1. Do you agree with the proposal in the Bill to repeal the 2012 Act? What are your reasons for coming to this view?

Yes. The act is barbaric. How someone can hypothetically ‘offend’ someone who hypothetically exists is absolutely beyond comprehension. The act literally criminalises the heinous act of potential offence. Even actual offence isn’t society’s idea of a criminal act. Not to mention the fact that this is solely contrived for football fans and football fans alone. So, it is perfectly lawful for one to offend another in the street, at a rugby match or otherwise? Pathetic.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

Absolutely not.

3. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute offensive behaviour related to football which leads to public disorder? If so, could you specify the criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 1 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Yes. Crimes such as racism, homophobia, any and every form of prejudice or discrimination in any context or setting are punishable by law under the Breach of the Peace, Section 74 of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003, Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010. This is comprehensive enough to cover behaviour that shouldn’t be tolerated in any corner of Scotland such as sectarianism, racism, bigotry or any other form of discrimination.

4. Do you have a view on the focus of section 1 of the 2012 Act, which criminalises behaviour surrounding watching, attending or travelling to or from football matches, which may not be criminalised in other settings?

As I have alluded to already, the fact that football supporters and, for example, rugby supporters are treated differently under the eyes of the law is abhorrent. Traditionally followed by working class people, football has always been a release from the mundanity of everyday life and should be enjoyed as such. How can this rare treat of supporting your team, which you have spent your hard-earned cash on, be enjoyable when they have to enter into a different ‘mode’ as there is varying laws applicable between the real world and the police controlled bubble of a football ground? It is completely unreasonable.

5. Do you consider that other existing provisions of criminal law are sufficient to prosecute threats made with the intent of causing a person or persons fear or alarm or inciting religious hatred? If so, could you specify the
criminal law provisions? Or does repeal of section 6 risk creating a gap in the criminal law?

Section 6 has hardly been used in the whole period since it was enacted whilst the other sections are.

6. Do you have a view on the proposed transitional arrangements in the Bill: that there should be no further convictions for section 1 and 6 offences from the date on which the repeal of those offences takes effect; and that the police will cease issuing fixed penalty notices at least from the point at which the Bill is passed?

The act should never have been conceived never mind brought to fruition. Any damage that the act has caused to football fans’ lives should be rectified by way of clearing past convictions, dropping all pending charges and police officers never uttering the words “offensive behaviour at football” ever again.

7. To what extent do you consider that the 2012 Act has assisted in tackling sectarianism?

If sectarianism is an issue which the Scottish government is serious about ‘tackling’ they should first look to the vile bigotry pushed every year by organisations such as the Orange Order. Sectarianism is punishable by Breach of the Peace, as I have mentioned and this act has done absolutely nothing to help rid society of the poison that is sectarianism.

18 August 2017