



F/T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

John Finnie MSP
Justice Sub-Committee Convenor
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

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Dear Convenor

Thank you for your letter, dated 22 December, regarding the policing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) climate summit and the rescheduled Euro 2020 Championships.

As you have correctly outlined, in this most tumultuous of years, COP26 has been postponed until 1-12 November 2021. We are working extremely closely with the UK Government on planning for the event, on the basis that it will be held in person, while closely monitoring the Covid-19 situation. Together with the UK government, we are exploring what different scenarios might mean for COP26 and how we plan for that, whilst putting the health of the participants and the local community first.

Our priority remains ensuring that COP26 is a safe, secure and successful event, whatever form it may take. I am aware that you have also requested updates from Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority and I will leave them to outline their latest planning activity as operational decisions are a matter for Police Scotland.

However, I can confirm that we are fully engaged with both organisations. This includes my regular meetings with the Chief Constable which provide an opportunity for me to receive updates on developments.

My officials attend the Policing of COP26 Oversight Board Group, chaired by Tom Halpin QPM. The Group considers, among other things, budget issues, mitigating the potential impact on day to day policing for communities and ensuring that staff and officer health, safety and wellbeing are fully considered. Its work is ongoing and will gather pace as we get closer to the event itself later this year.

In addition to this, assurance is provided through a robust mix of capabilities which includes HMICS audit, oversight by Functional and Strategic Leads, external oversight through the Policing and Security Assurance Group (PSAG) and peer review by bodies including the

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Metropolitan Police Service. There is also further independent advice being provided by an independent advisory group (IAG) led by John Scott QC.

Scottish Government officials are also in regular contact with Police Scotland's Finance Team, COP26 Unit and SPA counterparts re various aspects of the planning process.

Later this month I plan to meet Police Scotland's Gold Commander and operational leads to hear an update on their readiness to deliver a safe and secure COP26. I expect that this session will also help identify key operational delivery issues, risks and potential barriers to success, with time to consider any issues well ahead of the conference. We are also considering what additional powers the service may require to deal with the diverse range of protest groups that we can expect to arrive in Scotland to coincide with the event.

Turning to budget, we continue to liaise and work closely with the SPA and Police Scotland to ensure that robust and effective financial governance arrangements are in place to support Police Scotland in its delivery of a safe and secure event. Police Scotland's Finance Team continues to work closely with their operational colleagues to ensure that any changes to the planning assumptions are properly reflected in the financial plans.

I am aware that the SPA Board considered and approved an updated COP26 policing budget at its meeting on 12 November 2020 and that this has since been submitted to the Cabinet Office COP26 Unit for its consideration. Scottish Government finance colleagues are also engaging with the Cabinet Office to agree the mechanism of funding for the SPA/Police Scotland and of course the other organisations involved in the safety and security of the event.

Finally, event planning for UEFA EURO 2020 in Scotland is being led by a Local Organising Committee (LOC) comprising the Scottish FA, Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government, Police Scotland and Visit Scotland.

The Scottish Government is working closely with our event partners on preparation for the matches at Hampden this summer. In response to the Covid situation, all twelve host cities are considering a range of planning scenarios, including the scale of supporter attendance at stadiums and fan zones. UEFA will review scenario planning with each of the hosts in April before confirming final proposals.

The Scottish Government is also in regular dialogue with the UK Government to understand scenario planning for the matches at Wembley and to discuss matters with UK-wide implications, including readiness, safety and security. Scottish Government and Police Scotland participate in UK-wide forums, alongside UK Government, UK policing colleagues and other partners, that examine safety and security planning for the tournament as well as the potential impact on communities.

I hope you find this update helpful.



HUMZA YOUSAF

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