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**The Rt. Hon. Oliver Dowden C.B.E. M.P.**

Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
LONDON  
SW1A 2BQ

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021

**Dear Oliver**

**Support for National League Football Clubs**

I am writing to you again, following my letter of the 25<sup>th</sup> September 2020, about the Government's financial support for National League Football clubs. While I was relieved to see the announcement of a £20 million funding package following my letter in September, which allowed the National League to restart and offered clubs some financial stability, I am very concerned that DCMS have now switched from offering this assistance, which initially came in the form of grants, to loans. I would urge you to reverse this decision and provide the full £20 million announced in the form of grants, which is what clubs had been led to believe would be the case in previous discussions.

National League clubs are still losing significant amounts of revenue because of restrictions on supporters attending and playing behind closed doors. I am particularly concerned about the impact that this decision will have on my local club, Dagenham and Redbridge FC. Like many other National League clubs, they have lost significant revenue during the pandemic, even when accounting for the extra Government support.

They will also be required to make significant salary payments and cover other bills in the next 10 days, and are worried that if they cannot receive assurances from your department that they will be able to receive further financial assistance in the form of grants, that they will have to take advantage of the furlough scheme instead. If enough clubs were to take this decision, it would mean the effective end of the National League season.

I would therefore urge you to step in immediately to finance the £11 million in outstanding funds in the form of grants rather than loans. I hope that you will outline these changes as soon as possible, to give these clubs certainty and allow the National League to continue.

Yours ever,

**Andrew Rosindell M.P.**