

A REVIEW OF SCOTTISH STRATEGIC POLICE PRIORITIES – DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

Further to your request for feedback in relation to the discussion paper on Scottish Strategic Police Priorities I would advise that this was considered by Argyll and Bute Council at its meeting on 21st January 2016.

Argyll and Bute Council has a longstanding and excellent working relationship with the Police Service locally, where collaboration through the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) has been a key priority since the inception of Community Planning. The Council also has excellent relationships with the Police in strategic areas such as CONTEST and Serious and Organised Crime initiatives and also in relation to resilience planning and emergency situations. Both the local Police Commander and the SPA (Strategic Police Authority) are welcomed to the Council's quarterly Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee meetings. This mechanism provides an excellent opportunity for elected members to scrutinise local policing activity, identify and highlight areas for priority and assess resourcing. It also provides a vehicle for the consideration of future planning at a local and strategic level.

In the debate by Elected Members on the discussion document there was a mixed range of views on the key strategic priorities and how these filtered down to concerns that might arise in terms of local delivery of services. There was some concern amongst some members about their perception of the benefits arising from police reform and the introduction of the new national force. Discussion also took place in relation to geographical variations in police attendance at community councils ranging from poor to excellent and whether the police were sufficiently proactive in engaging with groups in deprived areas.

Within the context set out above and given the particularly dispersed and complex geographic nature of Argyll and Bute, a clear priority for Argyll and Bute overall is to maintain and build on the existing good practice and good working relationship that is in place, both at a strategic and a local level. The Council would wish to see no change that alters the framework within which this currently takes place and this is reflected in the response provided in relation to the three main questions posed within the discussion document.

What is important for you about policing in your community?

In order to develop on the good relationship and pattern of policing that will meet the needs of the communities in Argyll and Bute, as highlighted above, the Council would wish to see the Scottish Government ensure that prioritisation of objectives, resources allocation and operational discretion is devolved to divisional commander level. This allows for particular circumstances to be addressed and resourced. For example the ongoing issue with Road Traffic Collisions on vital arterial routes in Argyll and Bute, which has an impact on both people's safety and the economy, is being tackled through collaboration and specific resourcing, which is facilitated by the local Commander's ability to prioritise.

What sort of police service do you want to have?

The current local and community based resources are particularly important in Argyll and Bute, therefore the Council would wish to see a focus on increasing community based resources that strengthen local partnership working and community cohesion. Partnership working is essential and must be at the core of the strategic policing objectives.

What is your ambition for policing in the future?

The Council would like to see the police in future enhance and develop specialist response mechanisms to tackle terrorism and serious and organised crime. As a national and international issue, this is an area that the Council would wish to see Police Scotland appropriately resourced to prioritise.

APPENDIX 2

In summary the ongoing working relationship between the Council and the police both locally and strategically is very good and operating well within the context of the current strategic policing priorities. Continuation on a strategy which enables a locally based approach to continue is a high priority for Argyll and Bute Council, as it underpins partnership working, enables effective scrutiny and supports elected member engagement with the Police Service across a challenging, remote, rural and island area.

I trust you will find our response to the discussion document helpful and note your intention to conduct a formal consultation on revisions to the Strategic Police Priorities in the coming months.