

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

ICT Provision

Letter from the Convener to the Chief Constable

Firstly, on behalf of the Justice Committee and its Sub-Committee on Policing, may I congratulate you on your knighthood.

I would also like to thank you for agreeing to give evidence with Mr Emery in relation to ICT provision at the next Sub-Committee meeting on Thursday 27 June. In light of recent developments, Mr Emery has also been invited to give evidence on the changes at SPA Executive level immediately after the session on ICT provision. I understand that the clerks have been in touch with your office to confirm timings.

Given the likely time constraints at this meeting, the Sub-Committee agreed to write to you and Mr Emery in advance seeking written responses to issues that arose during evidence in relation to ICT provision to enable us to focus our scrutiny on 27 June.

- The Sub-Committee heard from a number of witnesses that a decision on whether or not to implement the i6 programme was becoming urgent for commercial reasons and the need to bring old systems up-to-date. We would welcome your views on this matter. It would also be helpful to receive details of the consultation that has taken place with unions and staff associations regarding the i6 project.
- ASPS said that they had received an indication that implementation of i6 “will have little more cost than keeping the legacy systems and their associated contracts going”. We would welcome your views as to whether this is an accurate assessment.
- It would be useful to receive your comments on whether the 14 independent national projects were successfully delivered by 1 April, as suggested by the SPA. Stevie Diamond of Unison disputed the SPA’s assertion on 13 May. He said he was “not entirely convinced that the 14 projects have been delivered in the way that has been advertised” as, for example, “there is no national e-mail system; it is a sticking-plaster solution” involving “redirection from the eight or nine legacy e-mail systems, which do not talk to one another”.
- Can you explain the huge divergences in evidence given to the Sub-Committee in respect of the fitness for purpose and inter-connectivity of current IT systems given staff comments and earlier responses from the interim chief executive and ICT director at the SPA on these issues?
- The Sub-Committee requests your views on the type of opportunities that might exist for co-ordinating ICT software systems and installation with other blue-light services and the public sector more widely.

- We would welcome your comments on the evidence provided by Unison that ICT in the legacy Lothian and Borders and Strathclyde areas is not compatible and so prisoner information cannot be transferred electronically. It is suggested that, as a result, prisoner processing takes over 30 minutes for each prisoner and that staff are unable to access previous custody records to see if any difficulties arose when they were last in custody.
- We would also welcome your comments on the views expressed by Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson, ASPS, SPF and Unison that the responsibility for ICT provision should lie with you rather than with the Scottish Police Authority.

With apologies for the tight timescale, we would be grateful for your written response to these issues by Monday 24 June.

Christine Grahame
Convener, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing
18 June 2013