



Our ref: SMR/

Margaret Mitchell MSP,
Convenor, Justice Committee
c/o Justice Committee Clerks
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

BY email only.

Date 6 November 2017

Dear Ms Mitchell

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

I refer to the above and to your letter of 3 November in relation to the work that the Justice Committee is currently undertaking in relation to this matter.

I note and entirely appreciate the wish of the Committee and its members to fully understand the Scottish FA's position on this issue. I also understand the benefits to the committee of oral evidence and indeed the benefits of oral evidence generally; in the last year the Scottish FA have appeared on five occasions before committees at Holyrood to give such evidence.

Unfortunately, the one date that has been offered to us at short notice is the same date as a long-standing one for a Board meeting involving a number of senior football representatives that both myself and our Chief Operating Officer are required to attend. For oral evidence to be of value the individuals attending must have a good understanding of the issues and that is why it would also need to be myself and our Chief Operating Officer who attend any Parliamentary Committee on this subject.

We are happy to consider alternatives dates, and note that the Committee also met on 3 and 24 October in relation to this matter. In addition, we note that the committee is due to meet tomorrow and, although we appreciate the short notice, both I and our Chief Operating Officer would be able to attend tomorrow if that would be helpful to you. If we are attending tomorrow we will also work on our written evidence this afternoon and send it across later today.



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As well as providing written evidence and offering to appear on an alternative date, we are also happy to respond in writing to any questions that the committee has in relation to our evidence. You are correct in your observation that the Scottish FA gave oral evidence in 2011. You may also be aware that on the same date as we gave evidence in September 2011, the SPL were unavailable to provide evidence and the Convenor stated the following (taken from the Official Report):

“The Convenor: For clarification, we invited SPL representatives, and it is not really their fault that they have not been able to attend—it was done short notice. Frankly, because we are running out of time to call the SPL, I think that it would be a good idea simply to send it questions and ask for a response in writing before we write a report”

I understand that on that occasion, notwithstanding the fact that the previous committee were “running out of time”, the SPL did attend on a future date as well as providing a response to written questions and, as stated, we are happy to do the same on this occasion.

I look forward to hearing from you by return regarding whether or not it would be possible for us to attend tomorrow.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S.M. Regan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Stewart M Regan
Chief Executive