

## **Justice Committee**

### **PE1370 – Justice for Megrahi**

#### **Letter from Police Scotland to the Convener**

I refer to your letter of 19th February 2014 relating to Police Scotland's handling of concerns and allegations of wrongdoing raised by the Justice for Megrahi group, and provide the following by way of response.

As was explained in Detective Superintendent Stuart Johnstone's recent letter to Mr. Forrester, Secretary of the Justice for Megrahi Group, the conflict with the live investigation that was highlighted by Mr. Shearer to the Justice Committee in September 2013 has taken longer than expected to resolve.

I am aware that DCC Richardson wrote to you on 4th November 2013 and indicated that the Justice Committee would be updated when that conflict has been resolved.

Regrettably, the conflict still exists due to recent developments in the live investigation and the current estimate is that the conflict will be resolved before the end of March 2014. But again I stress that this is still an estimate based on current information and may again be impacted on depending on what further developments emerge in the case.

I have appointed Detective Superintendent Stuart Johnstone to progress work on the deferred allegations at the earliest possible opportunity. His appointment before the conflict is resolved is designed to ensure that he is in a position to familiarise himself with what I am sure you will agree is a series of complex allegations and decide on appropriate strategies and resourcing. His appointment will now provide for a full examination of the further allegations that Police Scotland have determined require to be investigated.

In relation to your specific question about how many officers have been working on the allegations since Mr Shearer retired, the reality is that no further investigation could take place because of the conflict with the live investigation. During the period since Mr. Shearer's retirement, progress in the live investigation has been closely monitored by Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson and Chief Inspector Bill Sturgeon from my Complaints and Professional Standard Department. We can confirm Chief Inspector Sturgeon has continued to engage with the Justice for Megrahi Group on several occasions over the past few weeks.

It would be a matter of regret if any officer has communicated an inaccurate expectation of the timescale through which these matters would progress. I can assure you that the allegations made by the Justice for Megrahi group are being investigated thoroughly and as expeditiously as possible. Detective Superintendent Johnstone's appointment is in a full time capacity such is the commitment of Police Scotland to progress the allegations in this regard. As and when he identifies the need for additional support to help him I can assure you that will be provided.

I will, of course, ensure the Justice Committee is provided with updates as appropriate.

Sir Stephen House QPM  
Chief Constable  
20 February 2014