

CEHB



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NSM

16 August 1985

Dear Private Secretary,

FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM: INSTALLATION OF CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION (CCTV)

As your minute of 31 July to Sue Vandervord, Department of the Environment records, Lord Aberdare, Chairman of the Football Trust referred at the meeting which the Prime Minister had with representatives of the football authorities on 30 July to the fact that Strathclyde Police were reluctant to accept responsibility for the ownership and maintenance of CCTV equipment to be used at Ibrox, the ground of Glasgow Rangers. My Minister indicated that he was aware of the difficulty and that he was following it up.

Arising from this, Mr Stewart met senior officers of Strathclyde Police on 9 August. At the meeting Mr Stewart emphasised the importance which the Government attached to ensuring that the new football season is trouble-free and referred to the contribution which CCTV could make in achieving this objective. For their part, the Strathclyde officers indicated that the force were prepared to make use of any equipment, including CCTV, which would assist crowd control and that they were only too willing to give football clubs every assistance in connection with the installation of CCTV by, for example, advising on the positioning of cameras in order to give the best possible coverage of potential trouble spots within the grounds concerned. However, the officers made it clear that, notwithstanding the fact that capital costs of up to £25,000 would be reimbursed by the Football Trust, the force are not prepared to purchase and maintain CCTV equipment for use at any of the grounds of the 5 Strathclyde clubs which are at present in the Scottish Premier League or at Hampden Park, the venue for Scotland's home international matches.

The force have two main objections to doing so. The first is one of principle - in their view it would be quite inappropriate for the police to purchase and maintain CCTV equipment on behalf of a football club which, as a commercial organisation, is in no different a position from a shop or bank which installs CCTV for security purposes. In making this point, the force emphasise that a football match is a private, as opposed to a public function, and that because of this the costs of policing inside a ground should be met by the Club itself; this accords with Government policy, under which football clubs are, of course, charged for police manpower which is deployed within grounds. Mr Stewart referred to the role which CCTV could play in

helping to control crowds outwith a ground, but the Strathclyde officers said that the force was doubtful of the value of the equipment in this respect. (At Ibrox, because of the nature of the ground, it would not, in any event, be possible for the same cameras to cover both inside and outside the ground).

Strathclyde's second objection relates to the potential cost of maintaining the equipment. They are also concerned that in the longer term a force which accepts responsibility for the purchase and maintenance of CCTV equipment might be under an obligation to replace it when it becomes obsolete: so far as is known, no consideration has been given to this. However, the force's immediate concern relates to the cost of routine maintenance which, in the case of equipment for the 6 grounds referred to above, could amount to around £15,000 per annum, excluding police manpower costs. The Strathclyde police authority has imposed budget cuts in each of the last few years and, against a background of severe financial restraint, the force are simply unable to allocate scarce resources to CCTV.

While recognising that this is essentially an operational matter on which each Chief Constable is free to determine his own view, Mr Stewart had a full discussion with the Strathclyde officers. In the light of this he has concluded that there is no prospect of the force changing its position and indeed he has acknowledged the logic and strength of their arguments. As a result of this, it seems to Mr Stewart that the best way forward is for his officials to liaise, as he has asked them to do, with the Department of the Environment and the Home Office to consider further the present policy of the Football Trust on grants and whether it could not be influenced to take account of the fact that, for good reason, certain forces may not be prepared to purchase and maintain CCTV equipment, thus leaving Clubs in the area concerned with no option but to proceed on their own. (The basis of the policy, as presently understood, appears to be not a perceived need to spread grant more widely by purchasing equipment for the police to move between grounds but merely a belief that the equipment will be better cared for if owned by the police than if owned by the clubs: this is not a strong reason for involving the police in extra responsibilities and expenditure.) Mr Stewart has in mind that in such circumstances, it might be appropriate for the Trust to offer grants of up to £25,000 to the Clubs concerned. He himself also has in mind to raise the matter in the Working Group on Financing of Safety Improvements at Football Grounds which is Chaired by Mr Neil Macfarlane. In the meantime, Scottish Office officials are keeping in touch with the Scottish Football League and the Clubs in Strathclyde.

I am copying this letter of Sue Vandervord (Department of the Environment), Hugh Taylor (Home Office), Rachel Lomax (Treasury), Len Appleyard (Foreign and Commonwealth Office), Richard Allan (Department of Transport), Colin Williams (Welsh Office) and Phil Dykins (Minister of Sport's Office).

Yours sincerely,

Peter A. D. Ritchie

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Private Secretary

Football Hooliganism: HOME Affairs
PT 5.