

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Governance of policing of major events

Letter from the Chief Constable to the Convener

In response to your letter regarding the above dated 14 November 2014, I would confirm that the policing of major events, particularly over summer 2014, presented a significant challenge for Police Scotland. However, the close proximity of the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games (G2014), the Referendum and the Ryder Cup, also provided us with many opportunities to strengthen our approach to the policing of major events whilst maintaining 'business as usual' policing to a very high standard.

As G2014 was the most demanding planned major event to date for Police Scotland, I will focus on the oversight mechanisms put in place by the G2014 dedicated planning team, outstanding issues and lessons learned from this event in particular, as these would also be replicated in the other major events.

Before I detail how Police Scotland monitored the impact on day-to-day policing, it is important to recognise the various planning processes put in place to ensure there was the maximum number of police resources available during the summer to allow for the abstraction of officers from Local Policing to these events. One example of this included early discussions to reduce jury and summary trial court programmes. To prevent officers being committed to court attendance, the Sheriffs Principal were willing to countenance a reduction in the court programme for the duration of G2014. This agreement ensured minimal resources would be abstracted to court trials during G2014, providing the most available operational resources to both 'business as usual' and G2014 deployments.

A further example of the preparation for G2014 is reflected where some annual leave periods were restructured to exclude 6 July to 5 August 2014. This ensured an even distribution of leave throughout the year whilst ensuring the optimum number of officers were available for both 'business as usual' and G2014 deployments. In addition to this, all non-critical training courses were also put on hold during this period to maximise our resources, including those additional officers and staff that would normally work within training functions.

In terms of allocating deployments to these events, resource planning tools informed Police Planning Units of the resources available to them whilst ensuring Local Divisions had sufficient resources. This methodology, coupled with regular ongoing dialogue between dedicated police planning teams (G2014 and Ryder Cup), regional police planning teams (Referendum) and Local Policing Commanders was vital to ensure an inclusive approach to sharing resources was adopted. Regular testing and exercising in advance of these events provided invaluable assistance determining potential scenarios which helped establish specialist policing resources that may have been required and anticipate (and therefore manage) any impact on day to day policing.

For daily monitoring of the impact on day-to-day policing, it is useful to highlight the 'Games Support Group' (GSG). This collective group of officers were provided for resilience in the event of large scale protest or any unforeseen major incident during G2014. Due to the comprehensive numbers deployed in support of G2014, there was the ability for redeployment of these resources back to 'business as usual' functions where required elsewhere within Police Scotland. During the summer, whilst 'attached' to G2014, the GSG provided deployments for various protests, marches, demos, football matches, spontaneous disorder, missing person searches, murder investigations and a potential chemical suicide, thus maintaining full support for and lessening the resourcing requirements sought from Local Policing. A Force Memorandum was published across Police Scotland to ensure all officers were aware of the ability to request assistance from the G2014 Games Support Group and this was well utilised during the summer providing assistance to both G2014 and Local Policing in respect of normal policing issues.

Analysis carried out shortly after the conclusion of G2014, confirmed that our Professional Standards Department had not received any complaints concerning the public not having access to Police or Police services due to resources being deployed at G2014. Crimes during the period from 23rd July – 3rd August 2014, across Police Scotland, reduced by 18% when compared to the 2013 time period and were at their lowest levels when compared to the last 5 years. This provides reassurance that we continued to keep people safe.

From a resourcing perspective, 25,092 rest days were accrued by officers during G2014. Through proactive and effective management, those rest days have now been reduced to 1,730, whilst ensuring officers remain available at all times to provide a high level of service delivery throughout Police Scotland to protect the public.

In terms of lessons learned from these major events, substantial work has been carried out to capture lessons. Such methods have included internal and external debriefs, one to one staff interviews and structured debriefs with Operational Commanders and various Bronze Commanders within planning roles. Written debriefs were also provided by 40 different business areas with involvement in G2014 which have been collated into a composite internal 'Tactical Debrief' document. This has provided us with a number of tactical recommendations which are now being considered to assist us with not only the policing of future major events, but also to assist in our development as a single service.

I will conclude by saying that the delivery of G2014, the Referendum and the Ryder Cup, balanced with ensuring our standards were maintained for 'business as usual' policing, has been both challenging and successful. Police Scotland managed these additional demands whilst continuing to deliver a consistently high service to communities throughout Scotland. There is no doubt the experience and performance was positive, well received and enhanced the reputation of Police Scotland.

The summer of 2014 was a 'once in a lifetime' policing opportunity and a unique challenge. The positive feedback received by our key stakeholders and public alike, taken together with continuing reductions in crime and high levels of public

confidence and satisfaction, demonstrate that Police Scotland was successfully able to police the major events of summer 2014 whilst maintaining effective day to day policing.

Sir Stephen House QPM
Chief Constable
3 December 2014