

## Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

### Correspondence from the Chief Constable to the Convener in relation to ICT provision

Thank you for your letter of 18 June 2013.

With regards to the questions posed in your letter I wish to provide the following in response taking each in turn;

- *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.*

I am more than persuaded that there are significant and tangible risks associated with continued delay in the decision making process for i6. I have shared this position previously with the Convenor of the Board. In a broader context the i6 Full Business Case (FBC) clearly demonstrates the organisational and operational risks associated with the current legacy IT estate.

In terms of staff consultation, a wide network of officers and staff have been heavily involved in the development of user requirements and processes which will inform the design of the IT solution. Plans are in place for regular and active consultation with unions and staff associations about the future business change outcomes of the programme upon formal approval of the business case and award of contract. A dedicated i6 staff consultation sub-group will be formally established as part of the wider governance regime, which I know will be welcomed by those organisations.

- *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.*

Due to the unacceptable level of risk “do nothing” is operationally not an option. The i6 FBC indicates that the cost of mitigating the critical areas of risk, when combined with the costs of supporting the remaining ICT estate, are indeed broadly in the same range as the cost of delivering i6.

I should that this “do minimum” alternative would perpetuate a fragmented, inefficient and non-national nature of the current ICT environment. Furthermore it would yield significantly less benefits than i6 and hinder the delivery of strategic criminal justice change which your Committee would rightly expect Police Scotland to successfully deliver.

- *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” involving “redirection from the eight or nine legacy email systems, which do not talk to one another”.*

The go-live of Police Scotland was successfully delivered. As a non-technical person I do not think I can add value to defining the individual components of the ICT elements which supported Police Scotland at that time. I can confirm that a truly single national e-mail or HR system is not yet in place. The projects referred to represented a minimalist approach for ICT change prioritising only those activities required to enable a safe day 1 transition. As such, they were never intended to be strategic solutions. That work has yet to be completed.

- *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 variance in evidence may be the result of a range of factors, such as subjective personal assessment, lack of detailed subject matter knowledge, or perhaps not fully understanding the questions being asked. My endorsement of the i6 FBC in itself reflects my view of the need to address the weaknesses and limitations of significant elements of the current ICT estate. The lack of inter-connectivity is indeed a matter for concern.

- *The Sub-Committee requests your views on the type of opportunities that might exist for co-ordinating ICT software systems with other blue-light services and the public sector more widely.*

I would clearly support meaningful measures aimed at delivering effective and efficient ‘blue light’ service delivery. I anticipate that opportunities may well exist for collaborations of this nature moving forward. I would expect robust business cases and the ICT strategy of Police Scotland to deliver a technical environment which is an enabler, not blocker, to future developments in this regard. Clearly I would expect strategic proposals of this nature to be followed by comprehensive business cases.

- *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.*

It is indeed the case that the existing Custody ICT landscape between the legacy Lothian & Borders and Strathclyde forces is incompatible, and there is no means to electronically transfer data from one legacy force to the other, there will always be a requirement to re-key the information. An estimation of 30 minutes to carry out this process appears to be reasonable. Staff in the receiving legacy force areas have no way of accessing previous custody records containing, for

example, risk assessments, from the transferring force. This incompatibility exists between all of the eight legacy Forces and would be overcome by delivery of the custody component of the national i6 system.

- *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.*

DCC Richardson and I have worked together for 5 years. He has been the lead for me on a number of key issues involving ICT. We discussed his appearance before the committee. His comments were fully in line with my views.

I hope this is of assistance to the committee and look forward to appearing on Thursday.

Sir Stephen House  
Chief Constable  
25 June 2013