

Ask the Dep – Armed Policing

Q: My question centres around the role of Armed Response Officers in Scotland and what direction this may take in the future. We're clearly at a stage where local divisions are struggling to cope with the huge demands placed on them by all of our stakeholders who rightly or wrongly expect the Police Service to do far more with much less. Currently the ARV's are extremely restricted in the activities they can take in part in and I personally feel we are missing a trick in not allowing them to assist the local divisions more. I have previously had an acting position within Community Policing and during this period saw first-hand the demand for extra ASB patrols, Notalia checks, Bail checks, Warrant enquiries to name but a few which were expected to be carried out on top of responding to calls and progressing enquiries.

Whilst clearly the ARV units would not be appropriate for all of these, there is definitely the opportunity for Armed Policing to take on some of these tasks from divisions in order to allow them to focus on other priorities. I'm well aware of the Political/Media aspect to this topic, however, I feel this is an area which definitely needs to be looked at as I know there are a number of ARV trained officers who are seriously considering a change in career path due to the now limited career development and partnership working opportunities available within Armed Policing. Is the role of ARV's and the assistance they can potentially offer the divisions being looked at by the executive and how do you see this role developing in the future?

A: Many thanks for your question. As you are probably aware ACC Higgins chairs the Armed Policing Monitoring Group which meets on a Quarterly basis. As part of the ongoing actions the current and future armed policing deployment model is reviewed taking cognisance of current intelligence, information and threat assessment to provide a proportionate and justifiable ARV response and policing presence. ARVs and their deployment is at the core of this decision and review process which in line with the Strategic Threat and Risk Assessment is an ongoing process. Many thanks for your question and I hope the above helps.

Ask the Dep – Balanced Workforce

Q: Has the maintaining of Police Officer numbers nationally as set out by the Scottish Government had a negative effect on our reduced budget and structure?

A: Thank you for your question. The commitment to 17,234 officers continues to be maintained which effectively means a ring-fencing of this particular part of the budget. Savings requirements have to be found from other areas such as staff and non-pay costs and through the ongoing review of Police Officer supervisory ranks and ratios. We are undertaking work to develop a model for the service that is sustainable in the longer term. The work taken forward will include a look at the optimal model of officers and staff that the service should have, based on the capability and capacity required to deliver excellence in service and protection into the future. The future model will also be based on the legislative requirement to deliver best value through how we operate. Until sufficient work is progressed to inform decisions in line with the future model, the service will continue to look at all opportunities to make financial efficiencies and also how we resource and deploy against current demand.

Q: When are you going to put in hand measures to ensure that all Police Officers are doing work which requires Police powers or direct relevant Officer experience to do it? There are far too many roles being filled by Police Officers which could be done by Police Staff. In times of budget pressure you ought to be addressing the huge cost of deploying Officers in Admin/Support functions?

A: The question of a balanced workforce is both relevant and complex. There are many roles where police officer knowledge contribute to the effectiveness of the service - even where police powers do not require to be specifically deployed, as such there is always a balance to be reached as to the most effective means of service delivery. Police Officers - due to the nature of their role may also have been subjected to injury discharging their duties and require to be meaningfully deployed during periods of recuperation. In relation to your question I would also like to draw your attention to our current organisational development programme - 2026. This is looking to inform the future shape of the organisation and part of that will be a focus on what the right balance of Officers and Staff should be - taking account of all relevant factors including, demand, threat levels, crime forecasting and skills and capabilities. It will also seek to develop and deliver a model of policing that is sustainable in the longer term. Whilst the title - 2026 - suggests a ten year change programme, we will be looking to get the right balance of resources deployed across the service, reflecting best value, as soon as we can.

Q: With a high percentage of budget spent on wages, and the bulk of that relating to Police Officers, it seems inevitable with the loss of the Government commitment to 17234 that PSoS must look at Police Officer costs, structure and short/medium term viability of the current model, and establishment, in order to make significant savings. This has been done elsewhere by means of recruitment freeze and 'Early Exit' schemes under Police Regs - Devon and Cornwall, PSNI and West York are but a few examples. I'm not looking for anything other than a simple Yes or No to the following -

- 1. Are Police Scotland planning to reduce its establishment of Police Officers Nationally? Yes or No.**
- 2. If the answer to 1 is Yes - Is a recruitment freeze being considered? Yes or No.**

3. Is implementation of an Early Exit Scheme for Police Officers under Police Regs being considered? Yes or No. It seems inevitable at some point the establishment will need to be modernised for 21st Century Policing and this may go hand in hand with overall cost reductions and savings..

A: In response to your query and in the spirit in which you asked me to respond, I have tried to give you the Yes or No you requested, but it is often the detail that helps our Staff and Officers understand the complexity of these matters:

1. No, Police Scotland are currently maintaining a commitment to 17,234
2. Given that there is no commitment to reduce the Police Officer establishment at present (which is not to say this will not change at some point in the future) then no recruitment freeze is being activated.
3. No, this is not being considered.

Q: I understand that the recent form to submit a business case for filling a police staff vacancy (to be submitted to the recent “Vacancy Panel”) included a field effectively asking, “can this role be carried out by a police officer?” The maximum salary for the overwhelming majority of police staff roles is considerably less than the maximum salary for a Constable (approximately £36,000) and the political restriction demanding 1000 additional police officers is no longer in force. Additionally, many of these police staff roles require specific skills, capability with IT or qualifications that are not a requirement in order to be recruited as a police officer (and therefore, many officers may not hold them) My question is therefore, in what way can filling police staff vacancies with higher paid police officers be considered to either: a) save money for the organisation (b) increase the efficiency and operational effectiveness of the organisation.

A: Many thanks for your question. Currently, there is a budget gap in policing - which has been reported both in the papers to SPA as well as in the media. It is our duty as a public service to operate within our means. As such we must exhaust all options to ensure that we minimise spend. The question - 'Can this post be filled by a Police Officer?' is a generic question we ask within the organisation to ensure we are looking at all potential options to cover roles in the short term. The question 'Can this post be filled by a Police Officer?' does not mean a post will be filled with a Police Officer. In fact, the Service must look at what activities can be demand managed to reduce the need to fill posts in the first instance. The work that is progressing under 2026 will look to develop the Service for the future - within the finances available. This work seeks to identify what skills will be required under a future model. It will inform us what the workforce should look like - and will consider the most practical, sensible and economic way in which to deliver the relevant skills sets. If we need to change the balance we have in respect to Staff and Police Officer resources - either way - this will be achieved in a structured and planned way and with a target operating model in mind. This may not be a quick process, but it will happen - ensuring an efficient, effective and sustainable Service for the Scottish Public. I hope this is helpful in answering your query.

Q: Given the current financial difficulties that the organisation is faced with, will the ongoing job evaluation process end up being a cost cutting exercise and duties passed onto Police Officers or even result in job losses..

A: I would like to assure you that the current Job Evaluation exercise is not about cost cutting or seeking opportunities for Police Officers to fulfil roles currently being carried out by Police Staff.

Job Evaluation is a systematic way of determining the value of a job in relation to other jobs in an organisation. It makes a systematic, consistent comparison between jobs to assess their demands and creates a rank order of jobs. Job Evaluation is a key deliverable as part of the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation Project. The vision for the project is that the SPA/Police Scotland will be a responsible employer in fulfilling their statutory obligations through being:

Fair & Equitable - An organisation that has a fair, equitable and affordable pay policy and appropriate terms and conditions that support policing priorities.

Modern - An organisation that has an agile and flexibly deployed workforce where staff feel motivated, empowered and valued.

Sustainable - A sustainable organisation that attracts retains and develops skills, experience and talent.

The delivery of the Staff Pay & Reward Modernisation will see equity and fairness across the organisation with the introduction of a common set of terms and conditions of employment for all staff. As part of our collective bargaining framework we will consult and negotiate with the Trade Unions about matters relating to employees pay and terms and conditions of employment. This process will apply to both members of the Trade Union and non-members due to this bargaining arrangement. We are committed to working together with the Trade Unions and have a number of dedicated meetings to discuss this Project with them including a Modernisation JNCC fortnightly

Q: Could you provide as to whether there are any plans to civilianize the service? The question is based on the fact that there are many officers carrying out roles which do not require any police powers. Furthermore the market value for many of these roles would be below that of a constable's salary. I understand that there is no longer a commitment to maintain and extra 1000 officers and it would appear that there are considerable savings that could be made in for example intelligence and admin roles and even roles previously not considered suitable for civilians e.g. surveillance. The Security Service pays between £26,000 and £29,000 for a mobile surveillance officer whereas Police Scotland pays up to 37,000+.

A: The commitment to 17,234 officers continues to be maintained, although it is important to note that this will be an aspect of the service that will be looked at as we work to develop a model for the service that is sustainable in the longer term. The work taken forward will include a look at the optimal model of officers and staff that the service should have, based on the capability and capacity required to deliver excellence in service and protection into the future. The future model will also be based on the legislative requirement to deliver best value through how we operate. Until sufficient work is progressed to inform decisions in line with the future model, the service will continue to look at all opportunities to make financial efficiencies including non-staff costs and also how we resource and deploy against current demand.

Q: Having seen more and more budgetary cuts in the time I have been employed by StrathPol/Police Scotland, can you explain why more and more Police Staff posts are being filled with Police Officers who not only (generally) have no knowledge whatsoever of the job role, but also cost literally twice as much as their staff counterparts - who are fully trained and recruited based on their experience - for example my role which is Policing, however does not require any powers. It is not only a dent in morale to be teaching someone the very basics when they are earning twice the wage of their FSO counterparts, but also, surely it would be prudent to get MORE Police Staff in roles which do not require powers such as Crime Management and HOLMES. Having worked for an English force previously under the Workforce Modernisation Scheme as an Investigator within a CID, with many Police Powers (with the necessary background and experience) WFM allows jobs which require niche experience to be put into practice without the high wage bill of a Police Officer. Surely the place for Cops is on the ground, not administering in an office whilst their frontline colleagues are worked to the bone. Although granted, some have genuine reasons for remaining indoors, others are taking a wage which would be much better spent as an Officer on the ground or 1.5/2 members of Police Staff. Can you tell me whether there is any scope for WFM to be introduced within Police Scotland following its success south of the border?

A: Many thanks for your question.

What is clear - as you rightly point out in your opening line - there is less budget available to deliver the Service compared to what was available within the legacy organisations. This being the case we have to reshape the Service to ensure that we can provide Scotland's communities with the best possible service within the finances available to us. As such, the Service believe that the work that is being undertaken by the 2026 team is critical to establishing what the future operating model of policing will be. This will then inform the right blend of Police Officers and Staff. Nothing is off the table (and your ideas will also be factored into thinking) as we develop our ideas in respect to what is in the art of the possible.

There are however immediate challenges that we must consider and manage during this transitional phase - we must still reduce the costs of the organisation - and vacancy management is part of that process which helps us control the budget pressures that we are currently experiencing. This is also a prudent course of action until a clear picture of the future target operating model is understood - as otherwise we may recruit staff into the organisation whose skills we do not have a need for in the longer term. This can ultimately cost the organisation - when both recruitment and termination costs are factored together. This is why managing within our current people costs as far as possible until we have a clearly scoped plan makes both financial and operational sense.

I appreciate that the period of transition as we reshape is difficult - however, I have every confidence in the 2026 team and I know that the Service we build as a result will be more effective, efficient and sustainable.

Q: Officer Numbers and civilian staff redundancy. Is the 17,000 plus officer number being reduced and if so what to. Is it not a false economy to have civilian staff redundancies and replace the postings with Police officers whose salaries are far higher than the staff they replace?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The commitment to 17,234 officers continues to be maintained, although it is important to note that this will be an aspect of the service that will be looked at as we work to develop a model for the service that is sustainable in the longer term. The work taken forward will include a look at the optimal model of officers and staff that the service should have, based on the capability and capacity required to deliver excellence in service and protection into the future. The future model will also be based on the legislative requirement to deliver best value through how we operate. Until sufficient work is progressed to inform decisions in line with the future model, the service will continue to look at all opportunities to make financial efficiencies including non-staff costs and also how we resource and deploy against current demand.

Q: I am aware of several, primarily office based roles in the intelligence arena, where the organisation is perhaps not getting best value because these are carried out by officers earning up to £37,000 per annum. Many of these tasks prior to the single force were historically carried out in some legacy force areas by police staff on a considerably lower salary. Additionally, many of the tasks that are core duties of these roles benefit from an aptitude with IT that is not requirement of being recruited as a police officer, but could be specifically targeted when recruiting a suitable member of police staff. I provide examples below of the type of tasks that may be better more cost effectively, and potentially to a higher standard, by suitably qualified police staff, along with my understanding of the current salary disparity based on the interim pay grades which are in place (which would have to be confirmed):) Interventions Officer Tasks: identifying suitable tactics to impair the activities of OCGs. Police Staff Roles: Like for like equivalent of a Band E police staff equivalent role Interventions Advisor, maximum salary currently circa £28,000 (potential saving of approx. £8,000 per post). Tasks historically also effectively carried out by Criminal Intelligence Analysts – Band D maximum salary circa £24,000 (potential saving of approx. £12,000 per post). ii) Telecoms Officer / Digital Media Investigator Tasks: submission of telecoms data request forms, provide advice on range of options and tactics regarding telecoms and computer related data. Police Staff Roles: telecoms data request forms historically done by Analyst Researchers, Band B, maximum salary circa £20,000 (potential saving of approx. £16,000 per post). I was historically an Analyst Researcher and, amongst other duties, was advised I was successfully submitting approximately 50% of all telecoms forms in legacy L&B.

Providing an advice and a knowledge base in terms of telecoms and computer related data gathering options and tactics can most suitably be carried out by a Criminal Intelligence Analysts, Band D maximum salary circa £24,000 (potential saving of approx. £12,000 per post). On a related note, the processing of telecoms forms was historically primarily done to a high standard by police staff in legacy L&B, but I understand that this is now primarily done by police officers, at a higher salary scale. iii) Local Intelligence Officer Tasks: Sanitising, linking and circulating intelligence on SID. Police Staff Roles Like for like equivalent of a Band C police staff equivalent role of the same name, maximum salary currently circa £21,000 (potential saving of approximately £15,000 per post) Additionally, the police staff role of Indexer has an even lower salary and would make further savings. The examples above are factual, but are far from exhaustive. However, they demonstrate that savings of 22% to 50% on maximum salary costs alone would be routinely achievable. Further details of examples can be provided on request. My related question is to ask whether the organisation is undertaking (or is going to undertake) a review of duties and tasks carried out by police officers, many of which are office based, to identify which of these duties and tasks may be done more cost effectively by suitable police staff roles on considerably lower salaries whilst resulting in no reduction in the quality of service?.

A: Many thanks for your question. Currently, there is a budget gap in policing - which has been reported both in the papers to SPA as well as in the media. It is our duty as a public service to operate within our means. As such we must exhaust all options to ensure that we minimise spend. The question - 'Can this post be filled by a Police Officer?' is a generic question we ask within the organisation to ensure we are looking at all potential options to cover roles in the short term. The question 'Can this post be filled by a Police Officer?' does not mean a post will be filled with a Police Officer. In fact, the Service must look at what activities can be demand managed to reduce the need to fill posts in the first instance. The work that is progressing under 2026 will look to develop the Service for the future - within the finances available. This work seeks to identify what skills will be required under a future model. It will inform us what the workforce should look like - and will consider the most practical, sensible and economic way in which to deliver the relevant skills sets. If we need to change the balance we have in respect to Staff and Police Officer resources - either way - this will be achieved in a structured and planned way and with a target operating model in mind. This may not be a quick process, but it will happen - ensuring an efficient, effective and sustainable Service for the Scottish Public. I hope this is helpful in answering your query.

Ask the Dep – C3

Q: One of the biggest demands are officers across the organisation requiring PNC and CHS checks in connection to incidents that are no longer ongoing, but this information is required for a variety of reasons – one example being report writing. Previously, Station Assistants and Control Rooms (at Bilston prior to Police Scotland and I know this from working there) provided this slow-time function. Stations have closed or have reduced opening hours, Station Assistants have left, moved roles or are working dayshift during the week and Control Rooms only appear to provide checks for ongoing incidents (this was brought in across C3 earlier this year). This has led to a significant increase in the number of Police Officers (not in a specialist role) requiring training in PNC and CHS as there is no-one else available to do these checks. The waiting lists for these courses are at breaking point (CHS and PNC Training needs on SCOPE are currently 1195) and the backlog will NEVER be cleared (possibly slightly dented) if things remain as they are. Every officer requiring training that is NOT in a specialist role is an abstraction that could be saved and these officers could be on the street, rather than sitting in a classroom. Abstractions result in teams running short and quite often cost money. It would make far more sense for the organisation to have a dedicated function that could provide PNC and CHS checks for ALL officers, regardless of them being at an ongoing incident or not, on a 24/7 basis. Surely the PNC Bureau that exists at Govan could implement this fairly easily as a starting point? I have heard that the National Data Enquiry Unit that may be set up in Inverness at part of the C3 restructure will do PNC/CHS checks. Whether this is for both real and slow time enquiries I do not know, but I have heard this unit will not be 24/7 at weekends (which would not address the issue being faced), this unit is not going to be set up anytime soon and those working in this new unit are likely to all need PNC and CHS Training – it is a vicious circle!

Connected to this and mentioned above is the subject of training and the ability to meet demand. We have true vacancies in the JNCC approved Learning Technologies Department structure (if that is what we are meant to be working to). In the last 12 months a member of police staff changed roles and a police officer retired, but I have been informed it is unlikely there is money available to spend on getting IT instructors recruited to replace those that left who could help resolve this problem, never mind get us up to the staff levels we are meant to have. After our re-structure was approved at the JNCC and implemented roughly 18-24 months ago, we are meant to have 3 Police Officers and 20 Police Staff. We are currently sitting with 2 Police Officers and 15 FTE Police Staff. There was however money available for an Inspector to be slotted into our structure (in to a post which did not exist or was part of the JNCC approved structure) which could effectively pay for another 2 IT instructors that could be trained up as PNC instructors. To try and address the issue of less staff that we are meant to have, those present with the relevant skill set are asked if they are willing to travel and stay away from home. If a member of staff was to deliver a 4 day course and stay away from home for 3-4 nights, you are talking in the region of £25 petrol costs, £250-£300 for accommodation and breakfast, £60 for 3-4 evening meals and a hire car £50-60 for 3-4 days. That is approximately £385-£445 per course and while that member of staff is away delivering training from their own location, that is a week when no training can take place in their own area. As I said before, it is a vicious circle and it feels like we are trying to deal with a broken leg by using a plaster. When a project comes in (National Custody being an example) other training has to be slotted in as/when room and instructor availability permits.

Added to this is the ongoing usual demand for Probationer Training, officers moving divisions that require training in local legacy applications (i6 would have solved that problem but as that is not happening, it is a problem we will still be faced with for a number of years), enhanced IT training for promoted officers, new departments being set up and additional/specialist IT Training required and every brand new external person recruited to the ACR requires at least 13.5 days IT Training. There are processes in the organisation that do not work that urgently need reviewed, which in turn will provide a more efficient service and reduce the number of non-essential abstractions for training and at the same time, we need to recruit more staff to become specialist IT trainers to assist with the ongoing demand for training across the organisation for those that actually need trained. Submitted for consideration and happy to discuss.

A: Please find the following information in reply to your observations and suggestions;

As you alluded to in your opening few paragraphs, there was a change to the process requesting of vehicle and person checks on PNC / CHS. Following work carried out by the Edinburgh Localities Project earlier this year, in conjunction with C3 Division, a decision was made which provided much needed operational resilience for Edinburgh Division.

From 28 March 2016, all vehicle and person checks carried out on PNC / CHS by police officers from Edinburgh Division (territorial and specialist) were transferred to a dedicated 24 hour, 7 days per week PNC talk group based at The PNC Bureau in the Govan Area Control Room.

The strategic direction approved by SPA in 2014 included the creation of a National Database Enquiry Unit (NDEU) in Inverness. The C3IR programme team is currently developing the planning around the functionality, demand and resource requirements for the NDEU. It is the intention of the programme that the unit will go live in June 2017 subject to assurance and approval from the Scottish Police Authority.

In relation to your query regarding your JNCC approved Learning Technologies Department structure, the newly formed Workforce Management Group will oversee the implementation of and monitor progress towards delivery of a Workforce Management Plan that gives due regard to organisational priorities, available budget, resource requirements and the management of risk whilst maintaining an appropriate level of operational service delivery.

From a C3 training perspective, PNC/CHS user training will always have an acute business need, either through ACR staff or PNC Bureau and this demand will likely increase in specific geographic areas e.g. Inverness. The Training, Leadership and Development (TLD) processes for demand analysis / training prioritisation have a clear impact on the training plan in C3 to deliver on our operational requirements, both internally and externally as you highlight.

I trust this information I have provided provides context for the direction of travel for the National Database Enquiry Unit and the strategic direction for delivery of the PNC / CHS function for Police Scotland.

Q: I am writing in regard to the support staff currently working within the AACR as part of C3. I am interested to see if we are doing all we can to retain the broad base of talent we have within the AACR in Police Scotland. Many of the staff are undertaking the 'careers in transition' training opportunity and many keep an eye on the advertised jobs, as they wish to remain in the organisation. However, there are minimal job roles advertised in A Division area meaning most will not apply. There are a significant number who will retire on closure and look forward to the VR/ ER packages offered, however my concern lies with those that wish to remain in the organisation. We are lucky to have experienced and knowledgeable staff within the AACR who prove themselves to be assets to the organisation on a daily basis. Their individual and cumulative knowledge, built up over time, of the NE of Scotland is impressive. To lose all of this human capital would be, in my opinion, a loss to Police Scotland as we continue through the transition to one cohesive Force. I note that the majority of roles advertised are out-with A Division and generally located either in the central belt or near to the central belt. This negates many an application due to the upheaval required from staff should they apply and be successful for these roles.

My question regards this requirement for geographical location in applications and if this can be looked into at a Force level to ensure equality of opportunity within Police Scotland? In creating advertised roles can we look into establishing a justification process for nominated geographical location within the advert? Many support roles can be completed remotely and with current technology this has never been easier. Culturally the police require close geographical location of staffing however in reality we could maximise our current knowledge base and capitalise on our talent rather than lose it during this period of transition.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. You are absolutely correct in highlighting that the organisation does not wish to lose the valuable skills and experience of C3 staff within Aberdeen, should they wish to remain within the organisation. You will be aware that a short life working group (SLWG) has been established and now meets regularly, with a specific focus on identifying all possible internal job opportunities, in addition to external for those opting to leave. As part of this work, there is a specific focus on assessing all backfill opportunities available within the Aberdeen area to ensure that we are maximising the posts available locally within other business areas, where staff wish to leave the organisation but have not been able to be supported in their applications to date. You raise a valid point in terms of the need for the organisation to challenge the location of all posts approved for advertising. You may be aware of the recently established Workforce Management Group (WVG), chaired by John Gillies - Director of People and Development. The WVG is the decision making forum for all business cases to advertise and recruit to vacancies are considered. I will have C3 Division formulate a paper regarding this point to present at the WVG and will ensure that the outcome of this is fed back to you. In the meantime, thank you for taking the time to raise this.

Ask the Dep – Custody

Q: We are constantly requiring backfill from street resources as the civilian female turnkey post hasn't been filled for nearly 3 years. This is one of many vacant posts in custody. Is this ever likely to be filled or can we not afford the salary?

A: Thanks for submitting a question. Proposals are being developed which will set out how custody services will be provided as we move forward, but until these proposals are approved and implemented, the Force Executive will continue to ensure that each Custody facility has an appropriate level of trained, experienced officers and staff available at all times. This is vital to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of those who are in our care and those who work within this area.

Q: When will the issue of Custody backfill be addressed? As a response Sgt I can assure you that these constant abstractions are detrimental to front line Policing. We lost our PCSO approx. 7 months ago and have been backfilling his post since. I'm aware that on occasions backfill is unavoidable i.e. sickness and holiday cover however Custody division should be recruiting and filling vacancies.

A: Thanks for your question in relation to backfilling. Similar such questions have been asked and I hope the information below helps. The Force Executive collectively are currently considering several resourcing options in an effort to migrate towards a more sustainable service delivery model for CJSD, Custodial Services. The significant impact of providing local policing resource to backfill custody roles is recognised and this is carefully balanced and managed on a daily basis to minimise wherever possible, any unnecessary abstractions from our communities. It is however, of paramount importance that our custody suites are appropriately resourced given the acute need to safeguard the very vulnerable people detained in our care and to ensure appropriate custodial decisions are effected to safeguard victims. While this work is being expedited the CJS Division continue to leverage other Continuous Improvement Opportunities, which collectively lessen the need to abstract resource from local policing. 7 Day Summary Custody Case marking in partnership with LP Case Management Teams and COPFS. Designed to facilitate early custodial decisions to reduce the number of hospital watches, constant observations and prisoner transfers all of which impact on LP resource. Resource efficiencies are being realised through the use of timeous custodial decisions centred on sufficiency of evidence and the Lord Advocate Guidelines. Review of the Custody Primary and Ancillary Estate across Command Areas. Work has commenced in partnership with LP, Staff Associations, Trade Unions, Custody Staff, People and Development and CJSD SMT to examine the number of custody suites in use, their operating hours, location and deployment of resource, shift patterns, throughput of custodies, H&S and Accessibility to ensure the current operating model is leveraging resource and estate in an efficient and effective manner. Remote Supervision Pilots. An array of custody suites are being trialled as PC Led Suites which are remotely supervised from nearby primary centres to lessen the number of Sergeants required and also LP backfill when they are abstracted. The pilots are being robustly monitored and evaluated to ensure the highest standards of care and welfare, support to staff and appropriate CJ Disposals are facilitated. Revised Observation and Rousing Policy. Custody and backfill staff are about to receive on the job training to support the application of the new risk based policy, which also introduces other tactical options such as anti-harm suits to reduce the number of officers abstracted from Local Policing to facilitate constant observations of vulnerable prisoners (Anti-harm suits). Dynamic Operating Model. Flexing our estate and resource in response to prisoner profile and numbers allows the Division to reduce or increase the number of suites in operation at any given time in accordance with corresponding demand and Local Policing needs. Leveraging Additional Deployable, Custody Trained Resource: Merging of legacy Criminal Justice and Custody Divisions has increased the Divisional cadre of staff available to deliver end to end CJ services in future, but also to provide available in-house backfill. LVRD CAV resource has been retained in Division and an array of thematic Special Constables have also been recruited into the Division to assist our drive towards greater self-sufficiency. None of these innovations will in themselves negate the current need to resource the Division in part through Local Policing resource, however the Force Executive are fully committed to identifying an appropriate and sustainable resourcing model going forward to lessens the impact on LP abstractions, while recognising the need to effectively resource this critical and risk area of service. Both substantive custody resource and LP backfill trained officers are to be commended for their professionalism and commitment to making the interim model work. Thanks for your interest, the issue you raise is quite rightly being considered to identify options to improve the current model.

Q: Sir, I note the establishment of a Continuous Improvement Team to look at aspects of best practice in Custody Division. I spent about 4 years working in Custody at Stirling and Falkirk immediately prior to the creation of Police Scotland and make occasional appearances to plug staffing gaps. What I have seen is a disparity in staffing levels across different custody suites, with some very well staffed and others as low as 2 members of staff on duty at any given time. The local result is that Sergeants and Constables are taken from Response roles to work in Custody, placing additional burdens on Response staffing levels I also note that staffing levels are not specifically part of the Continuous Improvement Team review. I would raise the question as to whether there is potential to release staff from Custody Division to Response or other duties by establishing a ratio of staff to prisoners for ALL custody suites. Locally, a 'shift' consists of Sergeant, Constable and PCSO. Other similar Custody suites have more than double that number.

A: Thanks for your question in relation to custody. Similar such questions have been asked and I hope the information below helps. The Force Executive are currently considering several resourcing options in an effort to migrate towards a more sustainable service delivery model for CJSD, Custodial Services. The significant impact of providing local policing resource to backfill custody roles is recognised and this is carefully balanced and managed on a daily basis to minimise wherever possible, any unnecessary abstractions from our communities. It is however, of paramount importance that our custody suites are appropriately resourced given the acute need to safeguard the very vulnerable people detained in our care and to ensure appropriate custodial disposals are effected to safeguard victims. While this work is being expedited the CJS Division continue to leverage other Continuous Improvement Opportunities, which collectively lessen the need to abstract resource from local policing. • 7 Day Summary Custody Case Marking in partnership with LP Case Management Teams and COPFS. Designed to facilitate early custodial decisions to reduce the number of hospital watches, constant observations and prisoner transfers all of which impact on LP resource. Resource efficiencies are being realised through the use of timeous custodial decisions centred on sufficiency of evidence and the Lord Advocate Guidelines. • Review of the Custody Primary and Ancillary Estate across Command Areas. Work has commenced in partnership with LP, Staff Associations, Trade Unions, Custody Staff, People and Development and CJSD SMT to examine the number of custody suites in use, their operating hours, location and deployment of resource, shift patterns, throughput of custodies, H&S and Accessibility to ensure the current operating model is leveraging resource and estate in an efficient and effective manner. • Remote Supervision Pilots. An array of custody suites are being trialled as PC Led Suites which are remotely supervised from nearby primary centres to lessen the number of Sergeants required and also LP backfill when they are abstracted. The pilots are being robustly monitored and evaluated to ensure the highest standards of care and welfare, support to staff and appropriate CJ Disposals are facilitated. • Revised Observation and Rousing Policy. Custody and backfill staff are about to receive on the job training to support the application of the new risk based policy, which also introduces other tactical options such as anti-harm suits to reduce the number of officers abstracted from Local Policing to facilitate constant observations of vulnerable prisoners (Anti-harm suits). • Dynamic Operating Model. Flexing our estate and resource in response to prisoner profile and numbers allows the Division to reduce or increase the number of suites in operation at any given time in accordance with corresponding demand and Local Policing needs. • Leveraging Additional Deployable, Custody Trained Resource: Merging of legacy Criminal Justice and Custody Divisions has increased the Divisional cadre of staff available to deliver end to end CJ services in future, but also to provide available in-house backfill. LVRD CAV resource has been retained in Division and an array of thematic special Constables have also been recruited into the Division to assist our drive towards greater self-sufficiency. None of these innovations will in themselves negate the current need to resource the Division in part through Local Policing resource, however the Force Executive are fully committed to identifying an appropriate and sustainable resourcing model going forward to lessens the impact on LP abstractions, while recognising the need to effectively resource this critical and risk area of service. Both substantive custody resource and LP backfill trained officers are to be commended for their professionalism and commitment to making the interim model work.

Ask the Dep – Deployment

Q: With regards to making cuts to assist in meeting the budget demands, why as an officer working in V Division do we need to have a SOCO attend from Glasgow when required? Any MOE team or dog requirements have to come from Glasgow, when we have suitably trained Officers in the Division. We have to submit relevant paperwork for Tasking of MOE, dogs etc. and on numerous occasions we have to wait a substantial period of time and this surely costs a great deal more by means of possible overtime and extreme fuel costs. Surely if we could use our own trained MOE officers or local SOCO officers it would benefit the budget demand? Is there no way this could be looked at which would also benefit local officers as well as the budget strains. Also is there anyway the submission of a SOCO request can be made easier. If out of hours is required (which it normally is) it is a nightmare to use the Windscribe system. I am aware we don't want to go backwards but surely it would be easier for the Control Room to be updated of our request and them to carry out the necessary phone calls. V Division is an extremely vast rural area and it is a struggle to contact SOCO via phone if we are not close to a Police Office to use the phone. Could this not be considered, which would result in ourselves doing less travel and save on fuel costs?

A: Thank you for your question. Please see below where I hopefully answer and explain the points you raised. SOCO during Modernisation of Forensic Services in 2011, Scene Examiners in Scotland were placed divisionally and proportionately to best meet the national demand. That means that some areas have had an increase and others a decrease in the number of Scene Examiners that were in their Division prior to this re-structure. To minimise any impact a flexible resource model approach was implemented, where a Scene Examiner from one satellite office, may perform a scene examination further afield. If a resource is available locally, they will of course be deployed from the local satellite office. There are two Scene Examiners based in V Division at Loreburn Street, Dumfries. They work shifts and are on-call for serious incident response. Wherever possible, and for obvious reasons, preference is to send a locally based Scene Examiner. However, they cannot constantly be on duty. When not available, a response is provided by Kilmarnock or Glasgow based Scene Examiners. An electronic scene request process was implemented in West in December 2014, utilising C3 Information Resources (IR) and the WinScribe system. This process allows full visibility of all requests and improved management of Scene Examination resources in West. It is recognised that there are opportunities to improve this process, particularly for operational Police Officers.

This was also noted in the recent HMICS Inspection of V Division. A simplified request process through the ACR has been proposed by Forensic Services and is currently being considered. This is however, dependent on agreed business processes within C3 ACR and is being taken forward by Senior Management within Forensic Services and Police Scotland. MOE If spontaneous incidents require any form of MOE team, the Area Control Room can assist with identifying suitably trained Divisional resources and mobilise them to the incident. The use of Divisional resources should be the first consideration before national resources are requested. However, the gathering of Divisional resources should not delay a response and it may be the case that suitably trained and equipped officers travelling from elsewhere may result in a quicker resolution. For pre-planned incidents and if Divisions do not have sufficient capability or capacity, then a tasking request should be sent to the OSD Co-Ordination Unit who will assess the application and make the arrangements for the attendance of a team to meet the request. OSD would ask that some notice is provided for pre-planned operations to ensure officers are available to meet the request. Any officer or supervisor is welcome to contact the Support Unit at the OSD Complex, Govan for advice or assistance to discuss this issue. Dog Unit Dog Unit officers are not based in V Division and need to attend incidents in Dumfries & Galloway from other areas and do so as and when required and if suitable during spontaneous incidents. If dog unit assistance is required for any other pre planned incidents, then a tasking request should be submitted to the OSD co-ordination unit as outlined above. Again, officers are welcome to contact the Dog Training Centre at Pollok Park for advice or assistance. For general enquiries around the tasking process for OSD resources, officers should contact the OSD Service Delivery & Co-Ordination Unit.

Q: Why are they allowed to create a Review Team re the rank/ratio project of a permanent Inspector, 2 permanent Sgts, a seconded DS, a permanent PC and a seconded PC? OP Mithril which reorganised the whole Division re street resources etc only had an Insp, Sgt and PC and carried out an excellent job and was a far much bigger piece of work. Business sense? Best use of resources? Why permanent posts created for them instead of secondments and delete the permanent posts as part of the review?

A: Thank you for your question regarding the rank ratios work that is on-going. The work is being conducted by officers on a part-time basis alongside their permanent roles. No officers have been placed full time on to this piece of work. One officer has been seconded to work on longer term financial savings and as part of this has taken a lead role in the rank ratios work and at the conclusion of the savings work will return to their permanent post. I hope this answers your question.

Q: Why are they given permission to increase the Command Team by another permanent Supt post and allowed to have 10 CIs despite only having an establishment of 7? Currently 3 Temps and 1 seconded out. We have 2 temp Supts and surely makes business sense to redeploy substantives from projects going nowhere - would save much more money and be beneficial?

A: Thank you for your question regarding ranks within Tayside Division. In response to the question it is necessary to ensure that there is a common assessment of the current, and previous, situation in order that any uplift can be properly quantified. Taking the Superintendents first. Tayside Division has had a three Superintendents for the bulk of its existence and has only reverted to 2 for 3 of the last 26 months. The necessity to confirm the 3rd Superintendent operating model was considered through the Superintendents review, found to be valid, and endorsed by the Force. Consequently, there hasn't been an increase, merely a confirmation of the current operating model known to be effective. In regards to the Chief Inspectors. Tayside Division has 9 CIs. An officer with a base post in the Division is posted elsewhere in the Police Scotland structure and does not currently count in our establishment. In regards to the increase over the 7 permanent posts shown on SCOPE, one of these is due to a medical matter which is clearly a confidential matter. The 2nd is a 3rd DCI within Tayside. The post has been within our establishment for nearly the entirety of the Division's existence. It was founded upon the increasing and substantial volume, and consequent risk, of PPU enquiries. That 3rd DCI focuses upon the operational response, partnership and protection agenda within this complex area of work. The post is not additionally and is built within our operating model, albeit there is clearly a disconnect with SCOPE, which we have been addressing. In regards to staff postings and temporary ranks for senior officers, the posting and transfer mechanism will take into account all the required considerations around efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability whilst looking across the needs of the entirety of the Service. I trust this answers your question.

Q: Would it not be more cost effective have 5 PCSO's at Dunoon Police Office rather than 2.5 as we have just now, and have to backfill almost daily with a police officer?

A: Thanks for your question in relation to backfilling. Similar such questions have been asked and I hope the information below helps. The Force Executive collectively are currently considering several resourcing options in an effort to migrate towards a more sustainable service delivery model for CJSD, Custodial Services. The significant impact of providing local policing resource to backfill custody roles is recognised and this is carefully balanced and managed on a daily basis to minimise wherever possible, any unnecessary abstractions from our communities. It is however, of paramount importance that our custody suites are appropriately resourced given the acute need to safeguard the very vulnerable people detained in our care and to ensure appropriate custodial decisions are effected to safeguard victims. While this work is being expedited the CJS Division continue to leverage other Continuous Improvement Opportunities, which collectively lessen the need to abstract resource from local policing. 7 Day Summary Custody Case marking in partnership with LP Case Management Teams and COPFS. Designed to facilitate early custodial decisions to reduce the number of hospital watches, constant observations and prisoner transfers all of which impact on LP resource. Resource efficiencies are being realised through the use of timeous custodial decisions centered on sufficiency of evidence and the Lord Advocate Guidelines. Review of the Custody Primary and Ancillary Estate across Command Areas. Work has commenced in partnership with LP, Staff Associations, Trade Unions, Custody Staff, People and Development and CJSD SMT to examine the number of custody suites in use, their operating hours, location and deployment of resource, shift patterns, throughput of custodies, H&S and Accessibility to ensure the current operating model is leveraging resource and estate in an efficient and effective manner. Remote Supervision Pilots. An array of custody suites are being trialled as PC Led Suites which are remotely supervised from nearby primary centres to lessen the number of Sergeants required and also LP backfill when they are abstracted.

The pilots are being robustly monitored and evaluated to ensure the highest standards of care and welfare, support to staff and appropriate CJ Disposals are facilitated. Revised Observation and Rousing Policy. Custody and backfill staff are about to receive on the job training to support the application of the new risk based policy, which also introduces other tactical options such as anti-harm suits to reduce the number of officers abstracted from Local Policing to facilitate constant observations of vulnerable prisoners (Anti-harm suits). Dynamic Operating Model. Flexing our estate and resource in response to prisoner profile and numbers allows the Division to reduce or increase the number of suites in operation at any given time in accordance with corresponding demand and Local Policing needs. Leveraging Additional Deployable, Custody Trained Resource: Merging of legacy Criminal Justice and Custody Divisions has increased the Divisional cadre of staff available to deliver end to end CJ services in future, but also to provide available in-house backfill. LVRD CAV resource has been retained in Division and an array of thematic Special Constables have also been recruited into the Division to assist our drive towards greater self-sufficiency. None of these innovations will in themselves negate the current need to resource the Division in part through Local Policing resource, however the Force Executive are fully committed to identifying an appropriate and sustainable resourcing model going forward to lessens the impact on LP abstractions, while recognising the need to effectively resource this critical and risk area of service. Both substantive custody resource and LP backfill trained officers are to be commended for their professionalism and commitment to making the interim model work. Thanks for your interest, the issue you raise is quite rightly being considered to identify options to improve the current model.

Q: Constables and Sergeants are always back-filling cell block duties to the extent that hundreds of shifts are lost from division, which is having a significant impact on Officers being able to progress workloads in a reasonable timescale and Sergeants unable to concentrate on CPT work. What does the force intend to do to remedy this poor situation?

A: Thanks for your question in relation to backfilling. Similar such questions have been asked and I hope the information below helps. The Force Executive collectively are currently considering several resourcing options in an effort to migrate towards a more sustainable service delivery model for CJSD, Custodial Services. The significant impact of providing local policing resource to backfill custody roles is recognised and this is carefully balanced and managed on a daily basis to minimise wherever possible, any unnecessary abstractions from our communities. It is however, of paramount importance that our custody suites are appropriately resourced given the acute need to safeguard the very vulnerable people detained in our care and to ensure appropriate custodial decisions are effected to safeguard victims. While this work is being expedited the CJS Division continue to leverage other Continuous Improvement Opportunities, which collectively lessen the need to abstract resource from local policing. 7 Day Summary Custody Case marking in partnership with LP Case Management Teams and COPFS. Designed to facilitate early custodial decisions to reduce the number of hospital watches, constant observations and prisoner transfers all of which impact on LP resource. Resource efficiencies are being realised through the use of timeous custodial decisions centered on sufficiency of evidence and the Lord Advocate Guidelines. Review of the Custody Primary and Ancillary Estate across Command Areas. Work has commenced in partnership with LP, Staff Associations, Trade Unions, Custody Staff, People and Development and CJSD SMT to examine the number of custody suites in use, their operating hours, location and deployment of resource, shift patterns, throughput of custodies, H&S and Accessibility to ensure the current operating model is leveraging resource and estate in an efficient and effective manner. Remote Supervision Pilots. An array of custody suites are being trialled as PC Led Suites which are remotely supervised from nearby primary centres to lessen the number of Sergeants required and also LP backfill when they are abstracted. The pilots are being robustly monitored and evaluated to ensure the highest standards of care and welfare, support to staff and appropriate CJ Disposals are facilitated. Revised Observation and Rousing Policy. Custody and backfill staff are about to receive on the job training to support the application of the new risk based policy, which also introduces other tactical options such as anti-harm suits to reduce the number of officers abstracted from Local Policing to facilitate constant observations of vulnerable prisoners (Anti-harm suits). Dynamic Operating Model. Flexing our estate and resource in response to prisoner profile and numbers allows the Division to reduce or increase the number of suites in operation at any given time in accordance with corresponding demand and Local Policing needs. Leveraging Additional Deployable, Custody Trained Resource: Merging of legacy Criminal Justice and Custody Divisions has increased the Divisional cadre of staff available to deliver end to end CJ services in future, but also to provide available in-house backfill. LVRD CAV resource has been retained in Division and an array of thematic Special Constables have also been recruited into the Division to assist our drive towards greater self-sufficiency. None of these innovations will in themselves negate the current need to resource the Division in part through Local Policing resource, however the Force Executive are fully committed to identifying an appropriate and sustainable resourcing model going forward to lessens the impact on LP abstractions, while recognising the need to effectively resource this critical and risk area of service. Both substantive custody resource and LP backfill trained officers are to be commended for their professionalism and commitment to making the interim model work. Thanks for your interest, the issue you raise is quite rightly being considered to identify options to improve the current model.

Q: Sir, since the inception of Police Scotland and particularly during the past year, resources within SCD North are such that during major investigations, there is no option but to seek assistance from colleagues from elsewhere within the country. This has resulted in officers travelling back and fore repeatedly, to their respective stations, and where this has not been an option, taking up residence in local hotels for sometimes weeks at a time. Has analysis been done into how much money has been spent in fuel and accommodation in these and other similar circumstances throughout the country? Furthermore, this arrangement has allegedly been agreed in order to avoid incurring overtime at a local level. Has the comparison been made between the cost of fuel and accommodation versus the cost of a smaller number of local officers been paid overtime to carry out work being done instead by visiting colleagues?

A: Thank you for your question which is relevant given the recent increase in major crime demand in the North. You will appreciate that operating models and resource allocation is considered following analysis of data sets over a period of years and not by temporary spikes. However, in the past 6-9 months we have seen an increase in both numbers of homicide and major crime inquiries in certain parts of the North area.

As a consequence work is ongoing to review, modernise and improve the North MIT operating model to respond to more recent demand and to ensure that we are more effective and efficient. The MIT continues to work collaboratively with local policing divisions and other SCD departments to ensure we deliver policing in the most appropriate and cost effective manner. I hope this helps and provides you with some reassurance.

Q: Resource Deployment - Why are we regularly moving officers from Division to Division for large events and they cross each other whilst travelling - recent examples are officers deployed to Edinburgh for an operation from Forth Valley, same number of officers from Edinburgh deployed to Forth Valley for football -they are working the same shift and spend most of their time travelling rather than being deployed in their own area. I am aware that this is probably not intentional but as a result of different planning requests from different teams and what appears to be missing is a form of oversight. This type of issue is not only frustrating for the officers involved as they cannot access IT systems when in other Divisions but also increases costs in terms of fuel and vehicle usage. This is not an issue about Divisions supporting each other but about how we manage that support and maximise our deployment of officers without incurring avoidable additional costs.

A: Thank you for your question. A major benefit of Police Scotland is the ability to deploy officers from different divisions to meet the demands of large events and there is an expectation we will strive to police events at a no cost / minimum option with on duty resources. Prior to Police Scotland it would have merited a request for Mutual Aid, so invariably what happened was that officers had their rest days cancelled instead – something that Police Scotland tries to avoid unless as a last resort. Consequently, this does mean that on occasion officers will be deployed to different division. This is only done after extensive scrutiny and consideration. For larger events these officers then feature on a deployment plan; they have profiles created on STORM; checks are made to identify a suitable driver; operational orders are updated and officers are given parading/briefing points. In your question, you mention officers 'crossing one another'. Without knowing the specifics of the events you are referring to, I can only advise that all attempts are continually made to prevent this from happening. Our current process is that when a Resource Requirement is received for officers to provide support in another Division, then this request should not be considered in isolation. Therein, seeking to prevent a cross over as you have described. There are however occasions when officers with specialist skills are required to perform duties in another Division and that these officers are backfilled in their home Division by conventional officers. This backfill will be from the Division that is best placed to do so, and as a consequence may on occasion be from the Division where they are performing their specialist role. I note that you state this is occurring on a "regular" basis. This causes me concern and accordingly I can give you my assurance that I will raise this directly with Emergency Events and Resilience Planning and our Resource Deployment Unit (the Departments that have responsibility for this matter). In relation to your comment pertaining to IT system access, at events where it is anticipated that officers will require IT access local solutions (temporary) are usually put in place. I can confirm, however, that the Force is actively seeking to resolve National Access. The issue you raise regarding fuel costs and vehicle usage is valid; but I would suggest that this is necessary in order to avoid the much larger financial costs of significant overtime, cancelled rest days or the detrimental effect on officer welfare. Resourcing Events can be a difficult task with many variable factors requiring consideration. Often variances to original plans occurring at very short notice. I can reassure you that all decisions in respect of these matters are not taken lightly and every effort is made to resource events efficiently and effectively. Whilst I trust this answers your question, I would encourage you to make contact with Inspector Lynne Symington at Events East regarding the instances you cite, this will give us the opportunity consider any recommendations that you may have. Many thanks for your interest and the points you raise.

Q: My question relating to the financial constraints of the force is this; As a Road patrol officer who works night shift I would like to know why there are no OBL's for Road Policing and in particular the night shift? This has led to single officers being on duty while the remainder of the shift have been duty changed for court. This does save money but places a terrible burden on others while the public get little or no service. A lone officer would never have been allowed to happen the past so I can only assume saving money is the main driving force behind it. I can think of no operational reason for a lone officer being on duty let alone the safety implications surrounding these circumstances. I apologise if this is not the type of question for this forum.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. You are right to state that there are currently no established OBL's for Road Policing. We have relied upon experience and supervisory oversight to ensure minimum and acceptable staffing levels are maintained. Specifically in regard to nightshift working, our current shift pattern provides for a minimal nightshift cover to ensure that resources are available at core times to patrol our roads. This is obviously with the aim of providing a visible deterrence and response to the majority of our fatal and serious crashes, which we know happen mainly during the day and evening, as opposed to through the night. Until recently, in the legacy Strathclyde area, this oversight was solely the responsibility of the RP supervisors. Where shortages existed in relation to Court attendance for rostered nightshift staff, officers were asked to work nightshift and then attend Court. This was identified as a clear breach of Working Time Regulations and therefore we are endeavouring to identify suitable processes to eradicate this. The introduction of Resource Deployment Unit across the Force heralded a change in approach and officers are no longer expected to attend for Court after a nightshift. This has however introduced the issues you refer to on occasion. Where such issues become known in advance then measures are put in place to allocate staff to work the required shifts, to provide adequate cover. This includes allocation of overtime where necessary. Our aim is not to have the situation you describe, although I accept it has happened recently, perhaps due to uncertainty over the new processes. We are working hard to prevent it happening again. As you may be aware, there is also an ongoing review of the structure and operating model for road policing nationally. This review will include a review of shift patterns and overall nightshift resilience within RP for the relevant area. This review will include an opportunity for operational staff to inform the outcome and I would urge you to become involved in that process as appropriate to ensure your concerns are addressed. Thanks for your question and I hope you continue to put forward your thoughts and suggestions.

Q: With respect I would like to raise a suggestion with regards to Police officers being cited to appear at court. Officers currently get cited for court without any apparent effort made to reduce the officers, and Police Scotland, work patterns. Officers are requested to submit leave dates in order that the PF can arrange a court case with minimum disruption but more often than not they find themselves cited on rest days and annual leave. In addition, many officers appear to be needlessly cited for court when their evidence could have been approved far in advance of the court date. This has a knock on affect where shifts are short of staff, other areas regularly lose officers to cover these areas, and cited officers who are stood down days before the case are required to revert back to their original shift (due to staffing levels) causing them additional stress, and in some cases, financial loss, caused by having to change child care arrangements or their partner having to change or cancel their work arrangements. In an effort to alleviate the stresses and strains placed on RDU, police stations, shift patterns, staffing levels, and officers I would like to make the following suggestion: In addition to the current Fiscal Liaison officer I suggest employing an additional officer whose role and responsibilities would be to assess upcoming court cases with the view of agreeing police officer evidence with the Fiscal weeks in advance of a case. Officer would then be returned to their normal working shift preventing the need to juggle staff and throughout the division. The additional staff member would be responsible for:

- 1. Assessing the evidence provided by police officers 3 weeks in advance of a court case.**
- 2. Deciding which officers' evidence could be suitably agreed by the PF and creating a list, with rationale, to be presented to the PF**
- 3. Consulting with the PF and confirming agreed evidence thus relieving the officer from their commitment to attend court.**
- 4. Contacting RDU and informing them of the officers that are no longer required in order for them to update Scope and countermand the officers 3 weeks in advance of the case.**

Thus alleviating the ever increasing strain on resources, disruption to working shift patterns, and overtime claims. In short, it is my suggestion that the above be achieved using the following simple timeline:

Monday – Day 1 of the new role Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

Tuesday Present Mondays list for approval. Forward approved list to RDU for countermand issue. Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

Wednesday Present Tuesdays list for approval. Forward approved list to RDU for countermand issue. Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

Thursday Present Wednesdays list for approval. Forward approved list to RDU for countermand issue. Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

Friday Present Thursdays list for approval. Forward approved list to RDU for countermand issue. Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

Monday Present Fridays list for approval. Forward approved list to RDU for countermand issue. Assess all evidence for cases due 3 weeks today and collate a list for the fiscal.

A: Your question and proposal has clear merit and focusses on an area dear to many officers' and divisions' hearts. It also touches on a couple of areas where there is ongoing work and progress on several fronts. Firstly, I hope you have had a chance to read Police Memos PS102-14 and PS022-16, which seek to publicise an agreement with COPFS regarding reducing police witnesses at court. Unfortunately, there are still many instances when we are including officers in reports when they are not adding evidential value. It is not uncommon for divisions to receive enquiries from officers about delayed responses to Excusal Requests, and the officer will refer then to how little they are 'speaking to' in the report. COPFS have reminded us on several occasions that we are not making as full use of this agreement as they would wish. A re-publication of the memo is planned for the this month, following a dip sample in a complex case with 120+ police witnesses, 28 of whom would not have been needed under the terms of the COPFS agreement. The purpose of our agreement with COPFS is two fold; firstly to reduce unnecessary officer time at court and secondly, by doing this, reduce the impact of court on officers' time off and leave. We have also carried out a review of the 'scheduling' process which should be in use across Scotland and tackle the issues you highlight of cases being scheduled on dates when annual leave has been included in the report or is already on SCoPE. This has highlighted an under-use of the system and we are seeking to make improvements both to the system itself and the use by Scottish Courts and COPFS. A presentation to SPA will be taking place this month to highlight the benefits that are available here. If this route is progressed, there should be significant improvement without having to remove an additional officer from other duties to carry out the functions you suggest. At present, the 'scheduler' is based on a paper system and while that could be improved, there is active consideration of an IT based solution that would present more current and clear information on officer availability to the Court Clerk at the time of trial date being set. ACC Williams has chaired a meeting this week to look at court overtime and abstractions in the West and this has identified the 'Scheduler' as a key piece of work. It has also been drawn to the attention of the current review of 'spend to save' suggestions being put forward. You will see a new process start later this month (having been piloted earlier this year in K Div) to reduce trials and witness citations in High Court cases. This does involve your suggestion of closer scrutiny, during the case preparation, of exactly which witnesses are needed to prove the case and their availability for the trial dates. Longer term progress for summary cases is being influenced by Police Scotland in the 'Evidence and Procedure review' led by Scottish Courts, which follows from Lord Bonomy's report and a desire to design a more efficient process for summary cases. I hope you can see from this answer, that although I am not proposing to implement the solution you suggest, there are short, medium and long-term solutions already being progressed to reduce the impact of court cases on officers' and staff working and private time.

Q: I wish to advise you of recent events here in Edinburgh. I was attached to the Op Summer City (Edinburgh Festival) for two duties, in this very short time I identified the below issues.

- 1. Officers are being brought in from other divisions for this event, this is the first time I have seen this. As far as I am aware E Division officers have normally been all that is needed. This begs the question where are those E Div officers? I can assure you they are not being left in their normal E div stations, as I am still seeing half of the officers from my shift on Op Summer City?**
- 2. The officers being brought in are travelling over the 45 minutes or 35 miles that a Fed Rep claimed the Chief Constable could ask his officers to do. In fact the officer I was paired with was from St Andrews 51 miles and 1hr 27 mins away.**
- 3. These officers have different hours to E Div (i.e. they are working 8 hour shifts and we 10) and so are either disappearing early or having to claim overtime because of getting back home late (budget always in mind).**
- 4. These out of area officers are not able to log on to our computers i.e. they can do NO work in a station. This means the E div officers have to do all the paperwork for them. A better indication of how wasteful this is would be the Custody I had. I had to do all the paperwork for this taking 4 hours whilst the out of area officer sat twiddling his thumbs. This has two issues; a pairing is off the street longer than normal as only one can do the necessary paperwork and any out of area officer's attendance is simply a waste of time. If then a few incidents arise which require Custody paperwork, then lots of E Div are off the street typing, and the paired officer is sat doing nothing or worse sent out with another out of area officer onto the street with no local knowledge, a disaster waiting to happen if a big security incident occurred.**
- 5. Asking officers to parade at different stations raises security concerns. The security advice at present is not to travel in uniform or with recognisable kit. Have you tried to move a complete set of kit without it being obvious, especially on public transport, as the parade station does not have parking?**
- 6. I was attached to two days of this Op whilst on leave ie I went on AL on 1/8, got allocated to the event on the 5/8 and came into work on 12/8 to find the variation for the shift that day. The next day had also been varied, so having no notice for one day and 23 hours notice for the next, somewhat below the 28 days required.**
- 7. If one of the out of area officers were to hurt themselves or become so embroiled in an incident then that officer might either cause the rest of the officers travelling with them to also be late getting back (the overtime bill rocketing) or that officer could find themselves in Edinburgh with no way to get home as the others had to leave.**
- 8. I was attached to another duty on Summer City whilst on an already SCOPE reflected RRD, reducing the Ops resources.**
- 9. The work level for E div officers will be increased for some time to come due to statement requests, excusal requests, Annual Leave issues and this reduces the amount of time our E div officers can spend on the E div streets when it is already noted at the last HMIC report that E Div is well below the required number of officers. I am a CPT Constable and spotted these initial issues, I am sure a more experienced officer might spot further issues and in fairness, identify the advantages. However, it is my view at present that the above cannot be ignored and require some measures to mitigate against them, I have come up with a short list of practical ways. The officers travelling are identified from one area and brought in at least two vehicles in case of officers being held on etc. This would mitigate the number of officers claiming overtime and the travelling distances claims. The officers identified work the same hours as E div i.e. 10/9 shifts instead of**
- 10. That a generic logon is generated to allow out of area officers to at least type word documents i.e. text of an SPR and then email it to the officer with the report. Have a minibus within E div to allow transfer of offices from home stations to the parade station, negating the need to travel with full kit 'hidden' in a bag on public transport (security of your own staff). Ensure that the person putting the variations on SCOPE has the time to check that the necessary notices are adhered to, to stop claims of being given less than the required notices. Obviously my suggestions will have small cost issues but in the end I am sure they will have the effect of putting more cops on the street whilst having spent less of the budget.**

I hope I have started a thought process into how best to use officers not just how to get the numbers where they are needed, and that the suggestions demonstrate this is not just a 'moan' but a genuine email to improve our working practices.

A: Many thanks for taking the time to highlight the issues you experienced, I appreciate you are being constructive. There are obviously a number of issues that you highlight. Another officer also raised some planning issues and they have been passed to the relevant planning team for them to consider and make improvements where possible. I will remove your personal details and forward on the issues you raise for the planning team to consider and make changes to improve. Thanks again for taking the time to raise such issues and helping to make improvements in this area.

Q: How is it the case the OBL's are consistently and persistently being breached with no formal and documented Risk assessment taking place? Area Commanders - without exception in this Division - make the decision as they are of Rank to do so- not because they have made a rational, reasoned, assessed and documented decision. Failure to adhere to the PSoS Risk Management Policy is a prime example of how frontline Officers are treated with such contempt. Why aren't local Commanders being taken to task when the mantra they use is 'to look at emerging threats and organisational/reputational risk' they cannot even provide a required risk assessment to protect their own Officers which is shameful. Keeping People Safe? Can you answer this without insulting my intelligence and trotting out platitudes about 'challenges'? Who is taking responsibility?

A: Forth Valley Division (FVD) Operational Base Levels (OBL), like other divisions, have been set following an analysis of statistical demand data. The OBLs aim to have the correct number of officers, with the appropriate skill sets, on duty at any given time to meet community demands. In a policing environment such demands peak and trough with OBLs being set at mean demand levels. Significantly, the RDU provide the SMT with a resource profile two weeks in advance of operational dates detailing dates / times when resourcing doesn't meet OBL levels at a local authority or divisional level. This generates debate on available assets who may support response policing, whereby response policing resources may be moved across the divisional area or CAVRU, CPT or CIU tasked as first responders. Additionally, at the daily local and divisional grip meetings, chaired by Local Area Commanders and the Police Commander respectively, 'Resources' is a standalone agenda item, when again all opportunities are considered to mitigate risk and ensure divisional resilience. Notably, the SMT or RDU take resourcing levels exceptionally seriously and do not plan to operate under OBL. The primary reasons for OBL breaches being court abstractions and other local, regional or national demands arising from Resource Requirements, which are generated following significant events or critical incidents. Similarly to all other territorial policing divisions, FVD benefits from such coordination and collaboration of local, regional and national assets and resources, this being event when Forth Valley Division experienced two murders on the same day, resulting in multiple loci and exceptional resource commitments. As was evident on this occasion, due to the varying challenges presented in an operational setting, flexibility is key and material to operational delivery. Additionally, measures such as compensatory rest and other officer wellbeing considerations, including duty court change have the potential to result in OBL breaches. It is viewed that this measure is a welcome protective factor to officer wellbeing. In conclusion, whilst no formal or documented risk assessment is undertaken, Forth Valley Division SMT and PIO use professional judgement and local knowledge in maximising the deployment of resources to meet operational demand, and take all action to mitigate risk.

Q: A review of the role of Patrol / Response / PIO Inspector should be taken to confirm if the current structure is fit for purpose. Savings could be achieved if it could be ascertained there is a requirement for a PIO Inspector to be attached to each patrol / response team within divisions.

A: Thank you for taking the time to submit a question. As you probably know work is ongoing in relation to supervisory ratios. A review of the ratio of police supervisors to staff has identified that currently across territorial divisions, there is an average of:

One Inspector to every three Sergeants, and

One Sergeant to every 6.4 Constables.

The ratios are slightly lower across Police Scotland as a whole and this takes into account regional and geographic variations including the differing requirements for urban, rural and multiple deployments.

A proposal is being developed where the supervisory ratios will increase to:

One Inspector for every five Sergeants, and

One Sergeant for every eight Constables.

A single model will not fit all policing requirements and a full programme of engagement will be carried out to identify appropriate supervisor ratios across business areas. Police Scotland continues to place its people at the heart of the organisation and these proposals seek to balance potential savings whilst considering the workload and demands placed on all staff. Work is currently ongoing in this area.

Q: The catalyst in writing this message is to relay thoughts and comments on the permutations of Response Policing / Community Policing Team shift pattern and officer distribution as we enter a period of revision with a view to implementation overhaul. Whilst the eventual outcome will doubtlessly be a Best Practice rather than the capture of a policing Utopia shift pattern, I consider my following point to be of intrinsic worth at this planning stage so it can be effectively woven in to the ultimate working pattern which is adopted. There has been recent heralding of Sergeant to Constable working ratio increasing from 1 to 6 going to 1 to 8 (a 33.3 % increase.). My experience is that even the 1 to 6 ratio was being stretched with the numbers allocated to the Groups - 1 Sgt to 10 constables is typical on the Groups. In any event, the nub of my query is this:

At which point does officer allocation in excess of the "1 to 8" ratio instigate the appointment of another Sergeant to the Group?

For instance, if 17 officers are allocated to a Response policing group will that trigger a third sergeant being posted to said group?

If not, why not and at which number would it become a third sergeant posting?

In the same vein, can we be have confidence amounting to certainty that Sergeant resilience will be such that when annual-leave, scheduled training and/ or absence comes in to play that there will be sergeant backfill? The alternative to not doing this and "just sucking it up" type attitude - will by compulsion lead to a dilution of supervisory effectiveness at a time when scrutineering and Service Delivery is keener than ever. Ultimately, officers and the public will bear the brunt of stretching feasible workloads and officer ability to and beyond critical level. I kindly request that these points are raised with those in the planning and implementation process with a view to injecting effective remedy. Thank you in anticipation of your assistance and feedback in this important matter.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The rank ratio of sergeant to constables is intended to be used as a guide to achieve efficient spans of command. It was not intended to be applied as a hard and fast rule in all cases and it is recognised that different policing demands may necessitate degrees of variance. Examples of where such variances are often necessary include rural policing where large distances may require a lower ratio to be observed. Conversely, a higher ratio may be acceptable in densely populated urban areas where distances are far lower. Certain specialist departments may also require variance due to the work that they perform. The ratios were not intended to be applied on a team by team or shift by shift basis where an additional constable may cause the ratio to be 'breached' necessitating an additional sergeant to address the breach on that one shift. Rather, it was intended to be considered at area command, divisional and/or departmental levels. In terms of sergeant resilience, where training or annual leave is required, the ratio was derived in the knowledge that these types of abstraction would be a regular occurrence and any ratio, when considered across a division or department, would be capable of supporting such abstractions.

Q: Should public counters be open during public holidays? In our current climate we already have a number of offices in sub divisions that are open only between 0800-1800hrs and out with these hours' members of the public contact Police Scotland via 101 if required. By staffing public counters on public holidays the organisation will be incurring significant costs as staff across each division will be entitled to claim payment as double time for the duration of their shifts.

A: Thanks for your question and suggestion around Front Counters. I am aware that Greater Glasgow Division, like many other Local Policing Divisions, are considering their Front Counter provision to ensure it is appropriate to the needs of the local community, links to their local Estates strategy, partnership opportunities and available resource. It is vitally important that we maximise the effectiveness of the resources that we have and I would therefore like to thank you for this suggestion which I have passed to Greater Glasgow who will ensure that this is actively considered going forward.

Ask the Dep – Environmental

Q: Sir, Given the current financial climate, we as an organisation are experiencing, I was wondering whether or not any consideration has been given to the implementation of an Environmental Project to provide a sustainable income, while reducing our carbon footprint? I am referring in essence to a Project implemented by Edinburgh City Council, whereby they applied to the Scottish Government for a Grant, for the purchase and fitting of solar panels to their council buildings. The Government Grant was not sufficient, therefore to raise sufficient capital, employees were provided with the option to 'buy into the scheme', whereby they could invest a maximum of £250 in order that the solar panels could be purchased and fitted, across a number of council buildings. The energy produced by these solar panels was subsequently used by Edinburgh City Council, as required and any excess, was sold back to the National Grid, with investors being provided with a dividend. As an organisation, we obviously have numerous properties we could use, which could in effect generate an income for the organisation, while still benefiting the investors and reducing our carbon footprint by our self-sufficiency. I would also think that windfarms may also be a viable option. I have suggested this previously to SMT's, however, no-one has so far been able to advise whether or not it has been considered and without a Force Suggestion Scheme, it was difficult to gauge, whether or not it has been looked at previously. Many thanks for your time and consideration.

A: Many thanks for your question and really good suggestion which I spoke to Estates about. I believe that the scheme you describe is the Edinburgh Community Solar Co-operative (www.edinburghsolar.coop). We have investigated this previously and although it is a great scheme, it is not a model that our organisation could operate under as it requires investors and requires to remain under community ownership. We have however made good progress within this area, and can advise that we have sought grant funding for renewable projects that Police Scotland can access which is the "Feed in Tariff". To date we have installed our own Solar PV systems on the roofs of the following Police Offices -Clydebank Police Office, Paisley Police Office, London Road Police Office (Photograph Attached) Baluniefield Police Office, Kinross Police Office, Forfar Police Office, and Downfield Police Office. Due to the nature of our buildings i.e. 24/7 occupation, our systems would be unlikely to ever export excess power back to the grid, however the feed in tariff generally gives the projects a financial payback of less than ten years with a guaranteed income that last twenty years. Obviously the added benefit is the carbon saving from a reduced purchase of grid generated electricity which contributes to our Carbon Management Plan targets. Our Carbon Management programme captures progress on projects such as these and regular updates are provided to senior management and the SPA, perhaps we have an opportunity to publish these across the organisation to share the good news stories more widely. Our Estates team would be more than happy to talk over the programme you, if that would be of any assistance. Many thanks for your very positive and constructive suggestion.

Q: Sir, I wondered if perhaps consideration could be given to the necessity of having the neon Police Scotland sign above Dalmarnock switched off overnight, it serves no purpose other than to attract members of the public to it to find out that it is not a public facing office and they cannot get assistance there. The location of the building does not assist with any particular public reassurance and I think that turning it off along with the vast array of internal lights that are left illuminated overnight would cut costs considerably as I'm sure electricity is a drain on finances. Thanks

A: Thank you for taking the time to submit a question. Staff are encouraged to switch lights off when not in use and the introduction of light control sensors is being included in the Energy Efficiency Savings Plan. The lit police sign at Dalmarnock does hopefully provide some visible reassurance to those that pass the building. Whilst it is not public facing as such it is staffed by commissionaires who can direct members of the public to, for example, nearby London Road Police Office or call for assistance if required.

Q: Staff and officers take varying approaches to lighting use, with many rooms and corridors remaining lit for long periods of time despite being empty. Leaving corridor lights off can make the building a miserable place to work, with very little natural light, but a compromise, which may reduce the energy bills, along with our carbon footprint, could be motion triggered lighting. Should it make a considerable difference to cost, maybe a change to more natural seeming light would also be considered as I believe it would make a considerable difference to morale (and therefore productivity), particularly over the forthcoming months, as daylight hours reduce.

A: Thanks for submitting a question and helpful suggestion. Staff are encouraged to switch off office lights when not required. The introduction of lighting control sensors is a very good suggestion and this is being included in the Efficiency Savings Plan.

Q Has any consideration been given to asking staff to switch off monitor screens when they are not being used? There are a large number of screens in the office being left on but not being used for hours on end. Assuming that this situation is replicated across the force it will be costing Police Scotland a significant amount of money. The simple act of switching monitors off should result in a significant cost saving.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a suggestion in relation to energy savings. Switching off monitors is within our carbon management plan and obviously has the added benefit of reducing energy costs. Please find a link to the carbon management plan: <https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/Corporate%20Document%20Library/Carbon%20Management%20Plan.pdf> Work is ongoing to improve our energy efficiency as you will see from the plan.

Ask the Dep – Estates

Q: Current 'rumour mills' are that there is to be another review of all our stations. Is this correct, and will this result in further closures to stations or a reduction in opening hours?

A: Thanks for your question in relation to review of stations. As part of the Estates Strategy, there is an estates review on-going across the country, which includes all divisions and specialist functions. The purpose of this review is to ensure that we have a police estate that meets the future needs of the Service. The aim is to have a modern estate that is based on demand and increases collaborative opportunities. Currently, the Service has a large estate across the country with many buildings and stations too large and under-used. Indeed, some buildings and stations are vacant. It is therefore only right that we carry out this review which is not simply about the number of stations we have, but is also about how we provide the best service to local communities and work with partners to achieve this. The review will of course identify potential stations for closure and where relevant other opportunities will be explored to maintain a policing presence in these communities. Any proposal to close a station will require the approval of the Force Executive and the Scottish Police Authority and full consultation will take place with partners, local communities and staff. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Q: There has recently been a trend of not replacing Public Enquiry and Station Assistants. This has led to either stations closing for protracted periods or police officers standing in. Station closures is a clear indication of our failure to maintain service to the public and the employment of police officers in this role is not economic. As a result of this policy, will there be further erosion of the service through station closures? Will staff find themselves employed centrally? Will police staff positions be filled full time by police officers? Regards.

A: Thanks for your question in relation to stations. As part of the Estates Strategy, there is an estates review on-going across the country, which includes all divisions and specialist functions. The purpose of this review is to ensure that we have a police estate that meets the future needs of the Service. The aim is to have a modern estate that is based on demand and increases collaborative opportunities. Currently, the Service has a large estate across the country with many buildings and stations too large and under-used. Indeed, some buildings and stations are vacant. It is therefore only right that we carry out this review which is not simply about the number of stations we have, but is also about how we provide the best service to local communities and work with partners to achieve this. The review will of course identify potential stations for closure and where relevant other opportunities will be explored to maintain a policing presence in these communities. Any proposal to close a station will require the approval of the Force Executive and the Scottish Police Authority and full consultation will take place with partners, local communities and staff. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Q: As you will know Security at Fettes dealt with public 24/7 taking CRF V/As Etc. but since going to Police Scotland we have had this service removed. would it not be practical to re-instate this service as it does not cost the force any extra as we are still here 24/7 plus this would also take the pressure off the other 24/7 stations and allow members of the public to make a report at Fettes which in turn would stop frustrated members of public having to be re-directed to another station. I hope.

A: Thanks for your question and suggestion around Front Counters. I am aware that Edinburgh Division, like many other Local Policing Divisions, are considering their Front Counter provision to ensure it is appropriate to the needs of the local community, links to their local Estates strategy, partnership opportunities and available resource. It is vitally important that we maximise the effectiveness of the resources that we have and I would therefore like to commend you for this suggestion which I have passed to the Divisional Commander in Edinburgh who will ensure that this is actively considered going forward.

Q: 'Agile Working / homeworking' for relevant Police Officers / Staff. Would the Force explore the option of facilitating appropriate staff / officers working from home? This could assist in reducing the capacity on the Force Estate.

A: Thank you for your question. There are working groups which are currently looking at how we best use the estate and this is one of their considerations. Obviously such a proposal has to be balanced with the needs, priorities and security implications of serving the public. Many thanks for this topical suggestion.

Ask the Dep – Fleet / Fuel

Q: Is there scope for negotiating with suppliers of fuel nationally at a reduced or cost price rate that would allow savings on the price of fuel for the vehicle fleet. I.E. put out to tender who could supply fuel to the service at a reduced rate?

A: Thank you for submitting your question in relation to fuel costs. We currently source fuel under two contracts: 1) Fuel cards through the Crown Commercial Services UK Framework Agreement, and 2) Liquid Fuel being part of the Scottish Government Contract established through the Crown Commercial Services UK Framework Agreement. The fuel card contract will run to May 2018 and the liquid fuel to October 2019. Both contracts are in place to provide the best solution for Police Scotland operationally and commercially for these products. The fuel card contract allows all Police Scotland fleet vehicles to purchase fuel from practically any forecourt in the country and provides invaluable data to the Fleet Department that enhances their fleet management processes. Additionally a Force Memo is to be issued providing guidelines on sourcing fuel more efficiently using the fuel cards e.g. utilising supermarket forecourts at a lower cost and dispelling the myth that this fuel is 'inferior'. This contract also provides efficiencies in the back office transactions and simpler payment processes. Restricting ourselves to one supplier for this product would severely reduce the current flexibility with no guarantee that such an agreement would lead to a price reduction that would outweigh the current benefits. The liquid fuel contract provides fuel to be stored and issued from bunkers in the Police Scotland Estate. This bulk buying of fuel results in a purchase price lower than retail prices however this needs to be offset with the cost of running and maintaining the bunkers themselves. Added to this, the fleet management information currently available from the bunkers is not adequate to properly assist the Fleet Department therefore this is not the preferred method of sourcing fuel and is viewed more as a contingency.

Q: Sir, Police Scotland would appear to be running a fleet of vehicles that consists of numerous manufacturers. I appreciate that a lot of these will be legacy vehicles.

Have Police Scotland considered buying from one/two dedicated manufacturers to obtain maximum volume related discounts?

Also, the organisation appears to be spending money on hire cars. Would it not make more economic sense to run a small fleet of pool cars or use vehicles supplied from manufacturers for evaluation purposes?

A: Police Scotland purchase vehicles through the Home Office Crown Commercial Services (CCS) using a Framework Agreement for Vehicles. In addition to this we carry out further competitions and are part of a large buying group across the UK. The Buying Group is made up of a total of twenty two forces across Scotland, England and Wales. The main aim of this consortium was to standardise the type of vehicles Police Forces purchase and to reduce the cost of purchase due to the buying power of the consortium. The outcome of this saw us consolidate to 3 vehicle manufacturers for our core operational Fleet. As acknowledged there is still a mixed picture from legacy areas but these will be replaced naturally as we move forward. There is a need to supplement the fleet with hire vehicles due to operational demand, however pool vehicles are available within some division/departments across the organisation. Unfortunately whilst we do have vehicles from time to time for evaluation they cannot form part of our business as usual needs. The use of hire cars, pool cars and the costs of mileage claims across the organisation are being assessed to determine the business requirements. From this assessment we will aim to identify what solutions are the most efficient in terms of cost and fulfilling these requirements. I hope the above information helps. It is encouraging that people are thinking of cost reduction measures.

Q: Police Scotland have about 3400 vehicles in their fleet. These vehicles live a hard life and after active service have minimal resale value. Could Police Scotland forecast the fleet purchases they will need 2 years in advance, buy those vehicles and prior to Police marking and fit out, lease the vehicles to staff for private use for 2 years. These vehicles would be leased by staff for equivalent market value (potentially being taken directly from salary) thereby recovering some/all of the cost outlay before the vehicle enters active Police service. I understand the Police purchase vehicles significantly below market value and it may be possible to recover the full purchase cost within the first 2-3 years of lease.

I think this model would be of interest to many staff for a wide range of vehicles, ranging from small city cars to people carriers, vans and high performance vehicles, each having an appropriate lease fee. I believe the vehicles would be treated well because staff would understand the vehicle remains the property of their employer. If the lease scheme was to be oversubscribed an advance subscription, or lottery, or rationale could be deployed to who is given a vehicle.

A: Thanks for your suggestion regarding vehicle leasing.

What you suggest would require a degree of research to establish if such a scheme was feasible from various perspectives, including the long term financial benefits, any taxation implications and the management of the scheme amongst many others. Therefore, I have forwarded your suggestion to the Force Fleet Manager for their consideration.

Many thanks for your continued interest.

Q: Fleet Costs. Re fuelling PSOS vehicles, could we seek collaboration with either Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue or the appropriate Local Authority, for our vehicles to be fuelled within their depots / fuelling stations? Would the cost of this refuelling not be cheaper via this method as opposed to paying retail prices at local garages? I acknowledge there would be an administrative burden on any agreement reached / entered into to facilitate this.

A: Thank you for submitting your question in relation to fuel costs. We currently source fuel under two contracts: 1) Fuel cards through the Crown Commercial Services UK Framework Agreement, and 2) Liquid Fuel being part of the Scottish Government Contract established through the Crown Commercial Services UK Framework Agreement. The fuel card contract will run to May 2018 and the liquid fuel to October 2019. Both contracts are in place to provide the best solution for Police Scotland operationally and commercially for these products. The fuel card contract allows all Police Scotland fleet vehicles to purchase fuel from practically any forecourt in the country and provides invaluable data to the Fleet Department that enhances their fleet management processes and vehicle efficiencies. Additionally a Force Memo is to be issued providing guidelines on sourcing fuel more efficiently using the fuel cards e.g. utilising supermarket forecourts at a lower cost and dispelling the myth that this fuel is 'inferior'. This contract also provides efficiencies in the back office transactions and simpler payment processes. The liquid fuel contract provides fuel to be stored and issued from bunkers in the Police Scotland Estate. This bulk buying of fuel results in a purchase price lower than retail prices however this needs to be offset with the cost of running and maintaining the bunkers themselves. Added to this, the fleet management information currently available from the bunkers is not adequate to properly assist the Fleet Department therefore this is not the preferred method of sourcing fuel and is viewed more as a contingency. Similarly the cost of sourcing fuel from partner public bodies would probably result in a lower unit cost for the fuel itself but other factors both raise the net cost and lose efficiencies seen with our current arrangements: The partner public bodies would seek contributions to the running and maintenance costs of the fuel depots due to increased use; The use of these depots would need planning rather than as and when required in order that the partner public bodies could accurately forecast fuel consumption and therefore plan and order re-fuelling of the depots; As with our own bunkers the fleet management information would be inadequate and sourcing of any information would become time and labour intensive with inconsistent results leading to inconsistent and poorer fleet management; The geographical spread and availability of partner public bodies depots is limited and not comparable with widespread coverage of commercial forecourts and could potentially result in more fuel being used to reach a depot rather than utilising a more local forecourt; A mixed approach to using both depots and forecourts would similarly be disadvantageous with inconsistent fleet management information, various payment terms and processes with increased back office resource and an inconsistent re-fuelling policy across Police Scotland. Our Fleet department will continue to assess the best options available to us moving forward to ensure that we are always utilising the most efficient method of fuel provision.

Ask the Dep – Force Executive

Q: We keep being told that Police Scotland has no money. Where was the £173,000 found to fund another DCC?

A: Thank you for your question regarding the role of Deputy Chief Constable. On the creation of Police Scotland there were four Deputy Chief Constable Posts, DCC Designate, DCC Local Policing, DCC Crime and Operational Support and DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events. In the past year DCC Neil Richardson (DCC Designate) and DCC Steve Allen (DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events) have both retired. I have moved from DCC Crime and Operational Support to the DCC Designate role. ACC Johnny Gwynne, currently seconded from Police Scotland to the National Crime Agency, has been appointed to the role of DCC Crime and Operational Support and will take up this post in the coming months. The role of DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events has not been filled at present however, a selection process is ongoing to bring a senior officer or police staff member in to lead organisational transformation over the coming years. This will replace the role of DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events and will maintain the number of Deputy Chief Constables within the service whilst not requiring an increase in the budget for Deputy Chief Constable roles. Thank you for your interest and question on this matter.

Q: Given the current policy of not filling Police Staff vacancies, even in frontline or immediate support functions; how can the creation of a new Police Staff Director post, the most senior, (and presumably highest paid) Police Staff post in history possibly be justified? I'm sure you understand the effect this has had on the morale of staff who are currently working under pressure covering for unfilled vacancies. Please can you also advise what exactly is the job description for this newly created post as it was not clear in the announcement, and I do not recall ever seeing the post advertised with a corresponding role profile? Mr Page's history in RBS group was closing branches and cutting jobs - can we expect the same here?

A: Thank you for your question regarding the new Director role. On the creation of Police Scotland there were four Deputy Chief Constable posts, DCC Designate, DCC Local Policing, DCC Crime and Operational Support and DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events. In the past year DCC Neil Richardson (DCC Designate) and DCC Steve Allen have both retired. DCC Iain Livingstone has moved from DCC Crime to the DCC Designate role and a selection process has been undertaken to replace him. ACC Johnny Gwynne, currently seconded from Police Scotland to the National Crime Agency, has been appointed to the role of DCC Crime and Operational Support. The role of DCC Commonwealth Games and Major Events has not been filled and as you know a selection process was completed to bring a senior police staff member in to lead organisational transformation over the coming years. This will replace the role of DCC Allen and will maintain the level of DCC/ director equivalent within the service whilst not requiring an increase in the budget for Deputy Chief Constable roles. The role was advertised as per the link below, albeit the advert is obviously now closed. <http://www.spa.police.uk/news/346062/Separate> from the appointment of Mr Page, as part of the Estates Strategy, there is an estates review on-going across the country, which includes all divisions and specialist functions. The purpose of this review is to ensure that we have a police estate that meets the future needs of the Service. The aim is to have a modern estate that is based on demand and increases collaborative opportunities. Currently, the Service has a large estate across the country with many buildings and stations too large and under-used. Indeed, some buildings and stations are vacant. It is therefore only right that we carry out this review which is not simply about the number of stations we have, but is also about how we provide the best service to local communities and work with partners to achieve this. The review will of course identify potential stations for closure and where relevant other opportunities will be explored to maintain a policing presence in these communities. Any proposal to close a station will require the approval of the Force Executive and the Scottish Police Authority and full consultation will take place with partners, local communities and staff. I hope this information is helpful to you.

Q: Will the Executive and SPA reveal to officers just how bad the Police budget is and what is being done to address it? It seems every day that officers read another headline about the state of Police Scotland finances, latest being that Police Scotland were at a point that they were unable to pay wages. This is all sensationalism by media, however if officers are not being told the full story by management then they reach their own conclusions and believe these stories. The Scottish Government just take the same stance and repeat that the crime is at an all-time low and that they are committed to protecting police budget in real terms. No one believes this statement, neither the workforce or Federation. We are all adults and believe that we can all pull together as an organisation to do our best in the current climate. However it seems that no one really knows how bad things are

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The turbulent situation around change and finances has been with Police Scotland since our inception and was very apparent in the legacy forces prior to the change. I am aware of the strain that change and financial uncertainty can bring. We are working along with SPA colleagues to define a longer term financial approach to allow us to better predict spending pressures and to attempt to bring more balance to the organisation. To this end a long term financial strategy is being prepared by the Scottish Police Authority and our own finance department are working on a three year finance plan. This should allow us to stabilise the financial position and work out how to invest effectively to allow our service to meet the needs of the public within the financial settlement provided to us.

Ask the Dep – Income Generation

Q: Sir, I wonder if consideration have been given to charging a rent for a mobile phone provider to install a mast within the grounds at the Scottish Police College. SPC has long been poor in terms of mobile phone reception, which does not commend it as the world class facility which it undoubtedly otherwise is.

From basic internet research it would appear that mobile phone providers will typically pay a high four-figure sum in order to rent the location, which would provide a modest additional income stream and basic prepaid SIM cards and top up facility could be provided at the College shop to supplement this income stream and allow delegates and residents a higher standard of mobile phone reception than currently is the case?

A: Thanks for your query concerning the mobile phone coverage and revenue opportunities at SPC.

We are already in discussion with mobile providers regarding coverage at the college as part of a wider piece of work aimed at digitally enabling the learning and conference experience the college currently offers.

Interestingly though, the planned move from Airwave to the Emergency Services Network circa 2019 /2020 which will provide 4G/LTE Broadband coverage to replace the existing narrowband Airwave service across the country will provide some revenue gathering opportunity. EE have won the contract to provide this service and will have to ensure an equivalent geographic 4G coverage across the whole of Scotland to what we currently have with Tetra / Airwave. As Police Scotland / SPA currently have 400+ properties as well as a lot of airwave masts we will be investigating all routes that will help EE achieve their target.

Q: Can areas of business that are currently carried cost free to the customer be explored for revenue recovery? I am aware that this is carried out in some areas such as the provision of abstract reports to private companies such as insurance companies. I am not best placed to identify these areas but two that I have considered are

1. Kennelling costs for dogs accommodated as stray or lost are recovered from owners. This process may be easier now as owners are required to have them microchipped by law.

2. In consultation and partnership with COPFS, a process is identified to include in police reports the costs incurred in providing secure accommodation for custodies prior to their attendance at court. This cost could then be sought as a compensation order from the offender similar to how costs are awarded in England and Wales. The mechanics of the recovery of this revenue would need to be explored beyond this strategic view. Potentially this may generate employment through either criminal or civil enforcement of these costs?

A: Thanks again for your questions and I can now provide answers to you. The first is more easily answered. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (sec 149) confers the responsibility of stray (found) dogs on local authorities in Scotland and it is now their responsibility to accommodate, or delegate responsibility to an appropriate person or organisation. After a stated period of time (seven clear days) the authority can dispose of the dog by selling, re-homing or euthanasia as appropriate. Costs are recoverable from identified owners found dogs. We should endeavour to make use of this service and not incur additional costs. Your second question opens up interesting debate. Should an accused if found guilty be charged for custody costs prior to attending court? In England and Wales guilty persons may be billed between £150 - £1200 for court costs so there is some precedent. At present, legislative change would be required in Scotland to impose such charges, estimated at £250 per day, and the mechanism for charging and recovering monies not necessarily awarded by a court may prove difficult and more costly than the revenue recovered. Police Scotland is funded to protect the public and using current legislation, as a last resort to deprive persons of their liberty, many of whom are vulnerable, while attending to their care and welfare in order to protect both them and the public. I don't think there would be an appetite by Government or the public to charge for custody services, but as I said it is an interesting point you raise.

Q: With the current financial constraints and with the expectation to continue income generating, how are we expected to maintain our customer base and attract new custom with no investment in dilapidated conference and bedroom facilities.

A: Thank you for taking the time to submit a question. Police Scotland has been going through the process of reviewing our business requirements and services and the properties that we require to deliver these services. As part of this process, the Scottish Police College has been identified as a key location for training and development both internally and with our external partners. We are aware that some of the College buildings require significant investment, and a detailed condition survey of the buildings is underway to develop a programme of works that will be assessed and prioritised, and submitted to the Scottish Police Authority for allocation of capital funding over the next financial period. For example and pertinent to your question, projects to "Upgrade Residential Accommodation" at Glamis Phase 1 and 2, Craigeivar Phase 1 and 2, Dunvegan and Tantallon Blocks have already been scoped and will be included in the Capital Plan for the Scottish Police College as we move forward.

Ask the Dep – Mental Health

Q: When are our partners/agencies going to take their share of the work in relation to mental health calls? It is evident that more and more calls are placed to the police in regards concern for and suicidal persons. For some individuals this may be their first contact with Police officers and they are treated more like a suspect than a victim. The introduction of the Community Triage pilot in Glasgow and Edinburgh is a move in the right direction yet there are other Local health boards who are dragging their heels on this. Assisting these individuals is resource intensive and should be handled by Mental Health specialists rather than Police officers. The current budget situation is putting more pressure on the organisation and will no doubt impact on future resource levels. In light of this we should seek government support in how the organisation deals and treats those with mental health problems.

A: Many Thanks for your question and interest in this topic. I have provided the information below which I hope goes some way to let you know of developments and progress in this area. On the creation of Police Scotland, we developed an Action Plan in relation to Mental Health and Suicide Prevention which focused on Managing High Risk, Early and Effective Intervention, and Data Planning and Partnership. Working in partnership with NHS Scotland and other partners, a single Mental Health and Place of Safety SOP was also developed and published, effectively replacing legacy documents which revealed disparate practices and procedures across the Country. In order to support the SOP, training has been developed in relation to Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Intervention. NHS Scotland played a vital role in assisting us develop our training products which will be rolled out later this year. The training will comprise 2 online e-learning modules followed by classroom-based face to face training.

Partnership working is absolutely key to making improvements both nationally and locally, and therefore a network of divisional Mental Health Leads and deputies has been established to develop partnership working at a local level, so that we can improve our operational response to those in crisis/distress. This group meets every 6-weeks and a list of these leads and deputies can be found on the Intranet within the Mental Health micro site along with a wide variety of other guidance documents. The leads have been and are continuing to engage with their respective NHS counterparts in relation to the development of Psychiatric Emergency Plans (these are NHS owned documents but are helpful in highlighting local arrangements). Officers from Safer Communities attend the Scottish Government's Cross Party Group on Mental Health and the Scottish Suicide Prevention Implementation and Monitoring Group, and are also engaged with Healthcare Improvement Scotland's Scottish Patient Safety Programme for Mental Health (SPSP-MH), helping to inform them on some of the key safety principles more relevant to Police Scotland. In partnership with the Mental Welfare Commission, we have also revised the Place of Safety Form (POS1) which can now record up to 4 places of safety and a disposal. As the submission of these forms is a statutory requirement, it is important that the forms are fit for purpose.

We are currently being consulted in relation to the next Scottish Government, Mental Health 10 year strategy (2016 – 2026) and are working in partnership with both the Scottish Government and NHS Scotland in relation to developing the Scottish Suicide Information Database with the aim of improving data sets which will help inform the prevention agenda. Links with NHS 24 have also been established and there is now a mechanism in place for Police to raise any concerns or issues directly in order to resolve and learn from incidents. Following last year's successful Mental Health Leads Development event, a Joint Mental Health Leads Development event will be held later this year which will bring together Police Scotland Leads and their local NHS counterparts. The key aim of the event is to improve and strengthen local partnership structures within a coordinated national framework. Tables will be regionalised to bring together police leads and deputies and their respective NHS colleagues. Clearly much work has been done, but there is still more to achieve in this area. Improvements will only come by working closely in partnership with our NHS colleagues, the Scottish Government and the voluntary sector, and we are absolutely committed to playing a key role in terms of developing changes required in order to protect people at risk of harm and ensure they receive the best possible service to meet their needs. I hope this information helps.

Q: I write in relation to any future developments regarding a working strategy surrounding the high level of mental health related incidents that Police across Scotland attend. I note that increased training is being provided to all officers regarding mental health awareness via moodle and class based training. However, Police Scotland attend a wide range of incidents that are related to mental health and are attended by response Police Officers. This can at times place a huge strain on resources and tie officers to incidents for large parts of a shift. My question is, has Police Scotland considered developing a working strategy to create specific Divisional resources to attend these incidents. My initial suggestion would be to create a resource (set of 2 Police Officers) who would be solely tasked to respond to these incidents. For example, within D Division, a set of Officers could work within Dundee and cover the whole Division, attending mental health incidents where applicable. If they aren't available, then this would fall back to Response Officers, however when they were made available they would attend and take over the incident. This would create a similar position, akin to the Traffic and Dog units, who provide specialised support. I understand that this is a very brief summary of a potential solution and requires many points to be ironed out, but the crux of the objective would be to free response Officers to attend and be available to attend incidents, creating the best service possible to the public.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question/suggestion. As you rightly point out many of the demands on our services are not in relation to crime but in relation to people in need at a time of crisis in their lives. It's encouraging to see you are undertaking the available courses regarding mental health awareness. As you may be aware, the 2026 team are undertaking a detailed, evidence based demand analysis to capture what the actual demands on the service are. Moving forward, we will then be in a position to decide how we best deliver services to meet the needs of the public which could include, for example, innovative and relevant partnership working to meet such demands as you describe. I appreciate your suggestion to ensure that capability and capacity is maximised and that we deliver the best possible service to the public and there is work ongoing to fully support this.

Ask the Dep – Miscellaneous

Q: Sir, How many sick days have been lost to the organisation through the stress of being placed on restricted duties?

Q: How much money has been wasted on the pursuance of spurious data protection allegations against the Service employees?

Q: Sir, Why does the force make a habit of illegally oppressing personnel to the extent that employment tribunals are now becoming a norm. How is this cost effective?

Q: Sir, How cost effective is making an internal policing decision to report a case against one of your officers to the PF by 14 months which is in clear contravention of the Police and Fire Reform Act, Complaints against the Police SOP and Human Rights Act. Thereafter suppressing any complaints made regarding this.

Q: Sir, How cost effective is it to isolate personnel who have been placed on restricted non public facing duties for well over the 700 day mark? Surely this means that the tax payer is not getting their moneys worth from the Service in this regard?

Q: Sir. Without making reference to any personal circumstances. What are the cost benefits of placing personnel on restricted duties for a number of years, without any review and how is this compliant with Human Rights legislation?

Q: Sir, I have 7 and a half years Police Service. Due to restrictions placed on my Police duties for the past four years I am not public facing. Do you feel that this is an appropriate length of time to restrict an employees duties without clarification of the procedure? Do you feel that this is an effective use of resources and personnel within the service? I look forward to your reply

Q: Sir, I have had restrictions placed on my Police duties since June 2012. Can you confirm how in any way this can be construed as an effective management of the Forces budget. How often are these restrictions reviewed and by whom? All I wish is to be a public facing Police Officer again however I am prevented in doing so at every turn by the Force.

A: I have reviewed the questions you have posed but do not feel that this is the best forum for you to receive the answers that you are looking for. If you have questions relating to your own circumstances please direct them through your line management or indeed through the federation to make representation on your behalf, both being best placed to progress your enquiries. To assist you with other specific information (e.g. days lost to absence), can I direct you towards subject access requests and freedom of information requests, such requests allow specific information to be gathered and returned to requester, subject to certain conditions. Further information is on the intranet.

Q: Police Scotland utilise a company 'Capita', to book hotels, travel etc. for those officers required to conduct enquiries away from their base station. It would seem that Capita charge a hefty fee for their services, as the amount quoted is far in excess of that available on the internet or by direct contact. Would it be worth considering issuing Travel Units with a corporate credit card, (as was the case in legacy D&G) so that they book the travel direct, cutting out the middle man and saving the force a small fortune over the fiscal year. Utilising the corporate credit card would also maintain our ethics and standards, ensuring that no one obtained any personal benefit.

A: Thanks for submitting your question. We have received similar feedback from elsewhere and your own question adds more credibility to views expressed by others. The contract we have in place is a Crown Commercial Services Framework, part of the Home Office, for Travel services with Capita Travel and Events Ltd. The contract is effective until 10 November 2017 with an option to extend the contract for a further 12 months. Capita provide a fully managed Travel Service and currently provide us with 3 million room nights booked and managed per year, 2.4 million rail tickets issued per year and 230,000 air bookings made per year. Adoption of the on-line services is over 80% for air bookings and over 97% for rail bookings. SPA and Police Scotland spend is over £2million per annum and competition rules under The Procurement (Scotland) Regulations and EU Regulations we are required ensure that a contract is in place that adheres to the legislation. Capita do charge fees for their out of hours and off-line services but do not charge a fee for their online portal facility.

Where a travel or hotel deal is offered cheaper on-line then Capita should be contacted and given the opportunity to match the rate. Given the often remote and rural locations that Police Scotland operate in, the sometimes limited local hotel availability in these locations and the fact that the hotel do not want to deal with a third party, means that its sometimes difficult for accommodation bookings to be made online. Instead of having several contracts and management fees, we have one main travel contract to manage contractually, our back office process has been streamlined by introducing ebilling procedures whereas previously we had individual invoices to process and a management fee against each invoice and have authorised ebookers, not travellers, to manage the online travel portal. Ebookers make the final decision on the travel details. This also ensures duty of care for police staff and police officers so that we can find out quickly, either within the UK or overseas where they are and also be reactive when there is an incident. "The Police Scotland Procurement Manual" and "Standing Orders relating to Contracts" exist to ensure that no-one obtains any personal gain and these rules were adhered to when appointing Capita as a third party supplier. Representatives from Finance, Procurement and Business Support meet quarterly with the Capita Accounts Manager to review the operation of the contract.

The contract does not allow any personal gain e.g. collection of air miles for either Capita or SPA/Police Scotland employees. We have taken on board recent feedback with regards to this contracts performance and cost from across the Force and are commencing with a full review and benchmark of the contract against other public sector framework agreements to ensure we have best Value for Money and that the contract is meeting our service requirements.

Q: Sir, my question concerns the volumes amount of paperwork police officers are required to submit. Although this may not seem directly relevant to finance and delivery, I think it is certainly a factor. It seems obvious we are not going to be allocated more money to run the service so we have to make best use of what we have. Having officers type on computers continuously, completing forms and duplicating a theme is a waste of resources. If paperwork were simplified, these officers could be out patrolling and helping communities. My question therefore - Is there to be a root and branch, lean review of all paperwork & administration tasks a police officer submits and undertakes? Thank you.

A: Thank you for your question regarding our ability to streamline our processes and the possibility to use lean methodologies. You will be aware that the i6 programme was designed to provide one operational system for Police Scotland that allowed the benefit of data entry once rather than the multiple system updates that we currently have. I am sure you will have seen the media coverage and the update from Director of ICT, Martin Leven, about the failure of delivery of this product. The force are now reassessing how best to meet the need of a more effective ICT platform or systems that will reduce form filling, time consumed on computers at the end of a shift and the obvious disruption this causes to our front line services and individuals private lives. There are many areas both operationally and in the back office that we are looking to streamline to reduce cost and improve working practices and we have used officers and staff trained in lean processes to assist in this work. When we have these opportunities to do this the benefits quickly become apparent. However, with major systems that were due to be replaced we have not yet had the chance to undertake this work. We are in the process of considering how we move our ICT forward to allow the improvements you have mentioned and this work will be undertaken with support from trained lean six sigma staff.

Q: There any many positive aspects to Police Scotland, however the constant focus and chatter on finance can sometime make it seem like the heralds of doom have come to town. There will undoubtedly be light at the end of the tunnel, do you know what the expected timescale is for that to happen?

A: Thank you for your question and the comment on the positive aspects of Police Scotland, with which I totally agree. The turbulent situation around change and finances has been with Police Scotland since our inception and was very apparent in the legacy forces prior to the change. I am aware of the strain that change and financial uncertainty can bring. We are working along with SPA colleagues to define a longer term financial approach to allow us to better predict spending pressures and to attempt to bring more balance to the organisation. To this end a long term financial strategy is being prepared by the Scottish Police Authority and our own finance department are working on a three year finance plan. This should allow us to stabilise the financial position and work out how to invest effectively to allow our service to meet the needs of the public within the financial settlement provided to us.

Q: We have a National Missing Person Unit. Is there work ongoing to have a National missing person form as legacy forces still to have their own individual forms which lack corporacy? A National form would make transfer of enquiries inter Division better

A: Thanks for your question. I hope the information below is of use to you. Police Scotland, NMPU has identified the necessity for all territorial divisions to adopt a consistent approach to missing person investigations. Following justified public criticism and the findings of reviews conducted by the Police Investigations & Review Commissioner (PIRC) the NMPU has made the recommendation that to improve service delivery, minimise risk and prevent reputational harm an electronic Police Scotland Missing Person Report supported by a force wide Investigation Management Tool that is auditable should be considered. A Police Scotland Missing Person Report supported by an Investigation Management Tool will deliver consistency, provide better understanding and management of missing person investigations. It will also provide a more effective and efficient way of collating relevant data. The implementation of a force wide IT process will ensure SOP compliance, provide public reassurance, enhance our reputation and minimise risk. The NMPU has an established IT sub-group where a number of challenges and solutions have been discussed and addressed. One such interim solution was the creation of the National Missing Person Database accessed via the intranet and hosted on SharePoint. This has allowed for agreed nominal information to be collated on a daily basis. This provides an up to date and accurate picture of Missing Persons across all territorial divisions. It was the intention of the NMPU to further develop this site and allow for the creation of an electronic Missing Person Report to replace existing legacy force forms and reports. This request was rejected by IT who recognised that the failure of the i6 project had caused some operational management issues. Microsoft SharePoint doesn't provide the functionality to host a Police Scotland Missing Person Form. The NMPU thereafter submitted a Potential Project Assessment (PPA) to Organisational Development for consideration. It was agreed that the proposed Project Assessment relating to a National Missing Person Report and Investigation Management Tool was absolutely relevant and met with a recognised operational requirement. The recommendations of the NMPU are now being considered as part of a coherent Digital Transformation Programme by Police Scotland. I appreciate the issue you raise.

Q: Given the current financial climate, can you please advise why resources are being ploughed into PSYV (although the concept is a good idea) when our most valuable and less costly resource SPECIAL CONSTABLES get very little resources and support. For example in Tayside PSYV resource is 1 Sergeant and 4 constables Special Constables have 1 constable and 1 civilian member of staff Special Constables are handing in their tickets due to lack of support from Police Scotland. This is a poor reflection on Police Scotland given the current financial climate. Invest to save our most valuable least costly resource. I realise there is a large PR implication with PSYV but feel this could be matched and increased if Special Constables were supported properly. Example: - Recently along with some of my team we policed Rewind in Scone I had 4 constables available and supported by 4 special constables giving us a 100% increase in resources. Received fantastic feedback from each of the specials, my own officers and the public. Surely this is what we are looking for with very little monetary impact. What are your thoughts?

A: Thank you for your question. Considerable work is ongoing to ensure the PSYV programme becomes self-sustaining and there is a review being carried out at present to ensure any PSYV police resources are used as effectively as possible, with the minimum safe number of officers applied to the programme. Police Scotland has not contributed to the costs of groups in Tayside other than the provision of staff, some of whom are funded (in full or part) externally. There has been no other financial burden to date on the Police Scotland budget with these costs met by Scottish Government. Similarly, considerable work has been carried out to ensure our colleagues in the Special Constabulary feel valued, are used to tackle local and national priorities, and help make a difference. Significant efforts have been made to co-ordinate development through divisional co-ordinators and SPOCs and the national special constable co-ordinator, with positive feedback being received from Special Constables. There have been very few resignations and recruitment levels remain healthy. If you have any improvement suggestions around support for special constables, I would encourage you to discuss with your divisional co-ordinator. Thanks for your interest in these valued areas.

Q: Hi, I would like to know how Police Scotland are addressing lower group crimes. Realistically how much time can be contributed to lower crimes due to the budget cut? I was slightly concerned to hear the Chief Constable comment on Scotland Tonight that lower group crimes would need to go on the back burner due to efforts being concentrated on several major crime areas. This concerns me as it may portray a lighter patrol on minor crimes leading to a rise in lower crime as criminals may escape detection. In addition to this the victims of these crimes are deprived of a full investigation leading to a poor service for the public.

A: Many thanks for your question. How the police apportion their finite time to meet the needs of communities across Scotland, whilst trying to deliver a balanced budget, is a very important question and is one which forms a large part of our discussions about the very complex picture of demand we receive across Scotland on a daily basis. In partnership with the Scottish Police Authority we are working now to build a long term vision for Policing, looking ahead to 2026 to deliver a sustainable police service focussing on excellence in service and protection. Whilst 2026 is where we are aiming, this is a very much about delivering incremental change now, recognising our current strengths and building on areas where we see opportunities to improve outcomes.

A critical part of that journey is to fully understand our current demand, including the volume or low value acquisitive crime that you refer to in your question, so that we can consider how best to align resources to meet these demands whilst considering the threats emerging as society and our environment evolves. This detailed demand analysis and forecasting is now well underway as part of 'Policing 2026'. The investigation of crime must be prioritised on a case by case basis, taking a large number of factors into account when deciding the proportionate level of resource and time to commit to it. An incident or crime which might be perceived as being a "lower group crime" to one person might have a significant impact on the victim due to their own personal circumstances at the time. Conversely something which others might view as significant may have little or no effect on the victim and they may not even wish the matter pursued or cooperate with enquiries.

Regardless, we will continue to take a victim focussed approach, applying a proportionate level of investigation based on the circumstances presented. Crime itself is only one part of the complex landscape we operate within and when you consider that only 1 in 5 incidents we attend are crime related it becomes more apparent that the police service face significant other calls for service in areas which include vulnerability. As we move forward, delivering an evidence based and sustainable operating model for the service, we will continue to make appropriate decisions about the investigation of crime based on threat and harm.

Q: Why does the force not introduce or re-introduce a force suggestion scheme?

A: Police Scotland are developing a continuous improvement framework and one of the developments within this is the creation of a Force Suggestion scheme. The plan had been to use a proprietary software system to manage this, gain good ideas from across the Force and have a tool to publicise what was being done. The purchase of this software has been stopped due to the financial constraints in place. We are currently trying to develop an alternative way to have a meaningful system that is trusted and used by the Force. Thank you for your question and hopefully we can have a system in place soon.

Q: Can you advise why the majority of civilian staff in Tayside have been paid off from the firearms licensing and now we are in a difficult position trying to keep up with the co-ordination, enquiries and admin. This has now been allocated to police officers amongst other things. Given the current backlog surely there is a risk to the public in relation to this and given the Dunblane massacre many years ago surely Police Scotland would not wish to have any possibility of this happening again. What are your thoughts?

A: Police Scotland recognised that one of the most important internal functions requiring reform was the firearms licensing structure and function, which had become inconsistent due to differing legacy practices, with no corporate governance or consistency across the country. The firearms licensing function was operating with different policy, guidance, management and staffing structures, roles and responsibilities within each legacy area were fragmented with staff supervision, job descriptions grading and salaries all inconsistent. There was no national I.T facility and training sporadic or non-existent across the legacy areas. Such differences were creating uncertainty, duplication and potentially risk in an area of business that is critical towards public safety and wellbeing. As part of this essential reform Police Scotland immediately made a number of key commitments to improving the national firearms licensing function, including the development of a national I.T. facility to provide the necessary foundations and support for the effective management and administration. On 20 October 2014 the National I.T. SHOGUN system was implemented in full across Scotland and is now providing the essential bedrock of administration support for Police Scotland's firearms licensing requirements across the country. The clear lack of suitable and consistent training was also addressed with the introduction of a robust national training programme for all police staff and police officers involved in firearms licensing throughout Scotland, where we now have a core cadre of over 600 officers and staff trained to a specialised and high standard.

The final stage of the improvement plan undertook a full review of the firearms licensing staffing structures, roles, procedures, policy and guidance to ensure that the organisation provides the most efficient and effective corporate and consistent service. This involved the assessment of demand across the country and specifically in relation to the fluctuating volume across the 5 year period. In this regard D Division received the proportionate number of police staff enquiry officer posts relevant to the demand over this full 5 year period. In addition, every local policing division are now additionally supported with a substantial number of trained police officers to manage demand during peak periods. On 30 November 2015, the transition of the firearms licensing restructure was complete. It must be highlighted that consistent training and a centralised I.T. system were 2 of the key recommendations arising from the report by Lord Cullen into the tragic events in Dunblane over 20 years ago and Police Scotland have successfully achieved these key elements within the short period of its existence. In conclusion, public safety is our number one priority and our new firearms licensing structures have been fully operational for one year. Significant improvements in the management of individuals and risk have already been realised and we are adopting a more rigorous and robust assessment through the improved training, awareness and support in place across Scotland.

We are also consistently delivering compliance of over 90% for applications, which is significantly higher than prior to the new model being introduced. These new structures are fully supported by the new administration process and the deployment of a mix of police officers and police staff to manage enquiries has led to a far more flexible and effective service that is fit for purpose now and in the future.

Q: Policing is labour intensive and expensive. Our internal working practices mean officers are continually delayed at the end of their shifts (completing paperwork) with an obvious cost / work life balance implication. Are there any plans in the future, to look at Police processes and working procedures, in an attempt to save money / time?

A: Thank you for your question regarding working practices and our ability to streamline our processes. You will be aware that the i6 programme was designed to provide one operational system for Police Scotland which allowed the benefit of data entry once rather than the multiple system updates that we currently have. I am sure you will have seen the media coverage and the update from Director of ICT, Martin Leven, about the failure of delivery of this product. The force are now reassessing how best to meet the need of a more effective ICT platform or systems to reduce form-filling; time spent on computers at the end of a shift and the obvious disruption this causes to our front line services and individuals private lives. However, there have been numerous improvements in our working practices over recent years. These are often seen in the areas of fixed penalty tickets and formal warnings that are now used far more often than previously. The benefits of the use of a fixed penalty ticket or formal warning is that the data is far less time consuming to enter on our systems than a standard prosecution report. For the person issued with the ticket or warning the effect is much more immediate and removes the court process which is often seen as a far more punitive measure than their action called for. This way of working is seen to be beneficial and we continue to work with partners to make the most of these opportunities. There are many areas both operationally and in the back office where we are looking to streamline, reduce cost and improve working practices. Many of these will involve working groups and taking ideas from officers and staff engaged in the practices we are looking at.

Officers are involved in the design of these systems to ensure it is easier to operate, more streamlined and provides the best outcomes for the service at the least cost to time and effort. We will continue to develop this way and appreciate the question you have raised on this point.

Q: I am struck by the recent Police Scotland video describing the termination of the i6 implementation as not costing us money. I am sure this answer addresses the various rumoured multi million pound contract costs. Whilst I am sure that we will maximise the benefits from having engaged in the process I am fairly certain that industry Lean or Continuous Improvement tools would assign significant costs to such a long term project regardless of outcome. My question is what tools do we use to measure our processes and is this an area that you think we could exploit to make significant efficiency savings going forward.

A: Police Scotland have recognised over recent years the benefits to be gained from continually seeking to improve the way we do business. One example of this is in the Continuous Improvement field where we have engaged with Heriot-Watt University who have provided training in Lean Six Sigma processes to a number of staff and officers across the organisation. The formal training will lead to qualifications for the staff concerned. To achieve the qualification each member of staff must undertake a workforce project using continuous improvement methodology and provide an auditable cost saving above £25,000. We have 4 projects that have been completed and are now being reviewed by Herriot-Watt University staff to check on methodology, practice used and verify the savings made. We have more than 20 other projects underway with many coming towards completion. Once the staff have achieved the accreditation they are then used in other projects and we have good examples of where we are now using trained staff to solve business problems with a view to improving efficiency and saving money. Organisational development have completed a Continuous Improvement Strategy which will be presented to the DCC Designate Programme Board. You can see more about Organisational Development at the Intranet page (<https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/org-support/corp-services/organisational-development/Pages/Strategic-Planning-and-Development.aspx>). Many thanks for your question.

Q: Dealing with the cuts is a very difficult task, can you please however see if there is anything to be done about bolstering morale. If this is maintained then the "journey" will be easier. Would you be able to consider this in the planning? I suggest some cost neutral options: e.g. sports tournaments e.g. PSOS Div. championships; support for adventurous training; best police garden competition etc. all *off duty! *** This may take some thought and persistence, but I believe the rewards would be tangible. A good example of a decision that affects the way officers think of the organisation is the banning of radios in offices. Respectfully submitted for your consideration**

A: Thank you for your suggestions and taking the time to contribute. These are great examples of how we can improve everyone's morale across the organisation and I would support this being part of our future planning. Following the staff survey results, improving staff morale and motivation is a key priority and I agree that finding practical and innovative ways which help staff feel more valued, and provide recognition for their hard work, will have a positive impact on boosting morale. Your ideas are good examples of how we can do this and equally also improve the wellbeing of our workforce. As a next steps, I will forward your ideas to the team leading the staff survey improvement plans and suggest they get in touch (if you are with your name being shared?) with yourself to discuss how we can build this into our planning going forward. Thanks for your valuable suggestion.

Q: Sir, I recently found out whilst covering the front bar at Coatbridge the costs incurred when we take in stray or found dogs. I was also advised that when the Community Dog Warden finds a dog he attends at a local police office and requests a found dog report. This then leads to Police Scotland being charged for the care of a dog that has never come into any police office or in touch with any officer and it would appear to me to be the local councils exploiting the police in order to have dogs housed free of charge to them. I was advised that whenever we refused to provide a "pink slip"(found dog report) we were contacted by an inspector, not sure which to make sure we did provide one" To me we should not be responsible for local council dog wardens seizing dogs and they sure pay for their own. Can I ask if this is the correct protocol? And if it is I think we should have that changed in order to reduce the cost to us in this difficult time.

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 (sec 149) confers the responsibility of stray (found) dogs on local authorities in Scotland and it is now their responsibility to accommodate, or delegate responsibility to an appropriate person or organisation. After a stated period of time (seven clear days) the authority can dispose of the dog by selling, re-homing or euthanasia as appropriate. Costs are recoverable from identified owners found dogs. We should endeavour to make use of this service and not incur additional costs. The Lost & Found SOP covers the process for such circumstances, with Appendix G relating to the local processes for your council area. The process for us recording a found animal relates solely to those that have been within our care and is not a process to duplicate the council's own. I hope this helps.

Q: Sir, Regarding stationary supplies/orders. Currently every station (on J division at least) orders separately and items are delivered to that station by supplier - surely incurring huge delivery costs - in my opinion a more sensible option would be a central store for each division where "run of the mill" stationary, staples, paper clips, envelopes and the like is ordered and stored until requested by individual stations as required.... and cost apportioned accordingly thus avoiding delivery costs and can be delivered as needed by support drivers as they are at those stations daily.

A: Currently Police Scotland is in the process of implementing a new supply arrangement via a Scottish Government framework to improve service and reduce cost. The agreement is a "cost to serve" model, which is based on the collective behaviour of all organisations using the framework. This results in the prices being more competitive due to the buy-in of multiple public sector organisations. There are different processes in place across the legacy landscape with regard to Purchasing, Stores and Logistics.

These arrangements are currently under review as part of a national project. With regard to delivery charges within the new supply agreement being introduced via Scottish Government, delivery charges are included in the unit cost of the item, for all orders over £10, i.e. there will be no additional delivery charge. To ensure that excess delivery charges are not incurred, all orders under £10 are held and consolidated by the supplier. For information, please see below an example of some considerations taken into account on the benefits of direct purchasing from a supplier against holding stock:

Stock Holding:

- Holding stock takes up space
- Holding Stock needs administered, i.e. stock checked, systemic transactions etc.
- Holding stock increases the risk of obsolescence
- Department requests are non-standard leading to increased stock holdings
- Admin costs of raising a PO and following through to completion approx.: £60 to £100
- Delivery from Stores to requester significantly longer, i.e. time taken to raise requisition, have it authorised, send to Stores, stores to transact, stores to pick order, stores to pack order, stores to distribute

Direct Purchasing from Supplier:

- Supplier absorbs all obsolete stocks
- On-Line purchasing reducing costs
- Next day desk top deliveries to most areas / departments
- Larger variety of choice to meet department requirements
- Supplier absorbs all administration costs
- Supplier provides space / shelving for stocking

Q: I feel the requirement to complete S.279 and S.283 certificates, as per the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1995, to be in vital need of reform. I also believe it is an area where reform could save a substantial amount of police time with no negative impact to the Public whatsoever. Under the current procedure, a Constable based in Scotland is required to ensure that a witness handing over CCTV footage completes three labels and two Certificates of Authentication. To complete this task accurately at the locus takes between 10-15 minutes, and thereafter, requires a further 5 minutes to book the same material in as a production. When we consider that this amount of paperwork is required for each piece of CCTV seized, it's easy to see that the requirement consumes a substantial amount of Police time. Indeed, my current role, I calculate that about a quarter of my case preparation time is spent completing these forms. I accept that when the law was introduced in 1995, CCTV was in its infancy, and to be 'caught' on CCTV was relatively rare too. However, today's reality is somewhat different, and the last two decades have seen an unforeseeable expansion in CCTV based evidence to a point whereby barely a case goes ahead without footage of some description or another. It's for this reason I think Parliament would do well to look at this legislation again, and feel it could be something we may be able to precipitate through evidence based research. I wonder what, if any advances we could make to Parliament with a view to having this piece of legislation amended or ideally, abolished? Perhaps we could start by asking for its suspension (on a pilot or trial basis) in all summary cases or in certain jurisdictions? However we went about it, I'm sure there are steps we could take to highlight the case that Police are spending too much time on what is an outdated procedural requirement.

The stark reality is that a Police Constable based in Carlisle needs to fill in just one label even if they are collecting numerous discs, whereas a Constable in Jedburgh is expected to complete three labels and two certificates, for every single disc they seize. The fact that these Certificates are rarely looked at by anyone else, (least of all a defence solicitor) at any stage in the process, is further proof that they have become superfluous. I wonder if this is something you agree with and would consider taking forward?

A: Thank you for taking the time to put forward your suggestion. Criminal Justice Services Division is currently engaged with a number of stakeholders in terms of the Evidence and Procedure Review being led by the Scottish Court and Tribunal Service and Digital Justice Strategy led by the Scottish Government. The issue of the efficient and effective gathering and presentation of Digital evidence will feature within both these work streams. Criminal Justice Service Division have also been engaged in discussions with SCD Cybercrime personnel in regards to how things can be done more efficiently in terms of presenting this type of evidence in Court whilst minimising the likely number of witnesses required to provide evidence in regard to it.

They also have regular meetings with COPFS Case processing teams and this subject will be raised there also as a consequence of you raising it with 'Ask the Dep'. Minimising unnecessary demand on frontline officers to allow them to focus on our priorities is very important to Police Scotland. If you have anything further to submit regarding your suggestion can you please email Criminal Justice Services Division who will keep you updated with the progress of this work. Thanks for your valuable contribution.

Q: With the current financial constraints it has already been stated that staff costs make up the significant expenditure. No overtime is available, and we are all having to find new ways to do our work efficiently. I have been constantly impressed by Officer resilience in the face of these many changes. I am sympathetic to those leaving the organisation as either a direct or indirect result of this, but I also have my eye on the future and those left to carry on without the extra support they provided. We are being asked to provide more with less and I think most people accept this is the world we live in, but I see this combining with unprecedented levels of bureaucracy and form completion, all with strict and tight timescales for submission - usually by end of shift. Such competing demands make it difficult for Officer to clearly see what the priority is, because everything is. I wonder if there is any workload demand analysis ongoing or planned for uniform roles to see what affects our useable time and where time savings could be made. I can assure you that small wins make a huge difference to those affected.

A: You will be aware that the I6 programme was designed to provide one operational system for Police Scotland that allowed the benefit of data entry once rather than the multiple system updates that we currently have. I am sure you will have seen the media coverage and the update from Director of ICT, Martin Leven, about the failure of delivery of this product. The force are now reassessing how best to meet the need of a more effective ICT platform or systems that will reduce form filling, time consumed on computers at the end of a shift and the obvious disruption this causes to our front line services and individuals private lives. However, there have been many good improvements in some of our working practices over recent years. These are often seen in the areas of fixed penalty tickets and formal warnings that are now used far more often than previously. The benefits of the use of a fixed penalty ticket or formal warning is that the data is far less time consuming to enter on our systems than a standard prosecution report. For the person issued with the ticket or warning the effect is much more immediate and removes the court process which is often seen as a far more punitive measure than their action called for. This way of working is seen to be beneficial and we continue to work with partners to make the most of these opportunities. There are many areas both operationally and in the back office that we are looking to streamline to reduce cost and improve working practices. Many of these will involve working groups and taking ideas from officers and staff engaged in the practices we are looking at. When we get to these points we often involve officers to assist in the design of the system to ensure it is easier to operate, more streamlined and provides the best outcomes for the service at the least cost to time and effort. We hope to continue to develop this way and appreciate the question you have raised on this point.

Q: In recent times I have noticed there seems to have been a dramatic increase in Hanover Care (home alarm monitoring company) contacting police requesting welfare checks on elderly householders who have activated their alarms for assistance. I completely accept and agree police officers should be attending in certain instances - an elderly resident suffering from dementia/mental health etc. or considered a potential high risk missing person if they leave their address. However, it appears police are being requested on a daily basis even when this is not the case, when otherwise fit and healthy elderly persons have activated their alarm for day to day assistance. When Hanover Care are contacted they normally inform police the local council carers responsible for the address in question had been requested to attend the address but were unable to do so as they did not have enough staff on duty. As far as I am aware the local councils receive a weekly monetary fee from residents who have this alarm installed. In Police Scotland's current financial climate and high demand for police resources surely this is an additional demand which would be better dealt with by the local councils employing more staff allowing police officers to go about their day to day duties detecting and preventing crime? I would imagine the monetary fee these councils receive for these alarms could be used to employ more carers to fulfil this role thus reducing the need for police attendance. It would be my view that if the current arrangements continue these staffing issues will not be addressed as there will be a presumption the police will always attend.

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The question you raise is quite specific to one area but if I can answer in general terms. As you will be aware we always work to keep people within communities safe from harm and that very much includes those that are vulnerable or potentially vulnerable. You are quite right to raise that we should look at how we interact with partners going forward in order to agree how we best deliver that. One of the areas that the 2026 team are looking at is how we deliver services in the future to protect those at risk of harm. I will forward on the issue you raise so that it can be included in their work, I will take out your own details before sending it on.

Q: I have been in service for about 5 years and have previous experience in inventory management in a large pharmaceutical organisation. I would like to ask (suggest) if we have ever considered a bar-coded system or inventory management system to control and process our productions? I was amazed when I first commenced my frontline duties that we still used a carbon paper trail for this process. I believe an up to date system would be extremely cost effective in time processing, negating errors and controlling productions. I would be happy to be contacted to discuss further.

A: Many thanks for your suggestion and highlighting your previous experience. I would intend to pass on your suggestion to the relevant work area within productions, I assume you would be comfortable with me passing on your details?

Q: Why do Officers use A4 brown envelopes to send in their case related documents to Aberdeen Reports Department when internal envelopes will suffice? This could potentially save some money.

A: I will forward on to division, with your name removed, so that division can encourage this practice.

Q: Consideration of partnership funding for PSOS? I appreciate that this is a very emotive subject and I am aware a few years ago that legacy forces did have the scope to raise partnership funding as a percentage of their yearly revenue budget. The largest user of partnership contributions in the UK is currently West Yorkshire Constabulary, where around 80% of the total is funded by money from town halls and other organisations in their current budget? I am also aware that currently Regional Councils are reducing budget streams to PSOS. The ability to reach out to partnership organisations, for example Financial Institutions to help in the fight against Cybercrime and Financial Crime which is costing their respective organisations multi millions each year, through various types of fraud. (The rationale being on a spend to save basis). This in turn feeds into PSOS's priorities to deal with Organised Crime, Terrorist Funding and protecting people at risk of harm. Although this is only one area of funding, I am sure this can be replicated across all areas of policing, both local and National.

A: Thanks you for taking the time to submit a question in relation to partnership funding. As you may be aware, the 2026 Project are looking at what threats and risks Police Scotland will face going forward and how we then best tackle these. In some areas this could be through various forms of innovative partnership approaches to make sure we have the best capability and capacity to meet our future demands when there are many demands on our budget. There is currently a significant amount of work and focus looking at how we best shape Police Scotland for the future across many business areas. Thanks for your interest in this very topical area.

Q: 1 - Having trained staff in Lean Six Sigma methodology, how do we extract the principles behind the efficiencies delivered in the projects already completed and how do we spread this through the organisation?

2 - Are there any plans to use Lean Six Sigma methodology to seek efficiencies in current processes or assist in developing new processes?

A: Thank you for your question regarding lean six sigma, there have been a few questions in relation to this. You will be aware that the i6 programme was designed to provide one operational system for Police Scotland that allowed the benefit of data entry once rather than the multiple system updates that we currently have. I am sure you will have seen the media coverage and the update from Director of ICT, Martin Leven, about the failure of delivery of this product. The force are now reassessing how best to meet the need of a more effective ICT platform or systems that will reduce form filling, time consumed on computers at the end of a shift and the obvious disruption this causes to our front line services and individuals private lives. There are many areas both operationally and in the back office that we are looking to streamline to reduce cost and improve working practices and we have used officers and staff trained in lean processes to assist in this work. When we have these opportunities to do this the benefits quickly become apparent. However, with major systems that were due to be replaced we have not yet had the chance to undertake this work. We are in the process of considering how we move our ICT forward to allow the improvements you have mentioned and this work will be undertaken with support from trained lean six sigma staff. Thank you for your question.

Q: We are now expected, when working weekend late shifts, to be finished at our rostered time of 0300hrs and, so as not to incur overtime, effectively ordered to not stay on. How can this provide a sustainable service and, more importantly, safety and security to members of the public and our nightshift colleagues (the latter of whom may now be outnumbered at closure of licensed premises by a ratio of one to several hundred)? Having been one of the Officers in this position with a drink fuelled, angry crowd, it is not a nice place to be.

A: Thank you for taking the time to write to me and raising your question and concern. You will no doubt be aware of the financial constraints placed on Police Scotland. As managers and leaders in policing we all have a role to play in identifying areas of potential financial saving. It is my understanding that Inverness City Policing at weekends has, for whatever reason, been used to a practice of late shift officers being retained on duty in support of night shift colleagues and this ultimately resulted in an overtime spend and this practice is not sustainable in the current climate. I have been informed that the Area Commander has endeavoured to look at sustainable and cost effective options for back shift officers that take account of service demand and staff care and welfare. Where there is sound operational need for officers to be retained on duty then, as you will be fully aware, this is authorised by the Inverness Inspector or indeed the Divisional Duty Inspector providing oversight. If you have specific examples of where you or your staff have been ordered not to stay on when your colleagues or the public have been placed at risk then I would urge you to raise through your line management structure so that as an organisation we can review the circumstances and take forward any learning for future resource planning.

Q: Good day, May I ask if there are any future plans to help improve and build on police staff personal development? There is many staff within the organisation with skills and qualifications not relevant to their current roles and no opportunities available to help those staff and indeed the force benefit from this. Thank you and kind regards.

A: Thanks you for your question. We are committed to introducing new ways to support personal and career development, and the introduction of our new appraisal process 'Performance Development Conversations' will be the first step in placing greater emphasis on discussions around the development staff need for their current role and to support their future career ambitions. In the near future we will also be introducing a new Mentoring Programme (November) and a Talent Development programme (January) both of which aim to support staff with their future career aspirations and equally, introduce new development approaches which help us tap into and maximise the wide skills and talent that staff already have.

Q: Airwave Repair Process: In E and J Divisions Airwave radios are transported to and from the Airwave team using the internal mail when in need of repair or after repair. This method has been in use for many years, even within the former LBP. I understand that in some other divisions, transport of radios is undertaken by technician members of their Airwave Team. Do you consider this to be an inefficient and wasteful deployment of a technician's time and that the internal mail should be used for transporting radios?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Airwave terminals are restricted assets and as such need to be stunned if they are being shipped through the internal mail system as it has been known for items to go missing, the loss of an Airwave terminal would present a significant reputational and security risk to the organisation and indeed given the talk groups within the terminal of the UK Police Service. The role of Police Scotland Airwave technical staff is currently under review by ICT managers working towards a unified Communications Officer role. The Airwave Operational Lead is well engaged with Derek Rose the CTO in relation to this matter. A national process currently operating in some areas of Scotland is that the terminals are deposited in designated secure areas (office safe) where they are uplifted by process drivers, not engineering staff and returned for repair locally or back to Motorola in Germany, the key is that the terminal remains secure through transit back and forward, the terminal is repaired as quickly as possible and returned to the officer for operational use. The term local 'repair' is more a general terminal check over and administration process given that the repairs on what is a sealed unit are almost always carried out by the manufacturer Motorola, so it isn't the best use of a technicians time to 'administer' this process and this is being looked at currently.

The legacy practice involves the stunning of terminals but does not cover the unstun process which ultimately results in the operational police officer (the most important person in this transaction) experiencing delay on getting his/her terminal active on the network again. If the officer has been on days off and returns on a Friday night he/she will not be able to access his terminal and will have to use a pool terminal. This is very unpopular with officers as they don't have their contacts on the pool terminal and has proven to be the main reason officers have not return terminals for repair in the past, resulting in them continuing to use faulty terminals that expose them to operational risk or can impact on the force warranty with Motorola (e.g. water ingress) As National Lead Superintendent Mosley is working hard with the regional Airwave team leaders to establish national standards and processes drawn from the best practice identified from all of the legacy force areas. Some examples of this are: The Airwave lead supported by the regional team leaders has established a national code plug for the terminal and a national Fleetmap (that will bring us in line with the rest of the UK service - including the military) this will be rolled out over the coming months. We also now have a national asset management system PA Connect again moving us to a single set of national processes and practices.

It is important that we start acting and working as a national service and not holding on to regional practices without a good reason, the north of Scotland has its own unique circumstances and Superintendent Mosley engages regularly with the North team leader to overcome these issues and put in place bespoke processes particularly when remote islands are concerned. The issues you raise will be brought forward for discussion at the next Police Scotland Airwave Regional Users Group.

Q I would like to draw attention to what I think is an issue which is causing daily inefficiency in the organisation. The National Contact Directory (NCD) has, since its introduction, been a source of frustration for me and, from what I'm told, numerous colleagues in 'A' Division. The NCD enables staff to search on names. This works well. It also permits department searches. These rely on the person searching knowing exactly where the department sits in the Force structure. Once known, however, it provides limited returns as only 'single point of contact' numbers are listed. For example, if searching for the DI in the Concern Hub, PPU, 'A' Division, the nearest number that will be provided by the NCD is a DS in the PPU - who happens to be located in a different office, and in fact in a different building. This DS, providing he is at his desk, is effectively fielding all such calls for the PPU department. A further, and more frustrating, inefficiency is the inability to search for post types. Without knowing the name of the person you wish to call, it is difficult to call a post holder directly, for example the Paralegal Officer in Aberdeen, Central Reports office in Aberdeen, and Custody Sergeant in Aberdeen. (In the particular case of Custody Division, numbers are listed under department 'Clusters', which would mean very little to the majority of staff in the organisation.) Without exception in 'A' Division, numerous Officers and Staff I have spoken to criticise the NCD and its lack of practical application. I believe the limitations of the NCD have a significant impact on the efficiency of staff who should be able to quickly find contact telephone numbers for post holders in the organisation. Often they have to resort to phoning someone, who knows someone ... I appreciate there may not be an initial direct cost saving in improving the functionality of NCD, however medium to long term an effective, operational NCD will undoubtedly save the organisation time and money. Suggestion respectfully submitted for your consideration.

A: Thank you for your suggestion in relation to the National Contacts Directory applications. I've had a look at the background to this by talking to colleagues in ICT and while it's positive that some aspects of the Contacts Directory are working well, there are local nuances that would be challenging to roll out into this national application. Developing a consistent approach to searching within the Contacts Directory has meant that decisions on terminology and department descriptors have had to be agreed at a national level, which has led to the use of terms such as "clusters" in relation to Custody Division and the elimination of legacy regional descriptors for various departments. The plus side of this is one national system with standardisation of search criteria, the down side is the loss of the local terminology. I know that the ICT directorate are working with operational team who run the contacts directory on the requirement to continually evolve the product. I will ask that our Director of ICT tasks one of his team to contact you (if you are ok with that?) and gain your feedback so your suggestions can be fed into these discussions. Thank you again for highlighting this issue and I hope that further engagement with ICT will help address your concerns.

Q: Overnight / between shift charging of Airwave. Would it be cost effective to modify airwave charging lockers to supply electric for 6 hours then cut off for 6 hours in a cyclical pattern? Chargers are generally left plugged in all the time and this uses electricity whether the device is connected or not. Devices are left charging from one deployment to the next, charging an already full battery wastes electricity and money. Some officers will have their airwave on charge constantly between monthly or quarterly days of action.

The charging cycle is less than 4 hours for current airwave batteries and generally staff have at least 11 hours between shifts. If charging lockers were “live” for 6 in every 12 hours then batteries would be fully charged between shifts and 6 hours of electricity would have been saved. Alternatively the charging lockers could be turned off permanently and replaced with a bank of chargers placed in a Sgt room or communal area of sufficient size and quantity for that office, 1 bank for early shift, 1 bank for late shift and 1 bank for night shift. This may reduce infrastructure, maintenance and inspection costs. The early shift would take from and place into the early shift bank at the start and end of their shift respectively. These batteries would be fully charged by the time the night shift start and they could turn off the charging bank or the electric supply could cut off according to time to prevent wasteful overcharging. The late and night shift banks would operate in a similar fashion. The following has been lifted from <http://www.techradar.com/news/phone-andcommunications/mobile-phones/should-we-unplug-our-chargers-each-night--1280918> A 2012 study at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found that an idle charger drew 0.26 watts on average; this figure goes up to 3.68 watts when a phone is attached and charging, and drops down to 2.24 watts when the phone is attached and fully charged. Overall, the cost is a handful of pounds over 12 months. Npower puts the figure at £3.50 a year for the average household.

A: Thanks again for your question. It has taken some time to reply as estates under took electrical measurements, as described below. In order to establish the possibilities with Airwave charging we have conducted a series of tests. These tests showed that a charger with no radio connected draws 7.4mA; with a fully charged battery it draws 7.3mA; and with a flat battery it draws 20.9mA. It was also noted that there was no difference if the radio was turned on or off. These values are all very low therefore we doubt that the cost of retrospectively adding a time switch to each bank of lockers to control the six hour charge cycles would save us much money. It appears as if the charger recognises when it isn't charging a battery and just sits in a standby type state. Existing airwave lockers have individual sockets installed but these are not individually switched. However, we shall consider for any future airwave lockers the option to add individual switching to the specification. At the same time, we are awaiting the next generation Airwave solution, which may bring about a whole new scenario for charging handsets, etc. hope this information is useful.

Q: **Airwave batteries - personal issue. My handcuffs and baton are recorded on SCoPE by serial number as personal issue. I believe the same personal issue of battery would be possible. Our airwave batteries cost more per unit than our handcuff or baton and are arguably more important to our officer safety. Battery life is regularly insufficient to last a routine shift in K division currently and batteries in circulation have a range of manufacture date. It is true that cops are occasionally keeping more than one battery about their person but it is also true that time and money is being wasted ferrying batteries around to officers on points or at calls because the battery when fully charged will not last an 8-10 hour shift. I would urge every new delivery of batteries to be personal issue, priority being given to response and CP officers, serial numbers recorded on SCoPE with a best before (replacement) date. These replacement dates could then be used to schedule and budget for subsequent replacements. On the rare occasion that a new battery would run out of charge during the course of a single shift the officer would be expected to retain their own battery and obtain a temporary issue from a locally controlled stock of older batteries made up of batteries superseded by the personal issue batches. Currently there is little / no accountability for battery ownership and maintenance. Better management of batteries, replacing batteries more quickly in roles of heavy usage etc. could reduce cost, improve budgeting accuracy, and increase officer safety. In Q, G, K Division every officer has a battery permanently in their own airwave handset, charged in their own airwave locker overnight. The idea of this being personally issued and accountable to them would not be alien and could be monitored and enforced by line managers.**

A: Thanks for your suggestion regarding the management of airwave batteries. I will pass on your suggestion to Airwave Lifetime Management for them to consider as part of their processes.

Q: **I am currently based in a divisional Financial Enquiry Team and I am also a trained Digital Media Investigator. I have a keen interest in technology and see opportunities for its use in improving efficiencies to provide significant savings to the force. I have a question in relation to cross border powers re financial enquiries in particular. Why are we required, in this day in age, to attend courts in England to have Sheriff search warrants, already granted in our jurisdictions, endorsed at Magistrates courts in England? Currently to obtain a warrant for financial information (for an institution whose HQ is in England) we are required to depone for a warrant in Scotland and have that signed by a Sheriff. Thereafter we must attend at a Magistrates court within the jurisdiction of the HQ. These are all over England. London, Southend on Sea, Leeds, Milton Keynes and Swindon to name but a few. On attendance at a Magistrates court the Magistrate will endorse the warrant under terms of the Summary Jurisdiction Process Act 1881 section 4. The Magistrate does not consider the validity of the warrant, he/she simply requires the officer to inform him/her that they were present as the warrant was signed and confirm the signature on the warrant is that of the named Sheriff. This process can cost hundreds of pounds in travel, expenses and overtime (if not more), requires careful planning and days out of the office and in some cases very little evidential material is obtained. I do not believe this is efficient nor necessary.**

If I could make any suggestion it would be that when the warrant is granted by the Sheriff, this should then be sent digitally to the Magistrates court via secure encrypted email attachment by the court service who can then request endorsement. Upon this being agreed the warrant could be digitally / or physically signed by the Magistrate and be returned to the enquiry officer. Furthermore I see no need to actually attend physically at the banks to serve the warrant (in most cases) as police liaison staff are happy to provide documents via secure email / mail (this is the process in England itself). I see no reason why a process cannot be established where warrants can be served digitally should the correct checks and balances be employed. I believe that this would not only save the force considerable sums of monies in expenses etc. but also would reduce time spent by officers dealing with financial warrants and greatly improve efficiencies. I also see a further opportunity in asking banks to provide evidential material in a digital format which is again encrypted and locked (so changes cannot be made). At the moment it is not uncommon to obtain thousands of pages of financial material which cannot be analysed without being input onto an excel spreadsheet. In these cases there is a high risk of a sheet of paper being lost or misplaced.

This would not be possible with a digital copy. It is my view that a digital copy should be considered as best evidence rather than a paper printed copy. In short I believe there are numerous areas of business that could benefit from the adoption of technological solutions to rid the force of archaic and inefficient practices.

A: Thank-you for taking the time to submit your thoughts on the potential of technology and improved practices in your area of work. It is something all partners in the criminal justice world are keen to explore. I do agree with you, that every area should be examined to explore if technology can assist. The Scottish Government is already working alongside criminal justice partners to progress the Justice Digital Strategy, and Police Scotland are fully engaged in those discussions and the possibilities being generated. As an example, there is a pilot in Glasgow designed to use email to request out-of-hours search warrants – saving both police travel and time. A development team is building a “Digital Evidence Vault” prototype to house and manage digital CCTV evidence – to ease submission, storage and sharing of the footage. This demonstrates a more progressive approach to technology and the breadth of opportunities to employ digital and electronic data into a traditionally paper-based process. Current processes and procedures are the consequence of legislation, evidential requirements and experience. Current legislation requires wet signatures/hard copies, so reform in Scotland, and UK-wide, would be needed to deliver the benefits of e-signatures, for example. The Criminal Justice (S) Act 2016 is intended to deliver the potential for increased use of electronic material. As you suggest, savings should always be made where possible. That can be achieved quite readily by changing how we do, what we need to do. Often we are bound to act in a certain way - the endorsement of Scottish Warrants is enshrined in legislation. All Sheriff warrants are signed by Sheriffs to provide the authority in Scotland. For authority in England, that same warrant must be ratified by a local Magistrate. This could be seen as archaic, but it is a requirement to ensure the validity and admissibility of any evidence found. The proposal to establish an electronic exchange of signatures has merit, effectively putting the workload on to Magistrates and Sheriffs to ensure a warrant is 'legal' before execution. This would need the agreement of all judicial stakeholders and legislative reform. The “Evidence and Procedure Review” being led by the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service is currently examining how evidence is and could be presented at court. This may involve adjustments to how that evidence is gathered in the first place. The process of securing judicial signatures has a cost, as they do in Scotland. With careful management and planning, the process which is currently necessary can be more efficient. Banks providing evidence electronically would assist with analysis of financial statements for court purposes, however the statements would still have to be printed off and certificated. This would fall to Police Scotland, along with the associated costs. “Hard copies” are also still required when taking witness statements or during suspect interviews.

Q: **I have recently had cause to order three "Health & Safety What You Need to Know". I made efforts to source these at the best available price to the organisation before submitting the purchase order. In doing this I identified that each genuine poster comes with a unique, serially numbered holograph to prove its authenticity. As a result of this it was my belief that best value would be obtained from ordering direct from the Health and Safety Executive. This was based upon them being the most cost effective coming in at £9.00 (incl VAT) per poster. After submitting the order I was contacted by purchasing to query why I had elected to request that these posters be purchased from the Health & Safety Executive. I explained my rationale behind this but was stunned to learn that we are unable to order from the Health and Safety Executive as they are not an approved supplier. The result being that we now require to purchase these posters from a different company (who will have had it supplied by the Health and Safety Exec) at a cost of £14.00 per poster equating to an additional cost of £15.00. I appreciate that in the grand scheme of things £15.00 may not be a great amount of money to the Force. However it does raise the question as to how much the Force is actually overpaying for many items. I appreciate that we have a moral and professional obligation as an organisation to ensure that the Companies that we deal with are legitimate and there are no concerns as to how the public purse is being spent. However surely in the interests of Best Value we as a Force should be able to purchase items from Non-Department Public Bodies of the United Kingdom. Many thanks in advance for your consideration of this.**

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The situation has arisen because the HSE was out of stock of the posters, and trying to be helpful the purchasing team sourced from another contracted supplier our Stationary Provider. Not the standard route, we paid a higher price than via the HSE but the posters were delivered within a 2/3 days. We will ensure that next time the requestor is given the option to wait and pay the lower price, or receive them urgently and pay the higher price.

Q: **Dear Sir Please could you explain why I have had my day off cancelled on the 23rd October for the Celtic vs Rangers operation and have been placed on late shift 1600 to 0000?**

A: I'm sure you'll appreciate the significance of Rangers v Celtic games and the demands they place on Police Scotland due to the potential for disorder. Can I refer you to memo PS 143/16 which outlines the notice of re-rostering rest days and notice of intended alteration of tours of duties and explains this further? I do appreciate the personal demands on officers and staff that such alterations have. They are kept to a minimum and we try to provide as much notice as possible for the alterations and any re-instatements to minimise disruption to our officers and staff.

Q: **The service of legal documents is intensive on uniform resources. The vast majority of such documents are citations served on behalf of the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. I understand that COPFS are an important partner agency, however, in such austere times, it may be considered appropriate for them to take on more of these duties to alleviate the burden for Police Scotland in terms of financial and human resources. Section 20 of the Police and Fire (Reform) (Scotland) Act 2010 provides that the duties of a constable are, inter alia:- "where required, to serve and execute a warrant, citation or deliverance issued, or process duly endorsed, by a Lord Commissioner of Justiciary, sheriff, justice of the peace or stipendiary magistrate in relation to criminal proceedings." A normal prosecution witness citation is issued by COPFS. It would seem, on the face of it, that Police Scotland could, perhaps, refer to the above legislation and require COPFS to deal with their own legal documents as the legislation does not appear to impose a duty on the police to serve COPFS documents. The savings to the force in terms of efficiency and finances could be significant.**

A: Thank-you for this contribution to an area of business where we are acutely aware of the demands placed on operational officers and across Local Policing. The financial pressures you refer to are shared across the criminal justice sector with each partner facing its' own challenges.

The best route is a partnership approach, where possible, to align resources with demand in the most appropriate way. The purpose of a witness citation is to try to ensure the attendance of a witness at a trial. The impact of non-attendance and non-citation do include financial costs, however the reduction of inconvenience to victims and other witnesses is the most pressing consideration. There are sanctions available for the non-attendance of a witness only if properly cited. Police support is only requested when COPFS are unable to cite the witness by post; where the witness is listed as having a C/O Police Scotland address; where there is insufficient time to cite the witness by post; or the case is being heard in Solemn Court, where the consequences of non-citation and non-attendance are much greater. As an example, COPFS successfully cite 2/3rds of Summary witnesses themselves – police support is mainly in the service of High Court and Sheriff and Jury citations.

The citation of witnesses has been the subject of review at High Court, Sheriff and Jury Court and Summary Court level over the past decade or so. In each review, whilst acknowledging that it is not perhaps the best use of police resources to request them to cite witnesses – there is no other agency with the information and human resources to do it, often in the very tight timescales involved. The continued pressure this creates for Police Scotland is well understood by COPFS and by Criminal Justice Services Division of Police Scotland. Citations for personal service are subject to monthly scrutiny and reporting; and to quarterly and annual review so that every opportunity to reduce the demand is explored. Other demand reduction work, for example Recorded Police Warnings, Fixed Penalty Notices, Abbreviated Report Templates, and guidance on reducing unnecessary witnesses in prosecution reports, aligned to improved witness necessity assessments by COPFS case marking staff, has reduced the volume of citations in total and those for personal service. The reforms to Sheriff and Jury Court as part of the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act are expected to deliver further significant reductions. The legislation you refer to is a key driver for the police to support COPFS and Court function within a framework of collaboration and partnership-working.

We will continue to pursue further demand reduction however, the police do have a critical role in ensuring that trials go ahead as planned.

- Q: Is there a better way of dealing with Facebook related incidents and other Social Media complaints? These type of incidents seem to form a daily part of a Response Officers workload. Would a dedicated area of the Police Scotland Website providing general criminal advice on what constitutes certain crime types, possibly video clips from trained officers or staff, contact details of Facebook etc. to enable the complainer to obtain the evidence/information which would allow an enquiry to progress be a better use of resources than two Police officers attending and giving the same advice to a varying number of complainers. I appreciate this may be a simplistic approach to a potentially complex problem but even if it halves the number of people who go on to ask for Police attendance this would release some resources for what is mostly a non-Police matter.**
- A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question/suggestion on this relevant and topical area. As you quite rightly point out the types of demand on Police Scotland is evolving as trends within society evolve. How we best align ourselves to meet this demand and how we meet it most efficiently and effectively is very high on our agenda at the moment, particularly through the 2026 programme. Nevertheless I appreciate the shifting demand that social media has placed upon Police Scotland. We do have a Keep Safe Online section on our internet page <http://www.scotland.police.uk/keep-safe/keep-secure-online/> which provides a variety of advice and signposting to other organisations. I will forward on your suggestion to internal communications to ensure the point you raise is highlighted further.
- Q: Why are Firearm Enquiry Officers being tasked to carry out numerous firearms enquiries over on top of taking calls on their section and carrying a heavy workload. In my opinion there was nothing wrong with the way the civilian staff carried out this role and they had a wealth of experience in making enquiries into people being allowed to possess a firearm. I am concerned that the current situation in trained Firearm Officers while carrying a heavy work load may miss some vital information which would lead to a person getting access to a firearm when they maybe shouldn't.**
- A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Each of the approx. 600 officers who now carry out firearms enquiries in Scotland have undertaken a training course where they receive instruction in respect of legislation, firearms and the professional curiosity expected in relation to such enquiries. Coupled with robust and focussed enquiry documentation, based around the National Decision Making Model, it is apparent that firearms are removed earlier and more often than before. It is to be noted that approx. 40% of all firearms enquiries in Scotland were carried out by police officers before reorganisation and there are still a number of full time enquiry officers in Scotland, and in places such as N Division, were previously there were none. I am satisfied that the structure in place in Scotland is effective and efficient and delivering a service not only to certificate holders but also the wider public, who are safer. I trust this information is helpful.
- Q: Sir - I am aware that our federation representatives receive some form of enhanced pay, however, I am unsure as to whether this is actual salary or another form of payment structure. In this time of austerity, if this is salary, an obvious cost cutting measure would be to pay these officers as per their rank pay scale. Although not a huge saving, every penny counts. Many thanks for your consideration, I look forward to your response.**
- A: Thank you for your query and suggestion. The Scottish Police Federation is an independent statutory body, governed by the Police Federation (Scotland) Regulations 2013. As such, it is not within the powers of Police Scotland to consider your suggestion. However, thank you for taking the time and as you quite rightly say, in this time of austerity we do need to explore potential opportunities.

- Q: Given the financial constraints the Force is facing, I was interested in how we will continue to grow/develop our staff (in light of fewer acting ranks and potentially fewer development posts)? I believe DCC Fitzpatrick alluded to the Talent Management Programme beginning in August but have yet to see an update about this on the intranet. I understand during times of unprecedented financial constraint some tough calls are going to be made to ensure we deliver the best possible service and am fully supportive of this. As a side I have noticed quite a few updates from the Executive team covering a number of topics. This is something myself and my colleagues do notice and appreciate.**
- A: Thank you for your question. We will shortly be introducing a new Mentoring Programme (November) and Talent Development programme (January) both of which aim to support staff with their future career aspirations and equally, introduce new development approaches which help us tap into and maximise the wide skills and talent that staff already have. These programmes will support lateral development to support staff in their current roles but equally help individuals develop and prepare for future career ambitions. Both programmes will be open to staff and officers and will be advertised soon. The LPD team can also be contacted directly and are happy to provide any further information.
- Q: A while ago police Scotland removed the £25 overnight allowance from the SOP for staying at home when away on training courses and meetings. Now when we travel from Islands and outlying remote mainland stations to meetings in Inverness we are given the option of being placed in a hotel for the night with breakfast and dinner allowances. More often than not officers in the North have family if not friends they can reside within the City of Inverness and only cost the force £25 a night and make a big saving. It seems to be that the force would rather pay for a Dinner Bed and Breakfast experience for the officer at a significantly greater expense. I would say the average overnight hotel stay with meals cannot be far off £100 a night. If booked last minute it may well be more. I feel a review of this could make significant savings across the force.**
- A: Thank you for your interest. As you may be aware, in the context of your query there is currently no provision within the Police Service of Scotland Regulations 2013 for an overnight allowance. Furthermore, any such change to police officer terms and conditions would be a matter for the Police Negotiating Board to consider and would require the involvement of a number of other parties to mutually agree on this through negotiations. Many thanks for taking the time to contribute and I will pass your suggestion on to the Police Scotland representatives within the PNB for their consideration for progression.
- Q: Hello Sir, my suggestion is regarding the integration of the BTP in to PS and the potential savings we could make. Road policing officers are already specialists who deal with incidents and investigate fatalities on the road network. With additional training I would suggest they could be trained to go on the tracks for incidents on the railways and deal with fatalities. Road Policing is spread throughout the country and can respond quickly to incidents. Local divisional officers could cover any calls and incidents on platforms etc. (as they often do just now as BTP are usually too far away) and perhaps some BTP could take on a community police function at the main train stations. This would allow the numbers we get from BTP to be deployed elsewhere and ultimately save money and avoid duplication. A Road / Rail division could be formed or even an Infrastructure division taking in the ports etc. Thank you for reading**
- A: Thank you for your interest in this topic and your suggestion. Work in this area is ongoing looking at how integration is best achieved for the benefit of all stakeholders, very much including the public. It is of course at a fairly early stage with many options being considered. Communications will be provided in due course on what integration will look like as the best options are formulated. Thanks for your interest in this topical area.

Ask the Dep – Overtime / TOIL / Leave

- Q: Sir, thank you for the opportunity to address a wider issue directly with yourself with regards to budget expenditure. Recently the TOIL buyback scheme has been ‘buying back’ TOIL from my officers whom have already booked the leave, sending them into a negative TOIL balance. To my mind the officers have done the right thing by the organisation by identifying time in advance to allow us to plan effectively. Instead the policy results in them being payed money that they don’t want nor intend to ask for and at the same time having their morale adversely affected by upsetting their plans. Whilst I appreciate that TOIL is perceived as a ‘toxic debt’ is there a policy decision that can be made to ensure that TOIL that is already booked is not bought back to ensure the Service is not paying out money needlessly and officers retain their preferred time off please? Thank you?**
- A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The TOIL buy back process was introduced into the Force in April 2015. This meant that any TOIL accrued after that date would be dealt in accordance with Police Regulations and not through the individual legacy Force Policies. There was an outstanding TOIL balance post Commonwealth games of over 250,000 hours which was continuing to accumulate. Since 1st April 2015, Rolling Toil is converted to payment on a 90 day basis at the rate it was accrued, thereby reducing balances to zero continually. The SPF has requested an ability to go into negative TOIL for emergencies, but limited to one 90 day period in a year, which has to be cleared by the next TOIL accounting period. After consideration and benchmarking against other forces policies this is considered to be a reasonable request. In addition, a proposal to extend the buyback period to 180 days was put to the Force Executive, however this was not progressed as it contravened Police Regulations. I hope this information helps.

Q: Annual Leave: In other organisations staff can choose to take up to an extra weeks annual leave whilst forgoing a week's salary. The deduction in salary is spread over a year and not 'noticed' by the member of staff. In my previous employed there was a high take up of this offer. Overtime: If I work overtime I receive time +1/3 whether I take TOIL or payment so most people take the money. However if there was a premium for taking TOIL, say time +1/2 or double time, then more people would elect for this instead of a payment?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Thank you for your e-mail. Could I please refer you to the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation section on the Intranet? You will see that this project will include consideration of all terms and conditions and allowances. I would encourage you to read through the various FAQ's that have been asked. Regarding your suggestion of unpaid leave, I will pass your comments to the Modernisation team to include in their review of our existing allowances.

Q: Is a review and harmonisation of the expenses policy planned or does this need to be included in the bigger modernisation project? There appears to be current inconsistencies in the amounts claimed by officers and staff across the country. Also consideration of how robust the current process is for what some people claim and guidelines for those authorising. I.e. everyone clear what they can and can't claim? Do those authorising simply sign off or actually review to see if they were actually required and are reasonable expenses?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. For police staff, the review and harmonisation of allowances and expenses requires to be considered as part of the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation project. For police officers, the Allowances and Expenses Standard Operating Procedure was published in March 2016. Although this SOP is not scheduled to be reviewed until October 2017, the HR Policy team is collating any post publication queries in order that all appropriate amendments are included within the next version. If you are aware of any inconsistencies, which are not already subject of review, then I would ask that these are highlighted to the HR Policy team for consideration. In terms of your second point, it is stated within the Allowances and Expenses (Police Officer) SOP that the responsibility of those authorising claims (i.e. line managers and supervisors) is to ensure that they and their staff claim for allowances in line with the SOP.

Q: Undertime Working / Unpaid Annual Leave. We know staff costs are the biggest portion of a policing budget. I would be willing to take unpaid leave but the current mechanism for requesting unpaid or exceptional leave acts as a deterrent. My home life does not justify my requesting a part time work plan but I could afford to take unpaid leave occasionally. If there was a routine mechanism in SCOPE to request unpaid leave subject to normal 1st line manager approval processes it could reduce staffing costs and the stigma around unpaid leave. This simplified mechanism would reduce administration around unpaid leave and increase the uptake. Annual Leave Periods per year account for about 320 working hours but my annual leave allowance is 284 hours, I would happily take the remaining time off as unpaid annual leave. Outwith my annual leave periods I would be open to the idea of taking single days off when work was quiet or when I had some special event in my private / home life. Higher rate tax payers may be particularly interested in the scheme. If 250 additional unpaid leave days were taken that would be a cashable saving equivalent to 1 full time employee. If every officer took a single day per year that would be a cashable saving equivalent to 69 full time employees?

A: Thanks for your continued interest. There are no provisions within the Regulations for unpaid annual leave hours/days. Whilst it is not something currently being considered, I will raise your points with the Forces reps on the PNB (Police Negotiating Board). The Force would undoubtedly require to consider issues around resilience and in particular pensions, but a valid suggestion for discussion none the less. Many thanks for your suggestion which will be raised with Force reps on PNB to take it forward.

Q: TOIL Balances and Conversion to Payment. I believe this is an IT issue and a simple resolution could save a substantial amount of money. TOIL is accrued in a standard way, however, when TOIL is taken the IT system takes from the most recently accrued, rather than the oldest. The effect of this is that the only way to get the pre April 2015 balances to zero is for cops to have a zero balance (that has actually been used) prior to accruing more TOIL. Examples: If a cop had 1 hour pre April 2015 and accrued 8 hours post April 2015 their balance would be 9 hours. If they take an 8 hour day off, the system takes it from the most recent TOIL meaning that you'll never get rid of that 1 hour, which converts to payment in April 2017. A simple IT fix could ensure that TOIL deductions are taken from the oldest TOIL accrued thereby saving a substantial amount of money and it would also make supervisory management of TOIL easier. Using the same example, but this time the cop clears their balance by putting in the whole 9 hours (1 day off and a late start 2 weeks from now) they reduce their SCOPE balance to zero. The day before they're due to take the TOIL they accrue an hour in TOIL. The TOIL computer takes the newest TOIL meaning that once again the oldest balance will stay and get converted to payment in April 2017. I'm convinced that this is an IT issue that needs to be urgently resolved as come April 2017 all the old TOIL will convert to payment and a. the cops don't want paid (otherwise they'd have opted for payment in the first place) and b. it'll mean needlessly spending money we simply don't have.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question.

In October 2015, a review of Time off in Lieu and Re-Rostered Rest days was instigated at the Working Practices Review Board. This review had 2 aims:

- To provide a corporate and regulation compliant process for the management of TOIL and RRRD post commonwealth games.
- To reduce the Force's TOIL liability which at November 2014 stood at £6.4 million.

A number of workshops were held with participation from Resource Deployment staff, representatives of staff associations and senior management. The proposals which resulted from the workshops were taken to the WPRB in March 2015, endorsed and implemented.

The Implementation details were:

- All TOIL banks pre 1st April 2015 would not be subject to the buy-back process, however by mutual agreement, these would be reduced to zero by April 2017.
- Post April 2015, TOIL accrued would be subject to management in line with Police Regulations (Scotland) 2013 i.e. Any TOIL accrued would have to be applied for AND utilised in the 90 days after approval. If these conditions were not met, an automatic buy out would occur on the first working day of the following calendar month.

This is the reason why the “newest” TOIL is bought back first: to ensure that regulations are complied with and to reduce the Forces liability. A number of proposals are being progressed through the Corporate Finance and Investment Board at the moment to potentially modify the TOIL buyback system. These proposals are based on feedback from officers. Any changes to the Buyback system will be published.

I hope this answers your question, and thanks for getting in touch

Q: Sir, I have recently noticed that myself and other colleagues from my shift are routinely being paid for Time off in lieu which we have accrued through overtime rather than taking payment due to the ongoing financial constraints. Would it not be of benefit to the policing budget if the practice of buying back employee's time off in lieu albeit of low amounts. This practice could be scrapped and officers allowed to accrue for example 20 hours which could be taken when requested by them rather than the current stipulation of 90 days to the best of my knowledge. This could be implemented by allowing officers to take for example no more than 8 hours of time off in lieu on one run/set of working shift patterns or allowing for example only 2 officers per shift to use their accrued time off in lieu at any one time to allow resource levels to remain at a stable level?

A: Thank you for your question regarding time off in lieu. This is a point that is often raised in relation to the buyback scheme. The purpose of the buyback scheme is twofold. Firstly for welfare reasons, officers should use time that they are owed within a reasonable time frame, as the current scheme follows the Regulations in terms of requiring time off to be taken within 90 days of it being accrued I believe is reasonable and in line with our welfare policy. Secondly, if officers were to have a reserve of 20 hours TOIL this would increase the force's financial liability at the year-end significantly and this is something we must manage closely going forward?

Q: Any change to salary will be an emotive conversation but I would be willing to accept a salary cut in return for a proportionate increase in annual leave allowance. Is there an appetite to explore this type of saving?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit questions. Could I please refer you to the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation section on the Intranet. You will see that this project will include consideration of all terms and conditions and allowances. I would encourage you to read through the various FAQ's that have been asked. Regarding your suggestion of unpaid leave, I will pass your comments to the Modernisation team to include in their review of our existing allowances.

Ask the Dep – Payroll

Q: Sir, having recently worked in several locations I have observed first-hand the amount of time and effort that goes into providing officers and staff with their payslip each month. I believe that Police Scotland, and the SPA, could save significant time and money each month by switching to electronic payslips – officers and staff could either access payslips via the intranet, SCOPE or be automatically emailed a link each month to their payslip. There would also be significant environmental savings with this switch – something that will align to the Scottish Government aims and objectives I'm sure. These can be printed off at the time or retrospectively and are acceptable to banks, HMRC and other institutions.

I appreciate nothing is ever quite as straightforward with IT systems as simply adding this process but one of the options could be achievable hopefully. I am fully aware that some officers or staff may object to the change, it could be that there is an opting out process for those who wish to continue receiving payslips for the first year or so while the benefits are assessed. I am more than happy to be contacted by anyone allocated this suggestion to discuss anything further?

A: Thanks for your suggestion regarding the introduction of electronic payslips.

There are a few difficulties to enabling this in the short term, however we have work in progress that will hopefully enable this functionality to be considered in the future.

Across Police Scotland we currently have multiple payroll systems, some in-house and some run by Local Authorities, that served the legacy Forces which now make up Police Scotland. We are in the process of designing and procuring a new national payroll system that will serve the whole organisation. When the new payroll system is in place we can start to integrate with our Finance and HR Systems to allow far more visibility of the information they hold. When we have one source of data for the whole organisation and a modern system to host it then your suggestion would certainly be more achievable.

I have forwarded your suggestion to the ICT Digital Transformation team who are leading the project. I know they are keen to ensure all possible functionality is captured before they go to market.

Q: I am led to believe that the printing of wage slips is outsourced. Given that the information required for the payslips is obtained from SCOPE, would it be a possibility that a programme be added to allow staff to view their payslips electronically to negate the requirement to pay for printing?

A: Thanks for your query regarding the online viewing of pay information within Scope. You are quite right that Scope holds information that is fed into the payroll systems we use, but unfortunately has no capability within it to hold payroll information that would allow easy viewing, that function would come from the payroll system. Across the force we currently have multiple payroll systems, some in house and some run by Local Authorities that served the previous constabularies that now make up Police Scotland. We are in the process of designing and procuring a new national payroll system that will serve the whole organisation. When the new payroll system is in place we can start to integrate with our Finance and HR Systems to allow far more visibility of the information they hold. I have fed your suggestion to the ICT Digital Transformation team who are leading the project, I know they are keen to ensure all possible functionality is captured before they go to market.

Q: With such a vast number of people employed by Police Scotland or SPA, could consideration be given to changing to electronic payslips issued on a monthly basis? At the moment, a paper copy is sent for every employee, however this causes problems when an officer has moved department/office or is on leave (a/l, sick or maternity, for example) and the payslip is not received. The reduction in costs from money spent on the production of the payslips, the transport of them to each division and thereafter the hours spent sorting through them to send them to the individual officers would no longer be required, ensuring a saving to the force. If the payslips were electronic, could they be attached to each employees SCOPE record with the ability to print them off if/when required?

A: Thanks for your question around electronic payslips, it has been raised by a few people. There are a few difficulties to enabling this in the short term, however we have work in progress that will hopefully enable this functionality to be considered in the future. Across Police Scotland we currently have multiple payroll systems, some in-house and some run by Local Authorities, that served the legacy Forces which now make up Police Scotland. We are in the process of designing and procuring a new national payroll system that will serve the whole organisation. When the new payroll system is in place we can start to integrate with our Finance and HR Systems to allow far more visibility of the information they hold. When we have one source of data for the whole organisation and a modern system to host it then your suggestion would certainly be more achievable. I have forwarded your suggestion to the ICT Digital Transformation team who are leading the project. I know they are keen to ensure all possible functionality is captured before they go to market.

Q: My wife works for a major high street retail store. She receives her payslip, P60 etc. electronically. Has consideration been given to this to prevent the need for sending out monthly payslips?

A: Thanks for your question around electronic payslips, it has been raised by a few people. There are a few difficulties to enabling this in the short term, however we have work in progress that will hopefully enable this functionality to be considered in the future. Across Police Scotland we currently have multiple payroll systems, some in-house and some run by Local Authorities, that served the legacy Forces which now make up Police Scotland. We are in the process of designing and procuring a new national payroll system that will serve the whole organisation. When the new payroll system is in place we can start to integrate with our Finance and HR Systems to allow far more visibility of the information they hold. When we have one source of data for the whole organisation and a modern system to host it then your suggestion would certainly be more achievable. I have forwarded your suggestion to the ICT Digital Transformation team who are leading the project. I know they are keen to ensure all possible functionality is captured before they go to market.

Ask the Dep – Police Officer Pay and Allowances

Q: When are we likely to hear about the 2016/2017 Police Pay award?

A: Thanks for taking the time to contribute a question and I understand your interest in this. The Police Pay Award for 2016/2017 is currently being considered within the Police Negotiating Board arena and we would hope to have an update for officers on this matter by the end of September. We will communicate this out as soon as is possible.

Q: In an effort to preserve the headline or core pay and conditions of officers and staff would it be possible to do away with the competency related threshold payment, the special priority payment has already been done away with and I do not think anyone joined this organisation expecting to be paid an additional sum of money for being competent. There are the obvious administration costs around this payment which add to its expense, the submission, assessment, approval and administering costs. Everyone should be competent in their role and it seems unfair and unnecessary to reward those at the top of a pay scale for merely being competent?

A: Thank you for your question and feedback.

The CRTP payment is part of police officers remuneration which are regulated by determinations and regulations. Police Scotland values the skills and knowledge which experienced officers bring to the job and are not considering changing the operation of the CRTP scheme at this point in time.

Thanks for taking the time to submit a suggestion.

Q: The following is more of a suggestion than a question. Territorial officers numbers have declined due to the number of specialised departments, this is having an impact on the wellbeing of frontline territorial officers. Territorial frontline policing has seen a decline in the number of officers wishing to carry out this task. In an effort to save money it is a suggestion to remove the shift allowance allocated to these officers in specialised departments who no longer work shifts. It is anticipated that if this was implemented the number of officers wishing to return to front line duties would increase and this would save Police Scotland a substantial amount of funds.

A: Many thanks for your thoughts and suggestion. What you are suggesting would clearly require a great deal of thought, consultation and careful consideration as to the wider impacts of it. It is not something that we are currently considering, however as time moves forward and projects such as 2026 look at how we deliver policing in the future it is something that I can perhaps feed your suggestion into to study the feasibility of it. Many thanks for your interest and taking the time to submit a suggestion.

Q: Mr Livingstone my suggestion relates to the payment of mileage. I am in receipt of mileage in respect of travel to and from work (having moved to Gartcosh in 2014). In this day and age I find it somewhat bemusing that when I am on annual leave or off work for up to 2 months, mileage will still be paid irrespective. Additionally if I have taken toil then I still get paid mileage for travel to work that day! I was informed it was policy to pay mileage in this manner and cheaper than recruiting an individual to oversee claims on ScOPE. Surely it's wrong and has been for the past 2 years that mileage in this manner has been and continues to be paid. In my opinion significant savings could be made by re-addressing this issue.

A: Thanks for your suggestion. As per the conditions laid out within the Organisational Change Relocation SOP, employees are entitled to claim excess travel expenses for a period of up to a maximum of 4 years, where it is acknowledged and accepted that Organisational Change has resulted in a personal impact through an increase in commuting costs. As negotiated and agreed with the Trade Unions in 2013, irrespective of any short term absences (be that annual leave, sickness absence, TOIL etc.) Excess Travel Expenses are payable for a period of up to a maximum of 4 years in total, with the rate of reimbursement diminishing over time (i.e. Years 1 and 2 - 100%, Year 3 - 60% and Year 4 - 40%). After that Excess Travel Expenses are no longer payable.

Only in circumstances where an individual is off for an extended period of time (i.e. a continuous period of 2 months or more) are these expenses paused. I would emphasise that the expenses are only paused - and they recommence on the individual's return to work and the period of payment is extended by an equivalent length, to ensure that a total of 4 years excess travel expenses are paid to eligible and affected police staff in all instances. It was agreed that no deductions would be made for short periods of absence/non-attendance at work. This was considered the most efficient way to administrate the system from a Finance and People and Development perspective. I can assure you that all aspects of Force SOPs and Terms and Conditions remain under scrutiny to ensure that efficiencies are maximised and that any proposals to amend elements of these would require to be fully negotiated with Trade Union representatives. At the present time, the conditions as laid out within the Organisational Change Relocation SOP remain live. Many thanks for submitting a question.

Ask the Dep – Police Officer Pensions

Q: My question relates to Scottish Police Federation JCC Circular 27 of 2016.

On 30 June 2016, a Home Office letter from Elizabeth France, Chair of the Pensions Consultative Forum and Scheme Advisory Board outlines the ministerial decision to lift existing restrictions on payment of 25% commutation to officers between 25 and 30 years' service given strict conditions.

My question is, given the current budget issues, has this option been considered by The Scottish Government and Police Scotland?

A: Thanks for submitting a question. This proposal would require a pension scheme regulation change by Scottish Government. The implications around implementing this in Scotland are to be discussed at the next meeting of the Police Pensions Scheme Advisory Board. We await the result of this and updates will be available in due course. I hope this helps in the meantime.

Q: My question relates to Scottish Police Federation JCC Circular 27 of 2016. On 30 June 2016, a Home Office letter from Elizabeth France, Chair of the Pensions Consultative Forum and Scheme Advisory Board outlines the ministerial decision to lift existing restrictions on payment of 25% commutation to officers between 25 and 30 years' service given strict conditions. My question is, given the current budget issues, has this option been considered by The Scottish Government and Police Scotland?

A: Thanks for submitting a question. This proposal would require a pension scheme regulation change by Scottish Government. The implications around implementing this in Scotland are to be discussed at the next meeting of the Police Pensions Scheme Advisory Board. We await the result of this and updates will be available in due course. I hope this helps in the meantime.

Q: I'm told The Chief Constables in England and Wales recently won a court case regarding the lifting of the cap on lump sums prior to full service retirements thus freeing officers to leave the service before their full term of thirty years thereby saving their forces money in the long run. Is Police Scotland considering a similar challenge in the foreseeable future?

A: Thanks for submitting a question. This proposal would require a pension scheme regulation change by Scottish Government. The implications around implementing this in Scotland are to be discussed at the next meeting of the Police Pensions Scheme Advisory Board. We await the result of this and updates will be available in due course. I hope this helps in the meantime.

Ask the Dep – Police Staff VR/ER and Police Officer Redundancy

Q: In view of the budget overspend detailed in the recent first quarter report - it advised that this was due to over-spends against budget on both Police Officer and Police Staff costs. If these staff costs can't be managed down sufficiently to realise the remaining savings required within this financial year will the Force be compelled to implement compulsory redundancies?

A: The Scottish Government are committed to no compulsory redundancies through public sector pay policy (PSPP), and as such, all organisations who fall under the PSPP (ourselves included) are expected to make redundancies in line with this commitment. The VR/ER package has been designed with this in mind, i.e. it is anticipated that it is attractive enough to encourage volunteers to come forward that are genuinely interested in leaving under our scheme.

Q: Will Police Staff who have applied for VR/VER in non-business critical areas be allowed to leave? There are many staff roles in departments that have went through restructuring 3 years ago, but through changes in business practices have meant their jobs have been de-skilled or made non-essential. Middle management are however reluctant to let staff go in these areas as they fear for their own job security?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The organisation is currently reviewing all notes of interest and will be engaging with Head of Department/Commanders to look at opportunities to release staff where that is viable. This is being progressed over the next few months. Where work can be reduced, stopped or done using other resources then VR-VER would be financially viable. On this basis all releases must be looked at departmentally as well as individually. The organisation anticipates where work can be stopped or reduced this should be managed by Heads of Department. Where stopping work is not an option then there may be other options available for example using staff from other areas of business including backfilling using supernumerary staff. If you would like further information regards VR/VER you can access FAQ's on the website via the attached link <https://spi.spnet.local/commonservices/people-and-development/VRER/Pages/VR-ER-FAQ's.aspx> I hope this information is of use to you

Q: As the most significant costs are staff costs, are there any plans in the future to offer Police officers voluntary redundancy terms?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to contribute and ask a question. The Service and indeed the public value the skills and knowledge which all officers bring to the job and therefore we would not want to lose officers through such a scheme. In addition, there would be legislative requirements in relation to such a scheme. Therefore we are not currently considering any such scheme.

Q: Are there any plans to look at the long list of staff that have got their VR/ER requests in with their posts awaiting backfill? Would it not save the force money if the people that wanted to go were allowed to leave?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. The financial case for VR/VER release is a complicated one. Where work can be reduced, stopped or done using other resources then VR-VER would be financially viable. On this basis all releases must be looked at departmentally as well as individually. The organisation anticipates where work can be stopped or reduced this should be managed by Heads of Department. Where stopping work is not an option then there may be other options available for example using staff from other areas of business including backfilling using supernumerary staff. The organisation is currently reviewing all notes of interest and will be engaging with Head of Department/Commanders to look at opportunities to release staff where that is viable. This is being progressed over the next few months. If you would like further information regards VR/VER you can access FAQ's on the website via the attached link <https://spi.spnet.local/commonservices/people-and-development/VRER/Pages/VR-ER-FAQ's.aspx> I hope this information is of use to you.

Q: Those of us in this dept. who have applied for VR/ER have been told our posts are all critical and we won't be released unless the posts can be backfilled. Due to the financial situation is there any possibility that this position may change and our posts could be covered by light/restricted duty officers?

A: Thank you for your question. We are currently examining opportunities for further organisational change which may result in opportunities to progress the VR-VER of some of those who wish to leave the organisation. This is being looked at across the service and will require engagement with local management in the first instance to assess the feasibility of releasing staff who have long standing notes of interest in VR-VER. We will always have some staff who cannot be released on VR-VER as their post is required into the future. In that case the only way to let someone leave will be if another "at risk" employee is willing to be redeployed into their role. That said, we will be looking for opportunities to release more staff over the remainder of this financial year where it is viable to do so. I appreciate that this doesn't tell you whether we can release you in the short to medium term or not. All I can confirm is that this work will be progressing over the next few months and appropriate communication will be put in place to let staff know what is planned and progressed. If you would like further information regards VR/VER you can access FAQ's on the website via the attached link <https://spi.spnet.local/commonservices/people-and-development/VRER/Pages/VR-ER-FAQ's.aspx>.

Q: As the most significant costs are staff costs, are there any plans in the future to offer Police officers voluntary redundancy terms?

A: As you'll be aware Police Scotland is governed by the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. This specific legislation does not contain provision for redundancy of police officers. Therefore at this time your suggestion is not an option open to Police Scotland. I am not aware of any planned changes to this legislation in respect of redundancy terms.

Q: Has consideration been given to offering early/voluntary retirement to officers, say in the 3 to 5 years of their service? A benefit of this would be the saving on paying rent allowance. Whilst saving, in the short term, on maximum wages?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to contribute. The Service and indeed the public value the skills and knowledge which experienced officers bring to the job and therefore we would not want to have to lose them, or indeed any other specific service bracket. In addition, there would be legislative requirements in relation to such a scheme. Therefore we are not currently considering any such scheme.

Q: The biggest financial cost to Police Scotland is staff salaries. I applied for Early Retirement more than 4 years ago and am still waiting for it to be granted. I work in the Dundee control room which is undergoing major changes not least of which is that more and more police officers are being deployed and many more are undergoing storm training with a view to being deployed in the near future. My suggestion is very simple, allow me to take ER which will save my £26,000 salary and replace me with a police officer which is obviously what Police Scotland want?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Consideration is being given to all cost saving options that impact people. Any options taken forward will be done on a risk managed basis with Service Delivery at its heart. Putting Officers in posts such as yours requires careful consideration to ensure relevant skills and experience are deployed to assure continuity of service delivery; as such any decision in respect to this would have to be fully assessed to ensure sustainability, efficiency and robustness. In more general terms, we are currently assessing opportunities to identify staff who have submitted expressions of interest in VR-VER and who could be released, whilst managing risk and ensuring continuity of service. More information on this will be available in due course. If you want further information regards VR/VER you can access FAQ's on the website via the attached link <https://spi.spnet.local/commonservices/people-and-development/VRER/Pages/VR-ER-FAQ's.aspx> I trust this information is of use to you.

Q: I actually have three questions.

1. There are rumours that there may be packages for cops with 25 years' service and above? Any truth in this?

2. Are Police Scotland considering offering the 30+ scheme?

3. Would there be any scope to offer a system whereby you can transfer some RRRD to your spouse who is also in the service??

A: Many thanks for submitting your questions. Police Scotland values the skills and experience of all officers, including those in the final years of their service to the communities and people of Scotland, and therefore we are not considering any form of "packages" to officers. We are not considering any 30+ scheme at this time. With regards to your suggestions around RRRD, I assume you are thinking around flexibility for parental responsibilities etc. I appreciate your thinking around this, as you are perhaps aware, we do have a comprehensive Leave SOP which outlines provisions for parental leave. In terms of transferring RRRDs this may impact areas of business where one spouse works and the other does not and have potential equality implications for lone parents that would need to be explored. It is not something that we are considering at this time.

Q: There have been a number of rumours that packages may be offered to officers who are close to retirement in an attempt to reduce Police numbers. Is there any truth in this?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Police Scotland and communities value the skills and experience of officers of all service brackets, including those near the end of their police service. At this time there is no intention to offer "packages" to officers that would mean losing their skills and experience from the Service.

Q: Has any consideration been given to approaching the Government with a view to them contributing to an RUC70 style package to encourage officers on the top scale of pay to retire early with full pension? Given that the Government has an underspend of some £150 million from last year's budget it makes sense to approach them with the idea The Force could get a new appointee on half the wages of anyone wishing to retire, so there would no loss of personnel and a reduction of wages in the future. This could help in the future cost cutting required to meet the targets set by the Government?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. Police Scotland and the communities of Scotland value the skills and experience of officers of all service levels. At this time there is no plan to implement any form of packages which would mean we would lose such skills and experience early.

Q: Will compulsory redundancies come into effect from April 2017 for police staff or are Police Scotland continuing with voluntary redundancies only?

A: Thank you for your question. The public sector pay policy which is released annually has a commitment to no compulsory redundancies, which Police Scotland adheres to. There is no intention to move away from this, we await the next version of public sector pay policy which is anticipated at the beginning of the financial year.

Q: Recently there have been rumours regarding a 70+ scheme (age and service amounting to over 70 years) being introduced with a view to officers within that bracket being offered a financial "package" in order to take early retirement. Is there any truth in this rumour?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to contribute. The Service and indeed the public value the skills and knowledge which experienced officers bring to the job and therefore we would not want to have to lose them, or indeed any other specific service bracket. In addition, there would be legislative requirements in relation to such a scheme. Therefore we are not currently considering any such scheme.

Q: There was a memo released which indicated that the government had passed permission to Police Forces throughout Britain that they could now provide officers with the ability to receive 25% commutation prior to 30 years police service. As such is Police Scotland going to do this which will allow officers with 25 years and above the option to retire with a full lump sum?

A: Thanks for submitting a question. This proposal would require a pension scheme regulation change by Scottish Government. The implications around implementing this in Scotland are to be discussed at the next meeting of the Police Pensions Scheme Advisory Board. We await the result of this and updates will be available in due course. I hope this helps in the meantime.

Q: In departments which are under scrutiny and pressure to reduce staffing costs, and in order to reduce redundancies, will staff be consulted regarding a willingness or desire to reduce individual hours before putting specific posts at risk?

A: Staff and Police Officers can already request reduced hours through a Flexible Working Applications and if this is accommodatable at a local level then this will be endorsed. In respect to asking groups of staff who work in a team/department to reduce contractual hours formally there is no current plan to do so. As part of formal redundancy consultation staff can put forward a proposal (using the counter proposal process) to reduce hours as a redundancy mitigation measure - to date this has not been a chosen method of redundancy mitigation within departments that have undergone a change process, however, any redundancy mitigation measure that staff put forward during consultation is always considered very carefully.

Q: I refer to the article on the BBC News website yesterday (27.10.2016) regarding the Police Scotland overspend. I refer to the particular statement that staff costs were being "managed down" with strict workforce planning.

Since the period of change to Police Scotland there has been a huge staff reduction resulting in many staff undertaking additional duties along with the stress of harmonisation and job evaluation process. With staff morale already being very low does this statement mean that there will be further grade/salary cuts at the end of the job evaluation process?

Also from recent unison communication with regards 81 jobs being made redundant it is understood that these posts are through the current VR/ER process. Will this result in additional duties for Police Staff without remuneration or will these duties be undertaken by Police Officers?

A: Currently as you rightly point out the Service has a significant financial challenge. The majority of the money we spend within policing (about 90%) is used to pay for human resources i.e. Police Staff and Police Officer resources. Every single financial cost within the Service is being very carefully managed - including the cost of our people.

Workforce planning takes account of every aspect of people costs e.g. where we have supernumerary police officers or staff and how this can be reduced to ensure that people are used where we need them and within the budgeted establishment. The cost of temporary promotion and checking whether the Service can practically manage work within substantive ranks rather than incur the cost of acting/temporary promoting someone - is also routinely looked at. In short there are many ways of managing people costs through addressing workplace practices. Over and above these methods we do have redundancy which is progressed on the basis of either stopping activities or changing our systems, processes and practices - in order to reduce the number of people it requires to deliver the Service.

All of the above processes associated with workforce planning are distinct and separate from the Modernisation process. Modernisation is a project that is being progressed because the different legacy policing organisations all had differing terms and conditions of employment. Having 10 different sets of terms and conditions in place for staff is neither efficient nor sustainable. Modernisation essentially seeks to address these anomalies, and the subsequent feelings of unfairness they create between colleagues, by rationalising the pay system to ensure that people carrying out the same work have the same potential to earn. Modernisation is not being progressed as a cost saving measure - it is being progressed to try and create a fairer working environment.

Lastly you raise the point of the potential circa 80 VRVER releases that Unison communicated to members in respect to. The organisation has been working with various areas of the business in respect to changes to systems / processes and technology that all support releases through changing what, and how we deliver, in order to create genuine redundancy of work currently being undertaken. This allows us to release further people resources. Redundancies are being made on the basis that work will reduce or stop - therefore generating people savings and releases. There is no intention for work to be just spread out across the remaining staff to allow for these releases. There is a robust process in place to ensure that any redundancies are genuine and manageable.

Ask the Dep – Promotion

Q: Sir, More a suggestion from myself, rather than a question, as I know we are always looking on ways to save money. My suggestion is regarding Promotion...you can only be eligible for promotion if you have reached the top tier of your paygrade e.g. a constable can only be promoted after 10 years' service. For example, cops that are being promoted with 4 or 5 years' service, jump up considerably on the pay scale for a first year Sgt..obviously a saving can be made there. Just a thought...would rather this was not posted on the forum...I have tried to find other ways to post this?

A: Thank you for your suggestion.

I appreciate the concept of your idea, however, even during times of financial constraint, I think it is important that we continue to develop and support the career aspirations of our officers and staff. The skills and expertise of our workforce will be a really valuable resource to us going forward and there is a risk that time restrictions on promotion may impact on our ability to retain talented people.

Therefore, my alternative view would be to ensure we have the right people, with the right skills, at a time that is right for the organisation's requirements. In the meantime, we should continue to support officers developing their skills and expertise for the next rank and ensure we are growing our own internal talent that will have the capabilities to deliver our future challenges.

Thanks for taking the time to contribute your idea and suggestions.

Q: I am looking for an update on the promotion process to sergeant. My form has passed the sift so I feel very much in Limbo. I have 8 and a half years' service and no sick days in that time. I also successfully completed a year in an acting Sgt role. I am concerned with regards to my career development and future prospects?

A: Thank you for your question. As you know we took the decision earlier this year to temporarily suspend the Sergeant and Inspector process due to ongoing work relating to the Supervisory ratios review and the potential impact this may have on promotion opportunities at these ranks. I understand your concerns on future promotion opportunities, however it is important that we have a clear picture on the current and future requirements at each level. We have recently resumed selection interviews for both these ranks, albeit this will be on a smaller scale. Further information has now also been published on the Force Intranet. I hope this answers your question, Good luck with your application.

Q: My question is in regards to the decision taken in May to suspend the promotion process for Sergeant and Inspector ranks to allow the review of supervisor ratios. This was understandable and a rationale decision to take and I believe work is progressing in regards to this review. On 03/08/2016 Mr Gillies made an announcement on the intranet stating, Phase 1 of this review is now near completion and I am pleased to announce we will shortly recommence promotion to the rank of Sergeant and Inspector. Over 6 weeks have passed since this announcement but still no information has been provided on when the promotion process will commence. To see such a message is good news, however for there to be no movement in 6 weeks since this announcement is disappointing to those of us who are career focused and wish to progress but are at a sticking point, particularly when this message indicates that the decision on when to begin the process has been taken. Has the decision been taken to when exactly the promotion process will commence again and if so can this be disseminated to staff please?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question regarding a topic that is of great interest to many. I appreciate your understanding of the suspension of the promotion process due to the review of supervisory ratios.

As you have perhaps seen on the intranet, we are in a position to provide an update regarding the promotion process, details can be found via the link:

<https://spi.spnet.local/policescotland/news/Pages/Promotion-Process-Update---Sergeant-and-Inspector.aspx?refer=InFocusNewsSite>. I wish you the best of luck in the promotion process.

Q: Regarding the current promotion process from PC to PS, are there plans to streamline the process to make it more efficient and cost effective? A local model whereby Divisional Commanders and Management Teams identify officers suitable and ready for promotion and place them in temporary positions for 6 months, whilst the officers are evaluated, would improve the process. The current position whereby officers are evaluated on a single interview with little acknowledgement of their current positions or experience could be improved. This would also negate for a lengthy promotion process, during which the promotion interview becomes the focus for the officer, and for the need for senior officers, and the officers being interviewed, attending panel interviews all over Scotland. A system whereby officers placed in a temporary role, managed at Divisional level, would allow for the officers applying for promotion to prove their suitability, knowledge and ability in the role they have applied for before being promoted into a substantive role?

A: Thank you for your question. As you know we took the decision earlier this year to temporarily suspend the Sergeant and Inspector process due to ongoing work relating to the Supervisory ratios review and the potential impact this may have on promotion opportunities at these ranks. It is important that we have a clear picture on the current and future requirements at each level. We have recently resumed selection interviews for both these ranks, albeit this will be on a smaller scale and we will be reviewing the promotion process for all ranks in January.

I appreciate your views and ideas on how we could improve the process, particularly around temporary positions and the selection process itself. We want to continually improve the ways in which we select and promote future leaders, ensuring the process is streamlined and efficient, but also that it is a supportive process for officers. Your ideas are very helpful and I will ensure these ideas are captured within the planned review.

Ask the Dep – Recruitment / Retention

Q: My question centres on how the service can claim to be efficient and “investing in people” when it takes so long to process an advertised job application, involves personnel across several parts of the country doing a little bit here and a little bit there with the end result of no job offer because of budget restraints. My daughter applied to adverts for staff to work in Bilston in January 2016 and went through all elements of the process to the extent of being asked “what shift she would like to work”. Eight months down the line no formal job offer because of the budget restraints. Surely it would be more efficient to organise the budget first before advertising the jobs and not raising the expectations of members of the public of a possible job before dashing their hopes after months of waiting. To have people jump through hoops and then leave those dangling after months will not leave the Police in the best light as a possible employer with members of the public. Not to mention the wasted work done by current employed persons in getting applications to the “job offer” stage only to find that many persons have not waited due to circumstances and sought employment elsewhere. Surely a more structured process to ensure money is available before advertising a job must mean personnel better employed in doing tasks that are productive rather than doing work, which will never see any conclusion?

A: Thanks for taking the time to raise this.

I fully understand the frustration caused to all candidates for posts when uncertainty regarding funding has delayed or cancelled appointments. As you may be aware the service is dealing with a financial challenge this year and, as a result, decisions made on occasion require to review in light of emerging information. Whilst I cannot be specific it appears that this has been the case in respect of the posts you mention.

I can assure you that going forward we seek to better position ourselves to stop this type of thing happening and avoid the unfortunate position you describe for candidates who apply for posts within the service.

Q: I have no doubt that the recruitment and training of new staff is very expensive indeed. I work at the Bilston Glen service centre. In the last 18 months, a large number of staff have left Bilston, a majority were experienced staff working on the day shift pattern. Some moved elsewhere in the organisation but a considerable number left Police Scotland to work for other organisations. Sadly the attitude of service centre management was, and I quote - if they are not happy they should leave. My wife works in a management role in the private sector. I have discussed the loss of staff with her in general terms, and she told me her attitude would be - what can I do to perhaps change your mind and remain or if the person was set on leaving, she would ask what could be learnt that might be of use in trying to prevent the loss of other staff in the future. My question is, should we not as an organisation be trying to keep our staff, especially experienced ones rather than incur the cost of recruiting new ones?

A: Thank you for taking the time to submit a question. In answer to the points you raise, I can advise that between 21/03/15-19/09/16 we have had 21 members of police staff from Bilston Service Centre leave the organisation for a number of reasons, including retrial on medical grounds, taking up appointment as a police officer and moving to posts within the ACR (this does not include 5 staff who left on voluntary redundancy from the previous switchboard posts). A high proportion of these staff were from the dayshift pattern. Whilst we have recruited a further 36 staff during this period we have had to align the majority to the shifts that were lower on staff numbers to meet call demand with most being allocated to backshift and overlay (23 and 7 respectively) and 6 to dayshift. However, we are currently advertising for the dayshift pattern to not backfill vacancies that have arisen and to ensure that we continue to align our people and resources with call demand. I am disappointed to hear of your comments regarding the attitude of the Service Centre Management and will pass your concerns to the Divisional Commander. I know that the Service Centre Management Team are working hard to recruit and retain staff and it may be that we need to communicate these efforts more effectively. The Service Centre Management Team also take account of the feedback from exit interviews conducted with staff who are leaving the organisation, many for positive career development reasons.

You will be aware of a number of positive improvements in the last year including the Training Academy, Team Champions, allocated training periods for staff, daily briefings for staff, monthly team meetings etc., all of which I am told are warmly welcomed by staff. Once again, thank you for your feedback and I hope this response reassures you that we do indeed value our staff and are committed to building on the numerous Service Centre improvements we have achieved in the last 18 months or so.

Q: I find myself writing to you to highlight what is potentially a waste of Police Scotland resource. While I fully appreciate and concur with the requirement to streamline procedures and eradicate inefficiencies, the following example will hopefully allow both yourself and the executive an overview of processes that are both inefficient and disruptive to staff morale. A post was highlighted as a requirement within OSD Intell East ANPR Unit in early 2015, due to the departure of staff and the transfer of duties surrounding ANPR responsibilities from OSD Intell West to OSD Intell East to potentially centralise ANPR process. This post remained dormant for approximately 12 months, when it was highlighted that due to the workload undertaken and the potential for reputational risk around certain legacy force ANPR practices authority was given by senior management for the aforementioned post to be advertised. Subsequently the post, which I believe was approved by ACC Higgins, for ANPR LIO for OSD Intell East ANPR Unit was advertised following the necessary job description development by the organisation. Thereafter the post was published which resulted in 14 applications completed by staff, the submitted applications were thereafter sorted and evaluated with the relevant candidates notified that they had been successful for interview. The suitable applicants were then afforded an interview as per procedures with an appropriate panel. Once completed a member of staff was selected as most qualified for the post and made aware of their success in applying for the new post. A week later that successful candidate received a short email on 19th August indicating the post was on hold pending review for an unknown period of time. The above scenario is highlighted due to 2 main concerns, the amount of time numerous members of staff have spent on:

- 1. Development of job description**
- 2. Posting & advertising of post**
- 3. Time spent by 14 applicants completing the relevant forms**
- 4. Staff time spent evaluating all applications**
- 5. Staff time spent on interview, both candidates & panel.**

This is just one post and a considerable amount of resource time has been spent on the process, for it effectively to be halted at the very last stage of the process. If there is a moratorium on new posts it could be argued that a more cost effective way is to have the post ratified by D.C.C. then carry out the above process. This would have both cost and staff morale benefits, namely not wastage of staff time on a drawn out process and no disappointing email to members of staff. Regarding the morale issue, I have attended several meetings throughout the Force regarding the Staff survey; the example above highlights a detrimental approach to staff development through a failure of the organisation to take into account the consequences of the process. In summary the applicant goes through the whole time consuming process and is informed and congratulated on their successful application. Then a week later receives an email indicating the post is effectively no longer available until further notice. Again in my role with DACA (Disability & Carers Assoc) I have been in attendance at meetings regards the development of staff within the organisation. The member of staff concerned is a highly motivated, effective member of staff with great potential to be developed under Talent Management, however as a result of the process alluded to the organisation is in danger of losing a highly effective member of staff. In light of the above my question that I respectfully submit is: "Is the process alluded to above a cost effective use of both Support Staff and Police Officers time, and is it best practice taking into account the results of the Staff Survey?"

I have been informed of similar examples of the whole job application been carried out, then the successful applicant informed the post is no longer available but am unable to comment further. The above is brought to your attention to hopefully save the organisation considerable time and therefore money and perhaps more importantly alleviate any disappointment and reduction in staff morale. Respectfully submitted for your information and consideration.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. I fully understand the frustration caused to all candidates for posts when uncertainty regarding funding has delayed or cancelled appointments. As you may be aware the Force has a potential budget deficit for this financial year and as a result decisions may on occasion require to review in light of emerging financial situations. Whilst I cannot be specific it appears that this has been the case in respect of the post you mention. I can assure you that going forward we will be in a better position to understand our budget pressures and as a result avoid the unfortunate position you describe for candidates for certain posts. This includes HR and Finance working more closely with the operational leads to determine requirement, funding and all relevant aspects of a role proposed before it is launched. In the meantime I hope the above information helps.

Ask the Dep – Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation

Q: Why is it taking so long to sort out the disparity in wages for control room dispatchers? If Police Scotland is trying to save money is it cost effective to be paying some staff £7000 more than others for the last 3 years and counting?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. I fully appreciate your feelings of frustration regarding the extended timelines associated with the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation Project and how this presents real challenges and has such a direct effect on staff. With regards to the extended timescales, ACC John Hawkins is an active member of the Project Board who govern the overall direction and management of the Staff Pay and Reward Modernisation Project. I hope this will provide you with some assurance that the views of control room staff are fully represented in the strategic direction of this work. Whilst an extremely complex project, the Project Board recognises the impact this has on staff and one of the key areas of focus for the Project Board is to seek every opportunity to accelerate delivery timescales. I would like to provide you with assurance that the Force Executive are fully committed to delivering this Project as quickly as possible and fully appreciate the frustration felt by staff around extended timescales. I hope this information is of use to you.

Ask the Dep – Training

Q: Can I ask DCC Livingstone why we have two Police training centres located within the Central belt of Scotland. Would it save money by closing one of these facilities given they are no more than 30-40 miles apart?

A: Thanks for taking the time to contact me. You are absolutely correct in highlighting that our training facilities at Jackton and Tulliallan are just under 40 miles apart and there is clearly the potential to save money by closing one of them and focussing training at the other. A range of issues, including our current usage of both sites, makes that a complex and potentially expensive proposal. To explain – there are elements of specialist training which are unique to both sites and where we have invested significantly over the years. We conduct firearms training at Jackton using the specialist facilities on site, such as the 50 metre drive-on range. Public Order training is also undertaken on-site using bespoke indoor and outdoor skills training areas. Over and above that we have a range of classrooms at Jackton which are equipped for specialist IT training (PNC, STORM etc.). None of those facilities are available at Tulliallan where there is a greater focus on classroom-based inputs across a range of subjects. That said, when considering it from the opposite direction, the current volume of probationary officers undertaking initial training at Tulliallan could not be achieved at Jackton due to the limitations of that facility (bedrooms, classrooms, dining facilities, practical training areas, etc). This would also add, in general terms, 1 hour of travelling time for officers coming from East and North Command. We could, of course, consider training probationer officers within their respective command areas, however the officers and the organisation would then lose the range of benefits enjoyed in the current arrangement. It's also worth highlighting that training is not the only function occurring at either site: Tulliallan is our designated Headquarters housing the Chief Constable and the rest of the Force Executive. It also houses staff from Organisational Development, ICT, Estates and Operational Support Division. Jackton similarly accommodates non-training staff from Recruiting, Operational Support Division and some Police Scotland projects. You may also be aware that Jackton is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) and that we are contracted into a lease which ends in 2026. Since the inception of Police Scotland, the Training, Leadership & Development (TLD) function have been focussed in trying to deliver training in the most appropriate locations to minimise staff abstraction and keep down costs (travelling, subsistence etc.). TLD will continue to do this going forward and I know they are engaged in the ongoing Estates Review to forecast their accommodation needs for the years ahead. This may well bring about further efficiencies and savings. I am grateful to you for raising this question and hope that my response has been helpful.

Q: As we are trying to save money around the organisation. I think it would be a good idea to ask the staff for ideas and opportunities to save money. I work at Jackton and currently anyone attending a course is given a meal (except staff who work there and even if they are attending a course they are still not allowed a lunch) so in light of this why not remove free lunches to staff/officers? This would save money.

Another opportunity to save money would be free buffets being given to school children, executive buffets for training such as Stop search, etc. I am sure there will be many more examples.

This money could be put to better use.

A: Thank you for taking the time to contact me. You make some very valid points as the provision of food to those attending training events varies across Police Scotland. The reasons for that pre-date the creation of the organisation and surrounds pre-existing terms and conditions. That said, the geographical variation not only has a financial impact, but it could be deemed unfair. The situation is somewhat more complex in that the food provision at Jackton is intertwined with the contracted Private Finance Initiative (PFI). I am pleased to inform you that work is ongoing, led by T/Chief Superintendent Alan Gibson, to address the points that you make and I am hopeful that going forward we will be able to adopt a fair, equitable and affordable approach to the provision of refreshments across Police Scotland. I am grateful to you for raising this matter and I hope that my response has been helpful.

Q: During times of financial restraints on our budgets why are we still providing free lunches to probationers and staff attending Jackton either on courses or to assist at events? Staff are notified in advance that they are attending Jackton so are surely able to bring a packed lunch. It seems unfair when there are stories of staff having to provide their own soap etc.?

A: Thank you for taking the time to contact me. You make a very valid point as the provision of food to those attending training events varies across Police Scotland. The reasons for that pre-date the creation of the organisation and surrounds pre-existing terms and conditions. That said the geographical variation not only has a financial impact, but it could be deemed unfair. The situation is somewhat more complex in that the food provision at Jackton is intertwined with the contracted Private Finance Initiative (PFI) I am pleased to inform you that work is ongoing, led by T/Chief Superintendent Alan Gibson, to address the point that you make and I am hopeful that going forward we will be able to adopt a fair, equitable and affordable approach to the provision of refreshments across Police Scotland. I am grateful to you for raising this matter and I hope that my response has been helpful.

Q: In one of our conference rooms today there is a training course ongoing. There are three police officers as instructors and two students (both police officers) - the course is entitled 'Pitching In' - a youth diversion initiative apparently.

Given the financial situation that the force finds itself in, is this an appropriate use of police resources. It appears from the outside looking in that a 'project' is staffed beyond its needs and requirements whilst the front line are continually stretched. It would appear that the courses are doing a tour of the country and have been attended haphazardly.

Could the officers be better and more effectively employed?

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit a question. As you say, 3 instructors to 2 students, without knowing full details, is not the most cost effective or optimum way to deliver training. I shall forward your and my observations onto the relevant department to assess and address this.

Ask the Dep – Uniform

Q: In these financially challenging times is this not the opportunity to examine the current standard police hat for officers. I would suggest that it is no longer fit for purpose, expensive, uncomfortable and to be honest rarely worn by officers despite line mangers protests. To replace these hats with a cheaper more comfortable baseball type option recently favoured by an English Constabulary would provide a cost effective option whilst still retaining a uniform headwear.

A: Thanks for your question in relation to headwear. Whilst there is merit in looking at cost reduction measures we do have to balance this with ensuring we serve the public in the manner they expect. I think the public identify with the current police hat and recognise and take confidence from this image. As you may be aware, we use baseball type caps for some uses, such as by motorcycle officers when engaged in traffic stops for practical and visibility purposes and we take cognisance of religious needs in relation to headwear, and so headwear can vary depending on needs. Nevertheless, at this point in time I believe the current hat is a strong symbol of Scottish Policing that the public know and trust and therefore serves us well. Thanks for your suggestion and interest in this topic.

Q: In order to achieve efficiencies whilst meeting call demand it is absolutely prudent that we deploy as many officers on patrol in a manner which best suits the topography of the area. In my own Sub Division this is local officers on cycle patrol. I am currently in the position that I have a relatively well maintained fleet of cycles however very few of my CPT Officers have the necessary uniform to undertake cycle patrol. At this time cycle uniform is not standard issue for CPT Officers and is treated as a luxury item and to come from Divisional Budget lines. Our other specialist departments are not treated this way and their uniform required for their post seems to be readily available to them. Can we have local CPT officers supplied with cycle uniform as a matter of course in order that they can undertake their role in an efficient and cost effective way?

A: thanks for submitting a question, contact has been made corporate procurement regarding this. At this stage cycle clothing is one of the areas which remain devolved across local policing / divisional budgets. We have a Working Group, on which Local Policing are represented, and they can provide input to this Group to bring cycle clothing into the specialist equipment category and therefore hopefully end the variation in some CPT officers having the cycle equipment and others not. It is work in progress at this time but we do have means of changing the budget allocation process for cycle clothing and equipment. I will forward your question to Local Policing in order to hopefully progress. I appreciate your desire to deploy officers on cycle patrol.

Q: Given the financial constraints placed on Police Scotland, has any thought been given to employee uniforms, I feel there are many back of house positions where wearing uniform is not required, especially in situations where contact with the public is minimal or non-existent. I feel that this could save a substantial amount of cash per annum.

A: thanks for your interest and question around cost reduction. Whilst there is merit in your suggestion I feel we need to balance this with ensuring all police officers are fully equipped and ready to be operational police officers (albeit I appreciate there will be some officers on light duties etc.). I'm sure the public would expect all police officers to be able to deploy operationally should the need arise and that they draw confidence from us being able to do that. Further, there will be some officers whose normal duty does not require uniform but deploy on LDAs in uniform.

Please remember also that those in posts where plain clothes are worn receive an allowance for this and therefore any savings on uniform may well be offset by the outlay on this allowance and overall savings may not be as high as you envisage. In recent years we have also issued uniform on a demand basis rather than as a standard yearly issue which has reduced costs significantly. I feel therefore at this time it is appropriate that officers in "uniform" posts retain the ability to wear this uniform. Thanks for your thoughts and suggestions, it is encouraging that officers and staff are considering cost reduction measures.

Q: Police officers and staff buy their own underwear, socks and footwear. I believe it would be appropriate for them to also buy their own trousers, trouser belts, torches and kit bags. Trousers and belts already vary across the country depending on location and role worked. Many officers already elect to buy their own torches and kit bags. The unit cost of these items is low but the real cost when staffing, delivery, storage, stock checking, replenishment and distribution are attributed is considerable and unnecessary. Smart appearance could be maintained with officers and staff being responsible for buying their own unmarked clothing.

A: Thanks for taking the time to submit questions and suggestions. Police officers are issued uniform and equipment from a kit list which has been agreed by the Force Clothing and Equipment Working Group. This Working Group is chaired by ACC Higgins and includes representation from a number of different areas across the Force such as Federation, Health & Safety, Local and Specialist Policing. This membership ensures that the kit list is overall fit for purpose and, as far as possible, uniformity across Police Scotland. I think it is right and proper that a uniform is provided to all officers to enable officers to carry out their roles and that the public and officers would expect this too. If you have any suggestions around uniform and kit these can be progressed through the Group.

Q: The police uniform over the past few years appears to have been purchased with the priority on cost as opposed to appearance. I know personally of several officers who have went to other stores to purchase better trousers. Would there ever be consideration of opening up a scheme where officers can buy or contribute clothing via stores. Surely this would then allow for better quality uniform to be secured?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit a suggestion.

Officers are issued uniform and equipment from a kit list which has been agreed by the Force Clothing and Equipment Working Group. This Working Group is chaired by ACC Higgins and includes representation from a number of different areas across the Force such as Federation, Health & Safety, Local and Specialist Policing and therefore all aspects of the suitability of clothing and equipment are considered, not only cost, to ensure clothing and equipment are fit for purpose. It would be most efficient and effective to keep the uniform list as standardised as possible and for uniform standards not to vary depending if an officer wanted or could contribute towards it. I'm sure the public too expects Police Scotland's Officers to be issued with standard uniform that meets the needs of the role, as directed by the Force Clothing and Equipment Working Group. We always aim to provide the best clothing and equipment possible and the Working Group ensures that it is fit for purpose. Therefore such scheme would not be needed or implemented at this time. Thanks for your suggestion.

Q: As a cost saving suggestion, could there be a review of all officer claiming plain clothes allowance who are not public facing/front-line, the question being asked, regardless of rank (detective constable vs. police constable) 'do you need to be plain clothes to conduct your duty?'. This would provide a saving of £156 per annum for each officer who is currently receiving this allowance. Submitted for your consideration.

A: Thank you for your interest. As you may be aware, annex 18 under regulation 26 of the Police Service of Scotland Regulations 2013 currently states that where a constable in a federated rank undertakes the majority of their duty time in plain clothes, over a period of three months or more, they must be granted a plain clothes allowance of £13.26 per month. While it is useful to understand the regulatory basis, your query touches more on internal practice and the nature of roles which require an officer to be in plain clothes. In this regard it is worthy of mention that both the nature of the workforce and the nature of crime is changing and we need to not only understand these changes moving forward but also respond accordingly. As such, Police Scotland and the SPA are already looking to the future and will undertake robust demand analysis and forecasting in order to ensure that we evolve in line with societal changes. I would like to thank you and assure you that your suggestion has been passed to the relevant department and will be considered in tandem with this ongoing piece of work.

Q: Would Police Scotland consider reviewing the current uniform? My suggestion would be to collaborate with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the Scottish Ambulance Service in this regard. Both SFRS and SAS currently wear smart but practical combat style trousers and an open necked button up shirt. These garments appear to be of good quality and would look smarter and be just as practical as our current wicking shirts (which do not look all that smart, especially in some settings). A tie could be used with these sort of shirts for very formal occasions also. These shirts look more suitable for operational work than the old white shirts did (e.g. with body armour, etc.) I am unsure if the SFRS and SAS purchase from the same supplier although their uniform shirts look very similar (navy blue for SFRS and green for SAS, the police could adopt all black). If all three services collaborated and purchased the same uniforms from the same supplier in their respective colours/branding this would give several benefits:-

a) A similar appearance to all partnership emergency services.

b) Reduced cost for all services through economies of scale.

c) The better quality would mean that items do not wear out as quickly and could be replaced less.

d) A smarter, more professional look for the police with better corporate branding.

e) If these items of clothing were deemed safety clothing/equipment then perhaps VAT could be saved?

A: Many thanks for taking the time to submit your thought out suggestion. Currently, officers are issued uniform and equipment from a kit list which has been agreed by the Force Clothing and Equipment Working Group. This Working Group is chaired by ACC Higgins and includes representation from a number of different areas across the Force such as Federation, Health & Safety, Local and Specialist Policing and therefore all aspects of the suitability of clothing and equipment are considered, not only cost, to ensure clothing and equipment are fit for purpose. With regards to your suggestions around body armour and shared procurement, I shall forward on your points to the Force Clothing and Equipment Working Group and Procurement respectively. Regarding the high visibility yellow vests I'm satisfied that such decisions can be taken by local management teams when deploying resources to best effect. Thanks for your contribution.