

**LETTER SENT BY EMAIL ONLY**

Mary Fee MSP  
Convener  
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing  
Rm T2.60  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

4 October 2017

Dear Ms Fee

Further to your correspondence of 21 September 2017, I am writing to provide members with additional information in respect of SPA input and oversight on Police Scotland's communication and engagement strategy and performance discussion arrangements with staff.

Police Scotland were given an action by the SPA Board to bring their first [Communication and Engagement Strategy for 2014-2016](#) for consultation to the SPA Board. This was presented at a [public Board meeting held on 24 February 2015](#). The Board set expectations and sought assurance that Police Scotland's approach and commitment was focused on encouraging and fostering stronger communication and engagement - both internally with the workforce and externally with partners, stakeholders and the public.

Over the resulting period, the SPA's oversight in terms of workforce engagement and communication was undertaken through regular reporting on workforce and wellbeing issues to the SPA's HR/People committee and public Board meetings. Engaging directly and proactively with the staff associations and trade unions has also informed the SPA's scrutiny in this area.

Feedback from this approach has ensured that Police Scotland continue to review and tailor its approach to communication and engagement. Outputs from the staff survey conducted in 2015; recommendations from the [Chair's Review of Governance in Policing](#), and the approach taken to engaging and consulting on the Policing 2026 strategy have all informed a continued evolution of the service's communications and engagement approaches.

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With Policing 2026 now finalised and an implementation plan in development, Police Scotland are considering the next iteration of their communication and employee engagement strategy. The Board will continue to engage with the service to set our expectations on that approach – not least to fulfil our statutory responsibility to maintain policing and as the legal employer of police staff. We will scrutinise the effectiveness of its delivery by Police Scotland as an important part of the oversight of the implementation plan as a whole, and I can reassure the Sub-Committee that continued engagement with staff associations and unions will be an important ongoing contributor to SPA Board insight.

In relation to the Performance Development Conversations (PDC), the SPA's People Committee has received assurance that this approach has been widely implemented and will focus future scrutiny on testing the quality of these conversations. Police Scotland are currently undertaking a quality assurance process in relation to the implementation of the PDCs and this will be scrutinised by the People Committee in due course. This will be supported by contributions from unions and staff associations at public meetings of the People Committee with consideration being given as to whether this provides appropriate assurance or whether the SPA require to carry out a further dip sampling process.

I trust this information is helpful to the committee. Should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nicola Marchant', written over a horizontal line.

Dr Nicola Marchant  
Deputy Chair  
Scottish Police Authority