Justice Committee
Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill
Written submission from Robert Knox

1. **Do you agree with the proposal in the Bill to repeal the 2012 Act? What are your reasons for coming to this view?**
   
   No I do not

2. **Did you support the original legislation?**

   Yes I did.

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?**

   It risks creating a gap by allowing vocalisation and expression of sectarian hatred specifically at football matches.

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?**

   I believe there is no place at public sporting events for displaying, expressing and vocalising sectarian hatred. It exists in this environment specifically.

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?**

   Repeal of section 6 does risk creating a gap and serves as a green light to bigotry and sectarianism being shown at specifically football events.

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?**

   I believe the act should remain in force and be enacted upon until we eradicate the poison that is sectarianism and bigotry from our society.

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

   It has shown that we as a society will no longer tolerate sectarianism and bigotry at football matches and sends that message out into other areas of society.