

October 2008

Football Licensing Authority – Chair Designate

Gerry Sutcliffe, Minister for Sport, has appointed Paul Darling QC as Chair Designate of the Football Licensing Authority. He takes up the role on 1st October and will become Chair upon the retirement of Tony Speed on 16 April 2009. His term of appointment will run until 30 September 2011.

Paul Darling QC

A barrister at Keating Chambers since 1985, and a Queen's Counsel since 1999, Mr Darling's practice ranges across construction and engineering law. He was the Chairman of the Technology and Construction Bar Association between 2003 and 2007. He is currently a Bencher of Middle temple, a Trustee of the Free Representation Unit and Chairman of the Bar Council Access to the Bar Committee. He is also a director of a family-owned pharmaceutical company. His sporting passions are horseracing, as an owner and racegoer, and football. He was a Member of the Horserace Totalisator Board from 2006 until 31 July 2008, and has been Independent Member of the Horserace Betting Levy Board since 14 July 2008.

Background

The Football Licensing Authority was established by the 1989 Football Spectators Act and monitors the oversight by local authorities of spectator safety at international, Premier League and Football League grounds. In December 1998, following a major review, the Government announced that the FLA would in due course become the Sports Ground Safety Authority with responsibility for providing detailed advice on the safety of other sports in addition to football. Ministers are currently considering how the role of the FLA can best be expanded.

Appointments to the Board of the Football Licensing Authority are made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and follow the OCPA Code of Practice. All public appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Mr Darling has declared no political activity in the last five years.