

## NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD

29 AUGUST 2008

Agenda Item	
Report No	

## SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITIES CONVENERS FORUM

### Report by the Assistant Clerk

#### Summary

This Report briefs Members on a number of issues discussed at recent meetings of the Scottish Police Authorities Conveners Forum, on which Members may wish to comment.

#### **A INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF POLICING - HER MAJESTY'S CHIEF INSPECTOR OF CONSTABULARY**

##### Background

1. At its meeting held on 22 November 2007, the Board homologated a letter sent on behalf of the Board, following discussion in the Finance and Policy Working Group, in response to the Scottish Parliament Justice Committee's Inquiry into the Effective Use of Police Resources.
2. The Committee's Report on its Inquiry, published on 24 January 2008, can be found at <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/justice/reports-08/jur08-04-02.htm#27>. One of the Report's "Overall Conclusions" is:

*"The Committee ..... recommends that within the lifetime of this Parliament the Scottish Government should initiate an independent review of the role and responsibilities of the police in Scotland, informed by the Committee's report."*

3. On 23 May 2008, the Justice Secretary announced that he had asked Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCICS), Mr Paddy Tomkins, to carry out this review and make recommendations by the end of the year, his remit being stated as:

*"To review the roles and responsibilities of police forces in Scotland with the aim of ensuring:*

- that all Scotland's communities have equal access to expert and specialist policing and to the resources necessary to investigate major crime, whenever they need it, and;*
- that the delivery of such policing responsibilities does not divert resources away from visible policing in communities;*
- in pursuance of this to identify policing responsibilities which might more effectively be delivered nationally, regionally, or in collaboration between forces;*
- and to make recommendations for the organisation, governance and accountability which best supports the delivery of those policing responsibilities."*

## **Consultation Process**

4. As part of a Stakeholder Consultation, HMCICS wrote on 5 August 2008 to all Local Authority Chief Executives (Appendix 1), and to a further range of bodies as set out in Annex A to that letter, inviting their views on a number of questions by 12 September 2008.
5. Members will note that Police Boards/Authorities are not included in this consultation list. The letter does, however, indicate that HMCICS will be consulting “in person” with Police Authorities/Joint Boards. The Scottish Police Authorities Conveners Forum (SPACF) has written to HMCICS seeking a meeting and clarification on how he intends to engage with Authorities/Boards during his Review. A response of 22 August, while referring to an earlier suggestion that Conveners liaise with their respective Chief Constables on a then proposed series of consultation workshops with individual Forces, also now offers a separate workshop with SPACF members, on a date to be identified before the end of September. The letter also invites a written submission from SPACF, “independent of submissions from forces/police boards”.
6. Members will also note that, among its questions, the consultation letter seeks views on recommendations in the Justice Committee Report on governance issues, including the role and composition of police authorities and a suggestion that membership be “augmented” by the appointment of non-elected independent members.

## **SPACF**

7. The Convener will brief Members on SPACF discussions to date and on Conveners’ concerns as to whether Police Boards/Authorities, as part of the tripartite arrangements for the governance and delivery of the policing service in Scotland, are being fully recognised as having a central role in the Review process.

## **B COSLA PROPOSALS ON THE INTEGRATION OF POLICE AND FIRE INTERESTS INTO COSLA’S MAINSTREAM ACTIVITY**

### **Background**

8. COSLA’s membership comprises individual local authorities, but not Police (or Fire) Boards/Authorities. Its political structures are therefore based on the role of individual Councils and their leaders.

### **Potential Developments**

9. SPACF is aware of recent discussions within COSLA as to the potential for greater integration of Police (and Fire) issues into COSLA’s structures. SPACF has emphasised the need for any such proposals to take full account of the distinct legal status and role of Police Boards/Authorities and for there to be consultation on any proposed development of COSLA’s role in relation to the police service.

10. The Clerk expects to receive a briefing note from COSLA in the near future. It is recommended that, if further discussion is thought necessary before the Board's November meeting, a meeting of the Finance and Policy Working Group be called to consider the issue.

## **C SCOTTISH POLICE SERVICES AUTHORITY – PROPOSED SERVICE BOARD**

### **Background**

11. At its meeting held on 18 January 2008, the Board noted a presentation on the Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) by Mr David Mulhern, SPSA Chief Executive, and Mr Mervyn Rolfe, the then SPSA Chairman. (Mr Mulhern has since stepped down from this position; the Interim Chairman is Councillor George Kay, Strategic Chair of Fife Council's Police, Fire and Safety Committee.) Mr Mulhern and Mr Rolfe, together with other senior SPSA officials, met with the Board's Finance and Policy Working Group on 22 February. The Minutes of that meeting were reported to the Board on 23 April.
12. Members will recall that the SPSA is a Non-Departmental Public Body. Whilst its Board includes two Police Authority Conveners and two Chief Constables, concern has been expressed that a mechanism is required to provide an effective forum for engagement with all Boards/Authorities and Forces.

### **Proposed Service Board**

13. Members are advised that talks are ongoing involving SPACF and the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) with a view to establishing a Service Board, comprising representatives from SPACF and ACPOS, which would consider SPSA service standards and service delivery at a national level. Such a body could provide a mechanism for engaging with the SPSA Board on a consistent basis and for scrutinising performance and best value issues. A draft document setting out proposals for the remit and composition of such a Service Board is currently under discussion and Members will be kept informed of developments.

## **D POLICE PENSIONS**

### **Background**

14. As Members are aware, the Police Pension Scheme is funded through police authority revenue budgets. Whilst Police Officers pay significant pension contributions from their salaries, these are not invested in a Superannuation Fund similar to the Local Authority Superannuation Scheme. Representations have been made to Government over many years for the establishment of such a Fund for the Police Service or for the removal of the revenue liability from police authority budgets to central government. Whilst a revised pension scheme has been introduced for more recent recruits, the basic issue of revenue funding and the associated burden on police budgets remains.
15. This situation has been recently aggravated by changes introduced by the Home Secretary relating to police pension commutation multipliers, entitling Officers to a larger lump sum on

retirement. This change, on which Scottish police authorities were not consulted, has not yet been implemented in Scotland, with recent media coverage underlining both Scottish Officers' dissatisfaction with this delay and the significant additional financial pressures this would mean for police authorities, particularly in the context of the drive for additional recruitment.

## **SPACF**

16. SPACF takes the view that the additional costs arising from the changes to commutation multipliers should be met by central government and be recoverable from HM Treasury. On the wider issue of revenue difficulties, SPACF is reinforcing the call for centralisation of Police pension funding, and discussions are ongoing to identify particular mechanisms that can be suggested to Government for taking this forward.

### **Recommendations**

The Board is invited to:

- (a) note the issues recently discussed by the Scottish Police Authorities Conveners Forum;
- (b) consider responding to Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland's Independent Review of Policing; and
- (c) agree that, if thought necessary prior to the Board's November meeting, the issue of COSLA proposals for greater integration of the Police Service into its structures be referred to the Finance and Policy Working Group for consideration.

Signature

Designation Assistant Clerk

Date 22 August 2008

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