



SCOTTISH POLICE FEDERATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

The Scottish Police Federation represents all police officers in the ranks of constable, sergeant, inspector and chief inspector, police cadets and special constables; over 18,500 people, 98% of all police officers in Scotland.

To: All Outlets

Date: 6 March 2019

Subject: Independent Review of Football Policing in Scotland

EMBARGOED UNTIL 1300 HOURS ON WEDNESDAY 6TH MARCH 2019

The Scottish Police Federation welcomes the Publication of DCC Mark Robert's Independent Review of Football Policing in Scotland. The Scottish Police Federation (SPF) contributed to this review and are reassured that his conclusions are broadly aligned to our own views.

Commenting on the report, SPF Vice Chair David Hamilton made the following statement;

"Mark Roberts hasn't pulled his punches in this report and has presented Scotland with an honest assessment of the state of safety and security in Scottish Football.

The review comments very positively on the operational police response at matches and our colleagues will welcome the fact that their professionalism has been recognised.

They will also welcome the nudge given to Police Scotland to start explaining to genuine supporters and the public at large the risk that police officers face at some of our games. Verbal and physical abuse and injuries are increasing and such an engagement strategy would support a change to the culture of reluctance in deploying properly protected Public Order units when necessary.

Police Officers will also recognise the comments regarding the resource intensive nature of football policing and the fact that it denudes our communities of officers not just for one but two days. The constant interruption to weekends has its own wellbeing pressures on officers and their families too. However we recognise that given the quality of stewarding issues identified, inconsistent traffic management and counter terrorism approaches we are not in a position to reduce this footprint yet. Until then, regardless of Brexit pressures, the SPA need to put a hold on any thought of a reduction in police officer numbers.

The reviews comments and evidence regarding safety at grounds were utterly devastating and we fully support the recommendations to enforce safety in what are workplaces for thousands of police officers. Such a review also opens up the potential to extend licensing arrangements to consider the community impact, travel plans and fan behaviour beyond the footprint of the stadia. This would force clubs to take greater responsibility for their fans not just at games but on their way to games too.

We concur with DCC Roberts that Scottish football has a hooliganism problem - as well as a sectarian problem. They are both manifestations of the same peculiarity - that some supporter groups believe that criminal behavior is acceptable at football matches. "Fans Against Criminalisation"'s refusal to even engage with the review has shown themselves to simply be apologists for this criminality. They have refused the opportunity to engage with the review, maintain their entrenched opinions and clearly have no interest in acknowledging yet alone fixing the problems of the Scottish game. They have no legitimacy and until they change their approach, need to be sidelined while we engage with real fans.

This is an important point in Scottish Footballs history and if the review is implemented, should lead to a safer, fairer, more secure and pleasant environment for fans and those responsible for looking after them."

ENDS

Notes for Editors.

1. The Scottish Police Federation represents 98% of all officers in Scotland.

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