

# NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

19 JANUARY 2007

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## SCOTTISH POLICE SERVICES AUTHORITY

### Report by the Chief Constable

#### **SUMMARY**

This report provides members of the Board with information on the issues which will impact on Northern Constabulary as a consequence of the establishment of the Scottish Police Services Authority.

#### **Introduction**

The Police, Public Order and Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2006, which received Royal Assent on 4 July 2006, provided for the establishment of a new Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) to provide support services to Scottish police forces on a national basis as well as maintaining the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA), which is being put on a statutory basis and being given new statutory functions.

The SPSA will be led by a Chief Executive, David Mulhern, who will have a responsibility to establish the SPSA as a single national service with its own identity and to forge a new, dynamic and expanding organisation with a remit to deliver efficient, high quality services to Scottish police forces, thus enabling forces to concentrate on the delivery of front line policing.

The SPSA will come into being on 1 April 2007 and will take over responsibility for the staff and functions of the Scottish Police College, the Scottish Criminal Records Office (SCRO) and the Scottish Police Information Strategy (SPIS). It will also be responsible for establishing a new Scottish Forensic Service from April 2007, which will comprise the 4 existing police laboratories, the 4 fingerprint bureaux and scenes of crime officers.

It is also envisaged that in due course SPSA could take on responsibility for an increasing range of police support services on a national basis across Scotland.

Within ACPOS, it has also been proposed that by April 2008 the SPSA will take responsibility for developing, providing and maintaining ICT services for all 8 Scottish police forces. It is proposed that this will bring ICT staff and resources into a single body which will deliver the national projects already being developed by SPIS and oversee the process of harmonising existing police ICT systems.

#### **Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency**

The Police Act also puts the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency, formerly the Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency, on a statutory basis with new statutory powers and functions, including for the first time provision for police officers to be directly recruited to serve in SCDEA as well as being seconded from forces. The SCDEA will be part of and

maintained by SPSA, but its Director General, who holds the rank of Deputy Chief Constable, will be independent in relation to operational matters.

### **Implications for Northern Constabulary**

The development of the SPSA represents a significant overhaul of the way in which support services are delivered to police forces in Scotland, and as a consequence there are significant issues for Northern Constabulary to consider particularly in relation to:

1. Transfer of Personnel
2. Impact on existing Force revenue and Capital Budgets
3. Governance practices

The proposals for redeployment of existing IT Staff have been highlighted however in addition to this the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) has, as part of its portfolio, the proposed Scottish Forensic Science Service (SFSS) which incorporates the amalgamation of all Scottish Forensic Science Laboratories into a common service. As part of this process it has also been identified that in the future the SFSS will look to integrate staff, who carry out scene of crime duties within all Scottish forces.

Within Northern Constabulary this will relate solely to those members of Staff who are employed within the Scientific Support Unit (SSU) at Police Headquarters Inverness.

The particular issue of integration was initially the subject of debate at the meeting of ACPOS Council on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2006, when members were asked to consider the arguments for and against this issue. At that time members agreed that there should be a phased approach in moving towards these new arrangements. In this respect it was suggested that a number of Scottish Forces who had already integrated, or were in a position to move towards integrated Services, should do so by April 2007.

In the initial stages Northern Constabulary, along with Tayside Police and Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary did not agree to these proposals and it was highlighted that any move towards integration by these Forces would not be considered until April 2008. This decision was taken on the basis that there was a need to take account of the experiences of the initial phase of integration to ensure that current levels of Service Delivery could be maintained.

However since then it has recently been confirmed that Identification Bureau staff, Scenes of Crime Officers, Photographic Staff and all dedicated administration staff who support the Identification bureau functions will infact transfer to the SPSA by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007.

As a result of this there are now various obligations on Northern Constabulary, as the current employer and the SPSA (as the future employer), with regard to the transfer of staff. It is intended that the Force will work collaboratively with the SPSA to ensure that the information requirements, which are outlined below and fall within the scope of the formal legislative requirements, are provided for.

### **Duty to Consult and Inform**

As part of this overall process current employers have a duty to consult with local trade union representatives of staff affected by the transfer and to inform employees of the facts of the transfer. After transfer, staff will remain an integral part of the police family, and for this reason it has been agreed with the other forces who have already engaged with the transfer

exercise that it is particularly important to ensure that a consistent message is given to staff across the various organisations/business areas and that ongoing consultation between now and 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 addresses any issues and concerns.

To assist with this process, a suggested letter has been prepared for issue by current employers to staff who will transfer on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 along with a ***Frequently Asked Questions*** document. SPSA and other forces previously agreed that all staff affected should have direct access to this information by the most effective communication method possible within their respective organisations.

The Force has already commenced the process of consultation with trade union representatives. In this respect a meeting was held on 14 December 2006 with the seven Northern Constabulary staff affected. Also present at this meeting were Detective Superintendent G Urquhart, Head of Crime Support, Alaisdair Graham, Acting Director of Human Resources and Liz Sutherland, Lay Steward for Unison. It was confirmed to these staff at that meeting that their employer from 1 April, 2007 would be the SPSA.

The relevant documentation forwarded by the SPSA, including the letter referred to above, was handed to each member of staff.

This issue was also the subject of formal discussion at the Force's Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee on 18 January 2007.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

The Board is invited to note and discuss the content of the report.

**I Latimer**  
**Chief Constable**