

December 2015

What are your priorities for your police service? – A Review of our Strategic Police Priorities

The current Strategic Police Priorities have provided clear direction for the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland through the critical first three years of operation. As we progress the journey of reform, policing must adapt and respond to the changing needs of people and communities across Scotland. With the recent appointment of a new Chair of the SPA, Andrew Flanagan and the appointment of a new Chief Constable for Scotland, Phil Gormley who will take up post early in the new year, I believe the time is right to review these national priorities as we look to further strengthen the strategic approach of our police service.

The Scottish Government has set out through its Programme for Government its intention to review the Strategic Police Priorities. This revision is part of a wider programme of work around the strategic direction of our Police service. This includes work being undertaken by the SPA to review police governance – which will report in March 2016; work being led by the SPA to consider the changing and long term demands on Scottish policing – which will report by summer 2016; and ongoing dialogue to strengthen the community focus of policing and enhance accountability and scrutiny at a local level.

In September this year I hosted a Local Scrutiny Summit bringing together stakeholders from across Scotland to gain a greater understanding of how local scrutiny of policing is working and what can be done to improve it. I am keen now to build on this work and begin a conversation with the people of Scotland about what they want and expect from their Police Service.

It is important that we take this opportunity to build on the successes and identify the lessons from the first three years of Police Scotland. It is important that policing maintains the support of local communities and that local resources are focussed on priorities that are relevant to, and serve the interests of, local people. To do this I want to harness the knowledge and experience of local communities throughout Scotland. I am keen that the discussion is led, not only by Scottish Government, but also by local scrutiny committees, local police commanders and SPA members to establish as wide a platform as possible. To that end I have two requests to make of you;

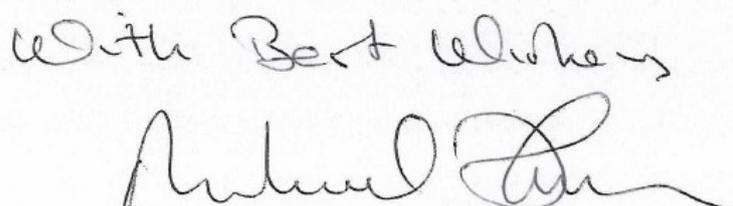
- Firstly I would be grateful if you could disseminate information about this discussion through your local network of contacts, social media channels and local communities and encourage engagement.
- I also want your input to this discussion. I am keen to gather a range of perspectives, and with this in mind you may wish to consider how the priorities we set can better support local scrutiny and accountability arrangements; allow Police planning to better fit local priorities and share thoughts on how policing is operating in your area.

I would welcome if you could discuss police priorities with colleagues and at meetings or other forums over the coming months. I look forward to hearing the outcome of these discussions and would welcome either your own views or a co-ordinated response.

Following this initial exercise to gather views a formal consultation on draft revised priorities will be taken forward in early 2016 - ultimately leading to the publication of revised Strategic Priorities. I am hopeful that you will have plenty opportunity to discuss and consider and to pass back your comments and views.

Policing in Scotland is working and has a lot of positive news to tell. The Strategic Police Priorities are an important part of the planning system for our Police service and I encourage you to have your say.

If you would like any further information please contact Dan Couldridge on 0131 244 7923 or daniel.couldridge@gov.scot.



With Best Wishes
Michael Matheson

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