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John Finnie MSP
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

30 October 2019

Dear John,

HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA)

Thank you for your letter of 8 October regarding the publication of the above report.

As you know, the aim of the inspection was to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the SPA in terms of fulfilling its core role and also scrutinise how the organisation is meeting its statutory obligations under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

Whilst the report highlighted important areas for improvement, it also identified evidence of genuine progress at the SPA over the last 18-24 months, including the appointment of experienced individuals to both Police Scotland Senior Team and to its own Board. It also recognised the considerable work done to change and improve its overall system of governance, with the Authority revising its committee structure, introducing a new Governance Framework etc.

I am satisfied there has been significant progress, not least in the financial management and planning of the SPA which have brought clarity to the budget position; and much improved local engagement, including the new approach to holding Board meetings across Scotland and using these as an opportunity for the Authority to engage with local authorities and other partners.

Both the SPA and I would acknowledge this improvement work is on-going and must continue. The majority of the HMICS report's recommendations are for the SPA directly to address and I am pleased that action is already underway. As an early action, Scottish Government has also agreed with SPA to work together to revise its governance and accountability frameworks. Work on this has already commenced.

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You have asked about the issues emerging during the inspection that were out with the terms of reference. These related to internal organisational matters which are to be addressed through the SPA's continuing organisational development and improvement work. The Scottish Government however is supporting this, building on the organisational development review which the Board itself has commissioned, we have assisted with the provision of interim HR support (through the recruitment of an HR professional with an organisational development background); with the appointment of the new Interim Chief Executive to provide stability and enhance capacity whilst a permanent replacement is found.



HUMZA YOUSAF

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