

Police Scotland on track to deliver £1.1 billion of savings



Plans that set out the operational, corporate and financial priorities for policing in Scotland will be set out next week.

Papers to be considered by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) next week, also show that policing is on track to deliver the anticipated £1.1 billion of savings for the public purse required by 2026 two years ahead of schedule.

With the first anniversary of the new police arrangements approaching, recent information provided to the SPA shows:

- overall recorded crime in Scotland has fallen;
- clear up rates for crime remaining high, and
- public satisfaction with policing services at over 80 per cent.

In the next few days members of the Scottish public will see:

- how police officers and staff will keep people safe in the next 12 months (Police Scotland Annual Plan 2014-15 – published April 1);
- the programme of organisational reform that over the next two years will support the service to deliver its priorities (Police Scotland Corporate Strategy), and;
- how policing will manage its finances in the rest of this public-sector spending cycle and meet the long-term efficiencies anticipated by police reform (SPA and Police Scotland Revenue Budget Proposals).

Police Scotland and the SPA set out commitments to produce both a corporate strategy and an underpinning financial plan by end March 2014 in their respective responses, and subsequent Parliamentary evidence sessions, to last year's Audit Scotland report on police reform (November 2013).

The SPA, the national oversight body for policing in Scotland, will hold its final meeting of the 2013-14 reporting year in Inverness on Wednesday 26 March.

Vic Emery OBE, Chair of the SPA said: "As we approach the end of the first 12 months of the new policing arrangements, it is useful to take stock of how far we have come. Police services have continued to respond to local needs, crime in Scotland has continued its long-term downward trend and policing costs tens of millions of pounds less to run than it did a year ago.

"We have always been clear that the first year of this, the largest public sector reform since devolution, would require a transitional period to allow the merger of 10 police organisations into one to settle down. I believe we can now safely and sensibly say that has been achieved and strong foundations laid for meaningful police reform.

"The strategic direction recently agreed for the reform of contact, command and control demonstrates that the process of more significant reform is underway. More of that will be needed through the next two years and beyond to make this a sustainable single service in action, as well as in name. The key documents to be considered next week build momentum around that shift in approach from the tactical to the strategic, and represent a clear tipping point on the journey from merger to long-lasting and far-reaching reform."

Deputy Chief Constable Neil Richardson said: "Bringing together ten organisations within a challenging financial context has been one of the biggest changes to Scottish policing. Our aim was to minimise the impact of the transition

to a single policing service on operational policing and we achieved that, as well as delivering early benefits of reform. Much has been achieved in this first year with improved access to specialist policing support and local policing further strengthened.

“We have met our savings target of £64 million for our first year and this has built a solid foundation for meeting our cost reductions in the future. The completion of our corporate strategy outlines our ambition for Police Scotland in the years ahead and sets out how all parts of the organisation support our focus on keeping people safe.

“We want to continue to build on high levels of public confidence and ensure that through continued engagement with the public and our partners, we continue to deliver a high quality public service.”