

**Letter sent by email**

Mr John Finnie MSP  
Convener  
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing  
c/o Justice Sub-Committee Clerks  
Room T2.060  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh, EH99 1SP

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Our ref: SD/177/CW/19

Dear John

**Strategic Co-ordination Unit (SCU)**

I refer to your correspondence of 30 July 2019 regarding the Strategic Co-ordination Unit and enclose a copy of the Unit's terms of reference which is available to view on the SPA's website at the following link: <http://www.spa.police.uk/about-us/strategiccoordinationunit/> The SCU comprises an Assistant Chief Constable and a Chief Superintendent, with additional elements of support provided on an 'as required' basis from within Police Scotland. As you note, the option exists for the work of the SCU to be further augmented in the future.

The establishment of the SCU is part of a wide ranging programme of work which is currently underway to review, develop and consolidate the operation of the post-2012 police reform arrangements. This includes a programme of organisational development and design of the SPA corporate support function which is addressing a number of longstanding issues. The objective is to ensure that the Authority has the capacity, capability, culture and structure to perform its role effectively in the future and to become an organisation which is strategic, assertive and front-facing and which commands public confidence and trust. Regular public reports on this work have been provided to the Authority and can be accessed from the SPA website.

As outlined in my report to the Authority at our meeting held on 22 May, the establishment of the SCU sits alongside this wider programme of work and is consistent with the principles and policy intentions of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 which *inter alia* specifies how the Authority and the Police Service of Scotland should work in cooperation, including sharing resource.

As defined in the Act, the Scottish Police Authority consists of the Chair and its Members, who are appointed by the Scottish Ministers. It is for the Authority (i.e. the Chair and Members) to provide strategic leadership and direction and to ensure that its statutory functions are carried out effectively. The Act specifies that the Authority may appoint individuals to assist it in the carrying out of its

functions and such individuals may be i) employed by the Authority ii) provided through arrangements with a third party or iii) be constables engaged in temporary service with the Authority. It is therefore entirely appropriate that the officers working within the SCU report to the Chair of the Authority for the duration of their secondment in respect of their activities in this capacity. In addition, it would be inappropriate for them to report to the SPA Chief Executive as they are, quite explicitly, not part of the SPA Executive.

The establishment of the SCU is not a direct response to the internally-focused review of the SPA Executive published in March 2018 which preceded a number of significant changes within the Authority as well as important recent work and contributions which have focussed attention, and informed thinking on, the 'whole policing system' and the SPA's role within that. These include the independent review of police complaints and investigations carried out by Dame Elish Angiolini, the Justice Committee's post-legislative scrutiny report and a range of work being led by the Authority itself, including that of the SPA's Governance Development and Improvement Group.

In summary, I would assure the Sub Committee that the SCU, its remit, membership and reporting, accords with the SPA's statutory and governance framework. The SCU's work is already starting to play an important part in informing thinking and practice across the policing system and I am confident it will contribute positively to developing effective governance and accountability of policing in Scotland in the future.

I trust this information is helpful and would be pleased to meet with yourself and members of the Sub Committee, either formally or informally, to discuss our programme of improvement and development work further.

Yours sincerely



**Susan Deacon CBE**  
**Chair,**  
**Scottish Police Authority**

Enc. SCU - Terms of Reference

Cc. Chief Constable, Police Scotland

# SPA Strategic Coordination Unit Terms of Reference

## Introduction

This document outlines the terms of reference for the Strategic Coordination Unit (SCU) and should be read in conjunction with the following publically available documents;

1. [SPA Chair's Report, SPA Board Meeting 28 March 2019](#)
2. [SPA Chair's Report, SPA Board Meeting 22 May 2019](#)

The duties and deliverables for the SCU should also be considered alongside the wider plans for the development and design of the SPA as outlined in these reports.

## Background

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 put in place new arrangements for the delivery and oversight of policing in Scotland, notably the creation of the Police Service of Scotland (Police Scotland) and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA). It is the most significant public sector reform since the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

The ten year strategy 'Serving a Changing Scotland' was developed and agreed jointly by the SPA and Police Scotland in 2016. It sets out an ambitious programme of transformation and change within policing and is now at a key stage of implementation and delivery.

Policing in Scotland faces significant financial pressures – across revenue, capital and reform funding – and this creates a challenging environment in which prioritised investments and spending decisions are made against the need to ensure not only financial sustainability but also the need to keep people safe and to maintain public confidence and trust in policing.

The efficacy of the statutory governance arrangements for policing - in particular the ability to make informed, accountable and timely decisions on key strategic issues - is a key factor in determining the ability of Police Scotland to operate efficiently and effectively.

In the six years since the new statutory arrangements came into being, Scotland's post-police reform landscape has evolved and developed, and positive progress has taken place both in the delivery and governance of policing, however, many systems, practices and relationships have developed and evolved in an ad hoc way and are in need of systematic review and improvement.

## **Role**

The role of the SCU will be to support the development of a strategic 'whole system' approach and to provide effective co-ordination between the SPA and Police Scotland and, where necessary, the Scottish Government, to ensure that issues of key strategic import for the discharge of efficient and effective policing, or those issues which will/are likely to impact on public confidence in policing, are addressed transparently and expeditiously in accordance with the intent of the 2012 Act.

The SCU will provide professional police advice and support to the SPA in the design and development of systems, practices and processes to support the effective delivery and oversight of policing and will inform, and contribute to, a programme of organisational design and development of the SPA's structure, functions and practices by providing professional police advice and input.

## **Structure and Governance**

The creation of the SCU is consistent with the provisions of the 2012 Act; both in terms of the requirement for the SPA and Police Scotland to work in cooperation and share resource<sup>1</sup> and also the Authority's power to appoint such individuals as are required to give effect to its statutory duties, including the temporary appointment of police officers<sup>2</sup>.

The SCU will comprise an ACC and a Chief Superintendent whose work will be supported by appropriate staff, as agreed by the SPA Chair and Chief Constable, and will be subject to appropriate internal governance.

The SCU will operate for an initial period of 6 months, subject to review by the SPA Chair and Chief Constable at that time.

The ACC SCU will report directly to the SPA Chair for direction in support of this terms of reference, while maintaining a line management relationship through the DCC People and Professionalism.

Regular coordination meetings will be held between the SPA Chair and ACC SCU.

## **Duties and Deliverables**

The role of the SCU as detailed above will be delivered through the following duties and work streams. This will be regularly reviewed and will be developed in agreement with the SPA Chair and Members

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/section/83/enacted>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2012/8/schedule/1/enacted>

The SCU, as Police Advisors, will support both development and business as usual activities as required and particularly in relation to strategic planning.

In particular, the SCU will work in support of the Authority to address the following:-

- 1. Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities** – provide professional policing advice which will support the development and articulation of a shared understanding of the respective roles and statutory responsibilities of the SPA, Police Scotland and Scottish Government, as a starting point for future work.
- 2. Strategic Planning and Management of Change** - support the development of a strategic and well managed approach to forward planning (at least 1-2 years) across the SPA and Police Scotland to enable the delivery of key strategic priorities and the delivery of transformation and change within policing, underpinned by the necessary systems, practices, capacity and relationships to support effective governance, decision making and oversight of change and the delivery of policing.
- 3. Business Co-ordination** - help ensure that effective, well designed and coordinated systems and practices, which are both rigorous and agile, are in place to ensure that governance and decision making arrangements between Police Scotland and the SPA effectively address both strategic themes/business as usual decisions and emerging risks/critical incidents, at all times working to ensure that public trust and confidence in policing is developed and maintained.
- 4. System development** - provide professional policing advice and support to the development and redesign, and to the building of shared understanding and agreement, of respective roles and boundaries across the policing system and wider scrutiny landscape including the SPA, Police Scotland, HMICS, PIRC, Scottish Government and the Scottish Parliament.
- 5. SPA design** – provide professional policing advice and support to inform the development and redesign of the SPA corporate support function so that it aligns to and supports the delivery of the SPA’s key statutory responsibilities, in particular to provide effective governance and accountability arrangements for policing in Scotland while also being cognisant of, but not involved in, the SPA’s wider responsibilities to deliver Forensic Services and the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme (ICVS), and the appointment of, and handling of complaints about, senior officers (ACC and above).