

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

ICT Provision

Letter from the Convener to the Scottish Police Authority

Thank you for agreeing to give evidence to the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing in relation to ICT provision and changes at SPA Executive level at its meeting on Thursday 27 June. I understand that clerks have been in touch with you regarding timings.

Given the likely constraints on time at this meeting, the Sub-Committee agreed to write to you and the Chief Constable 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.

These issues are set out below.

- The Sub-Committee seeks details of how the ICT strategy is developing and an indication as to whether it the strategy is on course to be considered and signed off by the SPA Board on 26 June, as planned.
- We would welcome details of the level of consultation that has taken place with police officers and staff in relation to the priorities and needs identified in the ICT blueprint and strategy. Chief Superintendent Niven Rennie of the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents (ASPS) told the Sub-Committee on 13 May that ASPS had not seen details of or been consulted on the ICT strategy.
- We request an indication as to whether the comment made by Martin Leven on 30 May that he expected to be “delivering a strategy” within six months is realistic. Also, can you be any more definitive with regard timing in relation to Mr Leven’s statement that “we will be able to identify the year 1 costs very soon and the ten year costs for certain aspects of the application delivery”?
- It would be useful to know when the SPA Board is likely to take a decision on whether or not to proceed with the i6 programme, as the Sub-Committee heard from a number of witnesses that a decision on this matter was becoming urgent for commercial reasons and the need to bring old systems up-to-date.
- The Sub-Committee would welcome 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 therefore welcome an indication as to whether this is an accurate assessment.

- It would be useful to receive details of the measures that are being put in place to ensure that the individual systems in previous police force areas are being 'joined up' to ensure that they can work nationally on a day-to-day basis, until a national integrated system is ready to be implemented. While Mr Leven told the Sub-Committee on 2 May that 14 independent national projects had been successfully delivered by 1 April, Stevie Diamond of Unison said on 13 May that he was "not entirely convinced that the 14 projects have been delivered in the way that has been advertised" and, 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?
- We seek assurances that lessons have been learned from failed ICT projects in policing and other areas of the public sector in relation to the governance of ICT projects.
- The Sub-Committee requests your views on the type of opportunities that exist for co-ordinating ICT software systems and installation with other blue-light services and the public sector more widely.
- We would welcome your views 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 the Chief Constable rather than 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