

Mr Michael Matheson MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Justice
St Andrew's House
Regent Road
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

8 June 2017

Our ref: AF031/17/CW

Dear Cabinet Secretary

Policing 2026 Strategy – Recommendation to Scottish Ministers

We are delighted to enclose a revised version of the 10-year Policing 2026 Strategy document, which the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland have developed over much of the last year in a joint and collaborative way.

The SPA Board has carefully considered the exceptional response of stakeholders and the Scottish public to the consultation, when reviewing the final strategy over recent weeks with Police Scotland.

The Board and Police Scotland have assessed that the consultation provides reassurance and confidence that no fundamental issues have been raised that would suggest or require a material change in the direction set out within the original strategy document.

The revisions that the Board has agreed reflect some of the key feedback received around recognising the specific challenges of rurality, around collaboration and engagement with the third sector, and on a stronger acknowledgement of the challenging financial environment in which policing operates.

The consultation period was extended for local government interests to reflect an overlap between the consultation and their recent electoral period. Responses have been received from COSLA and nearly two-thirds of local authorities, and the document includes further reflection on the importance of locally-empowered policing leaders in community planning and improving local outcomes.

We are acutely aware that the unprecedented cyber attack on the NHS and the horrifying attacks in Manchester and London reinforce the need for a modern police service with the flexibility to adapt and transform to meet such complex and growing threats and demands.

The Board and the Police Scotland leadership team share the view that the strategy provides the necessary direction to increase Police Scotland's operational capacity and broaden its operational capability to respond to these threats and demands. Recent events therefore validate the content and implications of the strategy rather than challenge them.

Through our SPA oversight and continuous review of the detailed implementation plans that follow the SPA will then hold the service to account for delivery of the necessary improvements, and also ensure that the Chief Constable has the flexibility to adapt plans to reflect any significant changes to risk, the environment in which the police service operates, and the level of resources available.

We believe these changes to the strategy strengthen an already compelling product, and it is on that basis that we recommend it to Scottish Ministers for agreement and endorsement in line with SPA obligations under section 34 of the Act.

Following your consideration of policy implications and subject to your agreement, it will be the intention of the SPA to lay the document in Parliament on 20 June, and publish the consultation responses and analysis. The Board will then seek to ratify the 2026 strategy at the next public Board meeting on 22 June, when there will also be a focus on Police Scotland's emerging 3-year plan for implementation.

Yours sincerely



Andrew Flanagan
Chair, SPA



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19 June 2017


Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your letter of 8 June seeking ministerial approval of the revised Policing 2026 Strategy document.

I welcome the extensive consultation which has informed the latest draft of the Strategy and would like to thank you for engaging constructively with partners, including the Scottish Government, as you have sought to develop its content.

I believe the document sets a compelling vision and clear long-term direction for policing in Scotland. It provides a strong basis for the further transformation that is necessary if we are to deliver improved outcomes for communities across the country, recognising the changing nature of the challenges and threats we face. Enhancing operational capacity and capability will enable the improvements we want to see and I am clear that any slowing of officer recruitment must be contingent on those benefits being realised. It is on this basis that I am happy to approve the Strategy and I intend to address the Scottish Parliament to this effect tomorrow.

Continued involvement of key partners and a robust approach to governance and oversight will be essential to the successful implementation of the Strategy. I look forward to discussing your plans in relation to these matters in the near future.

With Best Wishes


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Philip Gormley QPM
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19 June 2017


Dear Phil,

Thank you for your letter of 8 June seeking ministerial approval of the revised Policing 2026 Strategy document.

I welcome the extensive consultation which has informed the latest draft of the Strategy and would like to thank you for engaging constructively with partners, including the Scottish Government, as you have sought to develop its content.

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With Best Wishes


MICHAEL MATHESON