



The Scottish Football Association

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Patron: Her Majesty The Queen.

Our Ref: SR/SB

Anne Peat,
Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee,
Room T3.40
Scottish Parliament,
Edinburgh,
EH99 1SP.

11th November, 2011

Dear Ms Peat,

Public Petitions Committee - Petition PE1319 Update

This year the Scottish Football Association approved historic changes to its constitution. These changes put in motion the most significant modernisation programme in the organisation's 128-year history, culminating in the publication of our strategic plan Scotland United: A 2020 Vision.

As well as reducing the main Board from 12 to seven, introducing new independent representation, and implementing a new set of disciplinary procedures overseen by the first-ever Compliance Officer, the Scottish FA has also re-emphasised its commitment to improving the game at elite and grassroots levels.

The creation of two Sub-boards - the Professional and Non-Professional Game Boards - enables greater focus, planning and execution in the respective areas of the game. Indeed, the NPGB brings together all our non-professional associations - Scottish Youth FA, Scottish Junior FA, Scottish Schools FA, Scottish Amateur FA, Scottish Welfare Association, Scottish Women's Football, South of Scotland and East of Scotland Leagues - for the first time under one umbrella, which will be central to the effectiveness of our new regional committees. It will be through the new regional committees that we will drive the new strategy.

The Scottish FA strategic plan centres on four key pillars: Perform and Win, Strong Quality Growth, Greater Financial Returns and Respected and Trusted to Lead. Each has a "Level 1" objective, as well as the objectives both in the short term, by 2015 and ultimately by the end of the decade.

The Scottish FA has appointed its first-ever Performance Director, Mark Wotte, to deliver in the area of Perform and Win. Key is the restoration of its national teams to major tournament finals, with the men's 'A' squad not having qualified since the FIFA World Cup in France in 1998. The Scottish FA is in the process of setting up seven regional performance schools, with greater focus on expert coaching at key age groups.

Underpinning our new performance strategy is our work in ensuring Strong, Quality Growth. Promoting and cultivating grassroots is of huge importance to the Scottish FA and we are committed to ensuring that footballers of all ages and abilities have more quality access to football, and can ultimately achieve the established 'gold standard' of 10,000 hours of practice widely recognised as essential for elite performance. A facilities forum will be established to assess and enhance the number of 3G and indoor facilities currently available.

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Jim Fleeting, Scottish FA's Director of Football Development, is also tasked with doubling the number of recreational football participants from the current figure of 65,000 to 130,000 over the next five years. The Scottish FA has emulated the FIFA recruitment campaign and launched its own Big Count, with its first target of an additional 25,000 registered players by the end of the year well under way.

Through the Non-Professional Game Board, plans are already under way to commit to One National Plan: an agreement among all areas of the non-professional game to embrace a single philosophy and uniform approach to player development. One National Plan will complement existing involvement in the National Player Pathway, a commitment to staged involvement in 4v4, 7v7 and eventually 11v11 for young players honing their skills across the country through the Affiliated National Associations.

The Scottish FA plans for growth will also dovetail strongly with our new equity strategy. This will ensure a wider range of participant taking part in our national game particularly with respect to ethnicity, age, gender and disability.

In conjunction with the Scottish Schools FA, the Scottish FA has agreed a policy for young elite players to still play for their school, even if signed for a professional club. This situation is being managed by the Scottish FA's Academy Manager in conjunction with Heads of Youth at club level. It will exclude those children who are already training several nights per week and playing matches on a weekend where it is felt that there is a duty of care to ensure they do not overdo the physical training in the early stage of their career.

The Chief Executive will take part in 12 regional roadshows designed to roll out our key messages to stakeholders throughout the country, with a final presentation to the Scottish Parliament due to take place in December.

Yours sincerely,



STEWART M REGAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE.