



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Mr Robert Black
Former Auditor General for Scotland

By e-mail

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Dear Mr Black

Role of the Scottish Police Authority, the Chair and members: independent review

I am writing to you regarding your recent report on the role of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), the Chair and members.

I understand that the remit for your independent review was to: review the scope of work currently undertaken by the Chair and members of the Authority against the recruitment advert; review the time commitment of members and the Chairing member of the Authority as stated in the recruitment advert of 5 days per month and up to 12 days per month respectively and; provide clarity regarding the legitimate scope and time commitment required of both roles.

I note that your report includes conclusions on policing issues outwith this remit. In particular, on the accountability of Parliament in its scrutiny of the police service. You conclude that parliamentary accountability 'could be further improved by regular meetings, at least annually, between the Justice Committee (or the Police Sub Committee) and the SPA Members along with Police Scotland senior staff'.

Adding that, 'once it is clear that these arrangements are working well, the Scottish Parliament might wish to review the role of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing to ensure that it complements the role of the SPA and that there is no overlap of activities'.

Could you please provide details of the evidential basis for your view that there is an overlap in the work of the Sub-Committee and the SPA. For example, evidence provided to you on specific areas of work where the SPA and the Sub-Committee duplicated each other's scrutiny in the past, as well as evidence provided to you on areas of scrutiny work undertaken by the Sub-Committee, which might ordinarily have been expected to have been done by the SPA.

Also, could you please confirm whether you took evidence more widely than from those referred to within your report to inform your independent review. For example, from external stakeholders and elected representatives.

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice is to provide evidence to the Sub-Committee on the police governance and accountability review on 8 October, and therefore a response by Friday, 25 September would be appreciated.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Finnie', written in a cursive style.

John Finnie MSP
Convener, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing