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By e-mail

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Margaret Mitchell MSP
Convener
Justice Sub-Committee
C/o Justice Sub Committee Clerks
Room T2. 60
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**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe

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Dear Margaret

Thank you for your letter of 14 March requesting follow-up information on the subject of demand-led policing.

As I indicated in my evidence to the Justice Committee on 24 January, as part of the 2026 strategy Police Scotland has undertaken specific project work in the last year to define a broad baseline of demand on the organisation. The focus of the project work on demand covered at least 82% of the entire workforce and was based around the four broad channels of public and incident demand; preventative demand; protective demand and pre-planned demand. Internal demand, which was defined as being self-generating, was considered alongside this with all findings largely aggregated to a national level.

To develop this work further Police Scotland is now working to integrate demand analysis as part of its business as usual, analytical work to inform strategic and operational decision-making, in particular, to build capacity and to reduce demand. The work will be supported by a dedicated team of resources and the development has a number of different strands.

Firstly, as part of the annual business cycle, the demand analysis undertaken in 2016 will be replicated and updated during the summer of 2017 to analyse and understand changes to demand which have occurred in the previous year. Broadly the same scope of analysis will be carried out where qualitative information, such as from focus groups or police officer interview, will be used to triangulate and enhance statistical analysis of numerical data. This work will be completed in alignment with the budget setting process which takes place in Q3 and Q4 of the financial year.

Secondly, analysis to establish changes to demand levels, either geographically or by function, will be a core consideration in the evaluation of future programmes of work. A short-life working group is being brought together to specifically assess the outputs of local level demand analysis, which has been piloted in one geographical area, alongside the existing findings of national level demand analysis.

As you will appreciate, the picture of demand is a complex one to definitively understand as the demand on police does not occur in isolation of other public sector agencies and partners. A central part of our work on understanding and managing demand includes understanding the changes to policy and practice that our partners instigate and the effect those changes may have on police demand. Again, as part of the annual business cycle, the strategic horizon scanning and impact assessment will be carried.

Finally, our understanding of demand and what that means for creating capacity and changing our workforce model, will become increasingly important as the 2026 strategy is implemented longer term. While we have already engaged with the National College of Policing around best practice in this area, we are also connecting with police colleagues in England and Wales to learn from their own experience in this area of business. This is where I expect we will become more sophisticated in our understanding but this is likely to be over a longer timeframe. I would be happy to update the Committee with progress later in the year, alongside our implementation of other elements of the 2026 Strategy for Policing

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Graham', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

ACC Malcolm Graham
Strategic Change
Police Scotland