

Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

Role of local police commanders

Written submission from Argyll and Bute Council

1. Argyll and Bute council covers the second largest geographical area in Scotland and has a population of just over 88000. It has the highest number of inhabited islands of all local authorities with 23. There are 6 main towns from Oban in the North Campbeltown in the South and Helensburgh in the East. This presents the central challenge for public service delivery to all partner agencies.



2. Given our geography, partnership is central to service delivery in Argyll and Bute and is embedded in the work that the partner agencies carry out. The partnership between the Local Police Commander and the Council, both at officer and elected member level, is critical to this.
3. The recently approved Local Policing Plan 2017-20 for Argyll and Bute puts this clearly into practice – it is directly aligned with the Argyll and Bute Outcome Indicator Plan.
4. The Local Police Commander takes a lead role in Community Planning and related partnership initiatives. This has been the practice in Argyll and Bute since the implementation of community planning, with the Local Commander assuming the chair of the overall partnership management committee on a regular basis over the years. This has continued since 2012.
5. The diversity and remoteness of our communities means that a localised approach to service delivery, including policing is essential. More than ever before, the Police Commander in Argyll and Bute supports officers across our communities to deliver a different type of policing – one that is based on community need, not just on tackling crime.
6. The Local Police Commander leads on a number of specific partnership issues – recent examples are recruitment in the public sector and a joint approach to reducing Road Traffic Accidents, which is our greatest safety challenge.
7. The relationship that has been built between the Council and the Local Police Commander since 2012 has been strengthened by the regular Police

performance reporting to the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee and has enabled democratic scrutiny of policing priorities and performance.

8. Policing resources are discussed at the Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee. The desire expressed by Councillors for more visible policing in communities was met by the Commander in response to this by adjusting resource to create more frontline officers than were in post previously and a reduction in management tiers. Increased traffic resource was also delivered.
9. Local policing presence at Community Councils gives communities and councillors regular opportunities for dialogue and reassurance. This is actively encouraged by the Local Commander.
10. It is essential for Argyll and Bute Council that, whilst a national policy framework applies to the Police, that Local Commanders are empowered and autonomous in responding to local policing need.

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