

Plans to integrate control room facilities to be presented the SPA this week



Proposals for the final phase of Police Scotland's plans to integrate control room and contact centre facilities are to be presented the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) this week.

If approved, the plans will see the closure of the Inverness Area Control Room (ACR) and Service Centre, with the transfer of ACR functions to the ACR North in Dundee and call handling transferred to the Police Scotland Service Centre (PSSC).

A separate proposal to be considered by the SPA on Thursday 28th September will see the creation of a new National Database Enquiry Unit (NDEU) based in Inverness and Govan. The creation of the NDEU will support operational policing by undertaking live time database checks for frontline officers across the country 24 hours a day. Across Scotland, 1600-2200 such enquiries are conducted each day.

Staff working within the NDEU will take on the demand for checks currently placed on Area Control Rooms, enabling controllers to concentrate on the management of police incidents. If the NDEU proposal is approved by the SPA, 28 permanent staff posts will be retained in Inverness with every member of police staff affected by the control room and service centre closure offered a job in the new unit. In addition, 14 police officers, currently deployed within Inverness ACR will return to operational duties in Highlands & Islands Division.

Assistant Chief Constable John Hawkins said, "We are delighted that at a time when many areas of the public sector are having

to reduce staff numbers, we are able to bring in these improvements to our service whilst retaining jobs in Inverness and Govan.

“Every member of staff affected will be offered a position within the newly created NDEU, ensuring we retain our skilled and experienced staff who will work alongside colleagues already undertaking this role in Glasgow.

“If approved by the SPA board, these proposals will provide even greater resilience in the 999 and 101 call handling service we provide the public. For the first time since the creation of Police Scotland, the whole country will be covered by a single police command and control system making it easier for us to respond to critical and major incidents.

“Detailed planning has already taken place to enable us to provide the necessary level of assurance to the SPA Board. A significant number of milestones have already been achieved including increased ICT stability, independent assurance by industry experts of our staffing numbers, and the successful integration of our three service centre sites across Bilston Glen, Motherwell and Govan where 999 and 101 calls are answered by the first available Service Advisor.

“Additionally, the programme has been subject of significant independent assurance by Scottish Government and HMICS.”

At the creation of Police Scotland, Contact, Command and Control (C3) Division operated from 10 Control Rooms and nine Service Centre’s spread across 11 geographical sites. If the final stage in the service redesign is approved this week, detailed planning which has been ongoing for some time will enter the final phase with a go live date confirmed by the C3 Division, subject to operational requirements.

The proposals will be considered by the SPA Board when it meets in Inverness on Thursday, 28 September