words, but through implementation and demonstration to fans, we share this step-by-step progress to success. Together.

Does the Club have a plan to get out of the situation we are in?

Yes. We have a plan, and the plan is in place. In terms of recruitment, it is about performance and every part of the performance is being measured, the weaknesses are analysed and we are addressing them.

The Club has undertaken a Strategic Review of football operations which has been much publicised, but did this include player recruitment?

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Recruitment was a big part of it. Kevin Thelwell has concentrated on that, the medical department is strengthened and we are still strengthening the medical [department]. That is the most important part of the performance criteria. Another ten per cent utilisation from a player by efficient rehab and early diagnosis would lead to extra points. Our injury list has shrunk and it will improve. At Academy level, a number of high-level appointments have been made to attract better quality talent at different age groups. A lot of work has gone into the Academy by Kevin and the coaching staff are monitored and reviewed by Thelwell. He writes detailed match reports after each game and detailed injury reports are presented to us. The information database has significantly improved. With recruitment, we still have room for improvement and we will improve.

That is the most important part of the whole sport competitiveness, finding that early talent, and we are looking at a few more appointments on that. That is what is interesting to fans and me: sport. There are appointments in the commercial areas to improve better quality sponsorships, more commercial deals and all those areas are covered. The stadium, I must say, is probably the best-performing area of our operation currently. The only fixed contract in the history of stadium construction in the UK on time, on budget. Of course, that is something not tangible for fans, today, but once we get through the current underperformance fans can, with me, start dreaming about the new stadium, Europe and everything that goes with that type of facility.

We have now had three Directors of Football in six years. Is this a role you still believe in and have they been allowed to do their jobs?

I think the director of football is important. Clubs which are now very successful all have directors of football. The function is just too much now: there are interviews, press, what you need to do for sponsors and the functions are immense. No manager has time to do scouting in the fashion that David Moyes or Alex Ferguson used to do. The current managers are close to continental coaches, they are trainers. They have players they need to train and improve by coaching, but the recruitment department needs to provide them with what they need. If they need a right-back or support at striking level, that's what they need to come up with. The process at Everton is a well-structured process, so there are requisition forms for a new player. Either the director of football or the manager will propose a player's name then, once they have both signed, a document will be sent to the chairman and myself. The document will involve detailed scouting reports, recommendation of the manager and director of football and any references from experts who know the particular player, in terms of character and everything else.

"Once the chairman signs, I sign. That is well-structured. In the six years since I bought the Club, I never proposed a single player. It goes through a well-structured system. Why hasn't it worked? I think that is a big question as the structure is there. We have had Steve Walsh from Leicester, a very experienced scout, Marcel Brands, one of the top European directors, and now Kevin Thelwell. I think the reasons are that some of the deficiencies in various departments of football management were not addressed. Those are imperative to proper recruitment, that affects the performance availability and Financial Fair Play. Once you buy these players, you cannot buy additional players. We got very little out of these players. Our additional expertise in the medical and rehab department may support more utilisation. That is what we saw from the review - you need to have all the other areas in place. That is what has been taking place. Most things are at a good level but talent-spotting still needs to improve.

Evertonians are very grateful for the role you have played in the new stadium, do you remain committed to delivering the project?

Completely. That is the most important part of the Everton project, for its future. We have suffered three years of Covid and, under this board, they have managed to contain and progress the project and get it to a point where we are very close to stadium financing and I hope to be able to announce that to you. This is a board that is committed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Unless you secure that income, you will always have a Financial Fair Play problem with that income we have with our stadium. Of course, thousands of fans can't see the pitch because of the columns. The stadium was never a luxury for Everton but, for us, it was a necessity. Because it was a necessity, we had to do it. If we wanted to start this stadium today, the cost would be well in excess of £1.1bn.

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There is a lot of value for our fans as this stadium remains well past my tenure, well past our lives. It is for the future fans, not for me. I think it is important for all of us: Everton, the city of Liverpool, the dockland project. It should be part of that hope for our fans, that should be translated to support on the pitch to get us through this. The very first time I bought the Club, fans used to come to me on the train and I said 'They're loveable, the best fans in the world'. I had come from Arsenal and said 'Isn't that amazing'? I am so happy to be part of this great Club, with this fanbase. We haven't changed because we have lost half a dozen games, we are the same Evertonians. I hear you, I hear you loud; I share the pain but we deal with it. It is my responsibility and I deal with it.

Some supporters have been frustrated by engagement and communications from you as the owner. Will you and other Board members commit to more open sessions like this?

I think it is very desirable that there are sessions where the director of football and manager address the sporting issues and shareholders with financial issues. Any other concerns of the fans need to be dealt with through proper, organised forums. They [the fans] need to be at the same knowledge base as the offices, and I support it.

Within your Jim White interview fans felt like they were being blamed for the Club's current predicament. Can you explain what you meant by that?

I know. It is nothing like that. I said I asked for patience and I have said I have been impatient and so affected and responsive with fans' feelings, that maybe I have removed some managers too early. That is my criticism, not the fans. What I say to fans is that we should all be a bit more patient and measured. We should implement changes on a more informed basis. When I see in a game that a child, a fan, is crying, it affects me. Sharing an experience and feeling with the fans, we should all be a little bit more patient. It is not criticism, how could I criticise the fans? Fans are beyond criticism.

There has been a lot of media speculation and I know you have tried to be clear on this in the past. Is Everton up for sale?

The Club is not for sale, but I have been talking to top investors of real quality to bridge a gap on the stadium. I can do it myself; the reason I want to do it is to bring top sport investors into Everton, for some of the reasons the fans want improvement: more talent. We are close to having a deal done. It is not selling the Club at all, it is just bringing more expertise in terms of global sponsorship, commercial development and a lot of specialist sport investors have this pool of knowledge.