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 was brought in for political reasons, after much criticism of the SNP’s lack of policy on tackling sectarianism and racism and not any noble idea or principle to actually tackle the problem. We already had laws that tackle these issues, which are fair and equal across all off society. So why football fans then? As they make good headlines and the issue can be pushed as a football issue as to a wider problem in society. It’s a lot easier to stigmatise a whole group in society, rather than have to pinpoint the issues, make a plan to challenge the issues, then fund and implement the plan across wider society as to a single group. They can also dress up the law under arrest statistics as they create a law that is so vague at every level that it doesn’t even mention sectarianism in the whole legislation and can see you arrested for anything. Something the Police have abused to bully and intimidate fans up and down the country.

You also have the fact that the SNP have at many points through the life time of the Bill and Act tried to change the narrative of the issue from Sectarianism, to alcohol issues to domestic abuse and back again. No principle. Just an aim to stand by a piece of legislation that all political parties, except the SNP were and are against, many football clubs, including Celtic FC are against, football fans up and down the country are against, charities funded to tackle sectarianism are against and civic society are against. The legislation has done nothing to tackle the issue.

2. Did you support the original legislation?

No.

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.

Breach of the Peace, section 74 of the criminal Justice Act (Scotland) 2003.

Section 38 of the Criminal Justice and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2010.
The issue was never the law but implementation of existing laws. We now have laws that criminalise individuals for being football fans.

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?

Absolutely nothing goes on at a football match, that doesn’t go on at other settings. If society has problems they should be tackled across society and not focus on an easy target.

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 very rarely been used. Again though, any law used should be equally used across society, for instance Communications Act 2003.

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?

From the moment the bill is passed. I would go further and a clause should be added quashing any convictions under the legislation as any legislation that only convicts a certain group isn’t a fair or equal conviction in the eyes of wider society.

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

None, it’s only created an issue of intimidation from the Police on to Football fans as they chase statistics to justify this dreadful act.

18 August 2017