



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Justice Committee

Neil Doncaster
Chief Executive
Scottish Professional Football League
(SPFL)

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3 November 2017

Dear Mr Doncaster,

Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill

As you are aware, the Justice Committee is currently undertaking scrutiny of the Offensive Behaviour and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill. At a recent meeting, the Committee agreed to take oral evidence from the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) on 14 November. I understand that the invite was initially declined on the basis that you had no comment to make on the Bill, and after further correspondence, you offered a witness who could only attend at an earlier time than was stated in the initial invite.

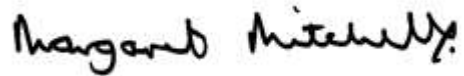
I appreciate the invite was initially sent just under three weeks before this evidence session, and that you have offered to provide a witness if the evidence session begins at 10am. However, the Justice Committee's work programme is incredibly busy, and our witnesses for our other business that day have already made the effort to make travel arrangements.

I am disappointed that a key stakeholder such as the SPFL is not able to appear before the Committee to provide Committee members with the opportunity to question you on an issue as central to its work as offensive behaviour at football matches. As you will no doubt recall, you gave evidence in your previous role as Chief Executive of the SPL on the original Bill in 2011, and having spoken to colleagues from every party represented on the Committee, I know that we all share the same view that it is vital to hear in person from the SPFL again to ensure that

the Committee has the fullest possible understanding of the issues attached to the Bill.

Should you still believe you are not able to give oral evidence, the Committee will consider other steps it can take.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Margaret Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a distinct loop at the end of the last name.

Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener, Justice Committee