



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Justice Committee

Bernard Higgins
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Dear ACC Higgins

Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill: request for follow-up information

During the evidence session on the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill on Tuesday 7 March you outlined Police Scotland's intended approach to training new recruits and those who will form part of the specialist transport unit.

You told the Committee that:

“On training, should the will of Parliament be to pass the bill, we will run an upskilling programme for existing officers; in addition, we will extend the initial probationary period for every new recruit to Police Scotland from 11 weeks to 13 or 14 weeks, to incorporate the additional training that current BTP students studying at the police college at Tulliallan receive once they have passed their Scottish training. It is correct that, post 2019, every Police Scotland officer will be trained in policing the railways.”

You went on to add:

“All officers of the BTP and Police Scotland currently complete the 11-week initial training course at the Scottish Police College at Tulliallan. Thereafter, Police Scotland officers go to their divisions and British Transport Police officers have an additional three weeks of training. We want to replicate that three weeks of training at the Scottish Police College, so we will rely heavily on the assistance of the BTP to develop the course so that we can deliver it”.

The issue of the nature and type of training that Police Scotland is planning to provide to officers was raised during the evidence session on the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill on Tuesday 14 March. The evidence that you had provided was discussed and differing views were expressed as to the interpretation of that evidence. Please see the [Official Report](#) of the meeting for details.

The Committee would appreciate a detailed explanation of what training is planned, to supplement the high level summary that you provided during your evidence session.

Would you also clarify whether it is Police Scotland's intention to provide the additional three weeks training only to new recruits and to those officers in the transport unit or whether the 'upskilling programme for existing officers' which you referred to will consist of additional training [for all officers in Police Scotland].

If additional training is to be provided to those in the transport unit, it would be helpful if you could also provide details of what it will include, and if the intention is for it to be initial training only or if it will include on-going training. If it is to be on-going training, details of what this might entail (eg how regularly you anticipate further training is to be provided) would be appreciated. It would also be helpful to know if there is to be any additional training for new recruits beyond the three weeks training.

At the 14 March meeting, the Committee also heard evidence, from Nigel Goodband of the British Transport Police Federation, that police officers should only be allowed to police parts of the railway environment if they have a personal track safety certificate. The Committee therefore would appreciate it if you would provide clarity on whether it is Police Scotland's intention for all officers to undertake personal track safety certificate training or whether this training would only be provided to the specialist transport unit.

As the Committee is due to complete its Stage 1 evidence taking on the Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill within the next two weeks, I should be grateful to receive a response as soon as possible, ideally before the final evidence session with Scottish Ministers on Tuesday 28 March.

Best wishes

Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener, Justice Committee