

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Local Policing

Letter from Police Scotland to the Convener

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2014 referring to the supplementary letters and written response submitted following our attendance at the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing on 20 March, 2014. I am pleased the Sub-Committee found the additional information useful. I have noted the questions that members require further information on and I am grateful for the opportunity to address these important points.

1. “Margaret Mitchell MSP asked you to respond to the concerns of some police officers that, since reform, there was pressure to move from effective preventative work based on intelligence, to target-driven policing and enforcement. There was also a feeling that police officers were not being consulted or communicated with regarding changes in policing approaches.”

Prevention and Enforcement

During the evidence session, we provided information on our preventative work which I commented on further in the written submission. The information below seeks to provide additional detail around our continued focus on prevention.

Police Scotland is committed to keeping people safe through preventing crime and disorder. Our priorities in keeping people safe clearly demonstrate our focus is very much on preventing criminality and harm:

- **Reducing** violent crime and antisocial behaviour
- **Reducing** road casualties and fatalities
- **Protecting** people at their most vulnerable (particularly victims of domestic abuse and children)

Preventing and sustaining a reduction in criminality requires a collective and coordinated response from partners and communities which is why Local Policing has partnerships and engagement at the heart of how we operate. Our combined work keeps people safe through early intervention which includes enforcement, education and the building of positive relationships which brings about a change in behaviour.

The concepts of prevention and enforcement are not mutually exclusive, enforcement being a form of prevention. All Police Scotland Local Policing operational strategies contain both prevention and enforcement elements, for example,

- The national Rape Awareness Campaign, supported by groups including Rape Crisis Scotland, ASSIST, Scottish Woman’s Aid and White Ribbon Scotland is a partnership approach which is aimed at raising awareness among men and women of what rape is to prevent people becoming either victims or

perpetrators. The campaign complements and supports the enforcement function of the Police Scotland Local Policing Divisional Rape Investigation Units.

- Local Policing has introduced into all 14 local Divisions the use of Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) as best practice for working with local authorities and other partners in protecting and preventing our most vulnerable victims from further incidents of domestic abuse. This is in conjunction with the Multi Agency Tasking and Coordinating meetings (MATAC's) where partnership actions focus on investigations, bail compliance and other enforcement activities which target the highest risk perpetrators to prevent them committing further incidents of domestic abuse.
- Local Policing offender management processes focus on the prevention of re-offending through accurate risk assessment with an intrusive inspection review and visit regime.
- Police Scotland's road policing emphasis is on preventing casualties and fatalities through education and enforcement, by targeting the most vulnerable road users through initiatives such as Operation Zenith which provides one day training sessions, Be a Better Biker, in partnership with the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

We do not set performance targets for individual officers, who have the discretion to deal with issues in the most appropriate way, commensurate with keeping people safe. This requires that we have officers with the right skills, in the right place at the right time to deter criminality and to take swift action against those who have offended and / or who present a risk to community safety.

Our focus on prevention through effective partnerships, community engagement and by having officers at the right place at the right time has resulted in fewer crimes and more people having been kept safe. For example, in the period 1 April 2013 to 28 February 2014:

Reducing violent crime and antisocial behaviour

- Overall crime down, 1565 fewer incidents
- Violent crime down, 737 fewer victims
- Attempted murders down, 32 fewer victims
- Serious assaults down, 370 fewer victims
- Robberies down, 303 fewer victims
- Anti social behaviour down, 50,226 fewer incidents
- Disorder down, 59,945 fewer incidents.

Reducing road casualties and fatalities

- Fewer people seriously injured in road traffic accidents, 257 fewer casualties.

- Progress continues to be made towards Scottish Road Safety Target 2015 and 2020 milestones. Police Scotland and partners continue to impact on road safety by prevention and enforcement through partnership working and education.

Protecting people at their most vulnerable (particularly victims of domestic abuse and children)

- Police Scotland has introduced the Domestic Abuse Task Force, National Rape Task Force, National Human Trafficking Unit and protocols to identify members of the Military whose wellbeing gives concern. All of these initiatives involve strong preventative work in partnership with robust enforcement to reduce risk and harm. The use of the new interim Vulnerable Person Database (VPD) allows more efficient identification of vulnerable persons, supported by swift and appropriate intervention assessment in our screening hubs now rolled out across the country. These are part of Police Scotland's new approach and are protecting vulnerable people wherever they are.

(The above figures are management information and are not official statistics. They cover period 1 April 2013 to 28 February 2014)

In addition to the above information I would also refer Sub-Committee members to our previous written response and in particular the section on 'Prevention / Partnerships' which contains further details about Police Scotland's commitment to this aspect of policing, together with evidence of the positive impact of Local Policing in this work.

Internal Engagement

Prior to and since our transition to Police Scotland effective internal consultation and communication remains vital to ensure our staff understand their roles and priorities in keeping people safe.

Police Scotland has a comprehensive internal communications strategy which includes information being posted on the force intranet, staff workshops, open meetings and group presentations. Extensive consultation has taken place regarding all elements of transformation which have helped shape implementation throughout local divisions.

Communicating and consulting with staff in person and face to face about the ongoing Transforming the Service work is a focus of Police Scotland executive who regularly visit each Division to engage directly with staff at all levels. The Chief Constable, myself and the other members of the executive team conduct regular leadership seminars for Police Officers and Staff and have put in place processes which provide regular and frequent opportunities to capture the views of all staff, such as the monthly Divisional Commanders meeting. In addition, we meet regularly on a national and regional basis with representatives of all the Staff Associations and Unions to discuss issues of interest to them. This face to face engagement by the executive team with local staff and their representatives is replicated by

Divisional Commanders who each provide similar opportunities through their management teams in engaging with their staff locally.

In addition, information about the ongoing Transforming the Service work is prominently displayed on the Police Scotland intranet home page and visible to all staff. Over the past year this site has published 97 news updates and 495 unique documents. In addition 43 issues of the Police Scotland Newsletter were circulated which contained news and interviews with senior officers as well as articles on change, finance and good work. This news letter has since been revamped and become the Police Scotland Magazine. A survey is currently ongoing to identify and capture suggestions from all staff about the content and frequency of this magazine to maximise the value it has in communicating key information to staff.

Locally divisions use newsletters, e-briefings and electronic forums to communicate local news and procedural or policy changes. Examples of these include Dumfries and Galloway Division who publish an electronic newsletter ever two weeks which contains local information. They have circulated 36 local newsletters to all local staff since the creation of Police Scotland. Forth Valley Division maintains an online forum divided into various topics that officers can read and comment upon, these are updated almost immediately as new threads are created. Glasgow Division has a weekly e-bulletin which is emailed to every officer and staff member.

Through this strong internal engagement Police Scotland, as a national service, is better placed to share and develop best practice across the country. The monthly Local Policing Divisional Commanders meetings provide an important forum for this learning and sharing among colleagues from across the country.

Police Scotland will continue to seek new and effective ways of consulting and communicating with staff, to ensure we are listening to and addressing their concerns and to ensure staff fully understand their individual and collective roles and responsibilities to keep people safe.

2. *“John Finnie commended to you a booklet produced by Northern Constabulary for young people entitled ‘Check it out ... know your rights’, which sets out their rights when stopped by the police and what they can expect to happen in certain circumstances.”*

The booklet so kindly provided by Mr Finnie was published in 2001 with a circulation of 20,000. It was distributed across schools, leisure centres and youth clubs in the former Northern Constabulary. The importance of ensuring young people know and understand their rights and have positive interactions with the Police has not diminished and since this booklet was released the Scottish landscape has changed considerably, not least in the way young people connect and communicate with each other and society as a whole. This is most evident in the significant and increased use of social media.

Police Scotland now have over 500,000 followers on various social media platforms, with all Multi Member Ward policing teams having access to a Twitter account dedicated to their communities. Young people can thereby engage directly through social media with their Local Policing Team.

The Police Scotland website has a dedicated section “Ask the Police” which contains answers to frequently asked questions and includes information on stop and search and on the rights of individuals during searches, explaining the procedures clearly. It is appreciated that the Police Scotland website may not be the first place a young person would look for information, so a similar comprehensive document has been uploaded to the YoungScot website.

Recognising that forms of engagement with young people develop and move on quickly Police Scotland Safer Communities team are working with a number of partners and have formed the Police Scotland Children and Young Persons Reference Group. This group will seek the views of young people to establish how the use of stop and search is perceived by them and how this affects their attitude towards the police. In addition, through consultation, this group will inform and assist in the development of Police Scotland policies and processes relating to children and young people across the range of the work we do in Police Scotland to keep them safe.

I hope this additional information is helpful.

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Local Policing
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