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Calum Steele

By Email: kirsteen.brown@spf.org.uk

Ar faidhle/Our ref: 201900002989
30 August 2019

Dear Calum,

Thank you for your letter of 1 August 2019, in which you raise a number of issues around the police budget. I acknowledge the importance of these issues and am proud of Scotland's record in this regard.

As we both agree, the recruitment of 20,000 officers in England and Wales in coming years would do no more than reverse the decline in officer numbers that has been apparent there over the past decade. Her Majesty's Treasury will inform the Scottish Government in due course of any consequential flows to Scotland from this spending and I am keen to have this clarified.

As you know, in Scotland, we took bold and early action to keep our communities safe in spite of significant budget pressures. We invested in the service and supported reform rather than pursuing the model adopted south of the Border.

I do think it's important to note that we have seen crime fall over the last decade. The recent Scottish Crime and Justice Survey shows that crime has fallen by 43 percent since 2008/09. The survey also shows that one in eight (12.5%) adults in Scotland experienced crime in 2017-18, compared to one in five (20.4%) in 2008-09.

The 2019-20 budget for Police Scotland is now more than £1.2 billion. While the detailed balance of officers, specialists and other police staff is a matter for the Chief Constable, officer numbers in Scotland continue to remain significantly above 2007 levels – in contrast to the reductions in England and Wales.

Tha Ministearan na h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus an Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh www.lobbying.scot

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In recognition of the range of challenges which Police Scotland is facing, particularly in relation to a no-deal EU Exit, we have also assured the SPA that up to £17 million is available in 2019-20 to cover EU exit-related policing costs.

At the same time, we will continue to press HM Treasury to pay back the £125 million VAT paid by Police Scotland before it reversed this unfair policy in 2018.

Of course the context for policing continues to evolve and I am committed to continuing to engage with policing interests on how we might best respond to new challenges. I look forward to discussing these issues with you when we meet on Monday 2 September.

Best Wishes,

H. Yousef

HUMZA YOUSAF

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