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Ms Jenny Marra MSP
Convener
Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny
Committee
The Scottish Parliament

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writer : Malcolm Burr
our reference : MB/LMC/L0901
your reference :
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Dear Ms Marra,

SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY (SPA) REVIEW OF THE SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY EXECUTIVE

I have noted your letter of 23 February 2018 on behalf of the Committee to Dr Nicola Marchant, Depute Chair of the SPA and co-Reviewer, with me, of the SPA Executive.

Dr Marchant will, I am sure, respond in detail to the Committee's concerns regarding the performance of the SPA Board, but I note that your letter also seeks some guidance on the progress of our Review, and what has informed our conclusions.

It is fair to say that both Dr Marchant and I are somewhat frustrated as to the time which has elapsed since we completed the recommendations following our Review, in the first week of January 2018. It is fair to take into account, however, that the SPA had recently appointed both an Interim Chief Officer and a new Chair, both of whom had a legitimate expectation of being consulted on both the process and conclusions of our Review. I had a very helpful conversation with Professor Deacon in January, and we reflected on the issues, past and present, affecting the SPA. We both noted, however, that the SPA was still the subject of a number of recommendations from earlier reports, and that it was important that our Review supported improvements in the SPA itself, and in its relationships with Police Scotland, its stakeholder community, Parliament and indeed "Civic Scotland". These discussions were concluded by early February, and it is unfortunate that it has taken until today for the Report to be published.

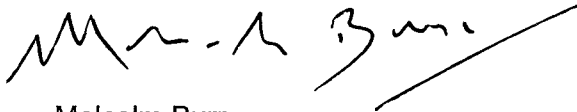
No one is more aware that we of the need for the SPA to consider our recommendations – it need not, of course, follow them – and move into a different phase of operation, both internally and externally. Dr Marchant and I undertook an extensive programme of conversation and consultation with a number of Stakeholders, many of whom had not felt connected with the work of the SPA, and all of whom expressed both the need and wish for deeper engagement with the SPA not just on the narrow performance of its statutory duties, but as regards the development of Policing Strategy and Policy.

We also undertook a second round of engagement with key Stakeholders, including Police Scotland, the SPA Board and employees, HMICS and Staff Associations as to the interim conclusions of our Report, and these have all, I am glad to note, been warmly received.

We have considered in detail the transcripts of the Hearings conducted by both your Committee and the Justice Sub Committee, and the substance of the concerns expressed in these Hearings, as well as the strengths which were also noted, are reflected within our recommendations.

I hope that this information is of assistance to you and the Committee, and would be pleased to have a discussion, formal or informal, with the Committee in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Malcolm Burr', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Malcolm Burr
Chief Executive
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar