

# Politicians respond to chief constable's resignation



Cabinet Secretary for Justice Michael Matheson today responded in Parliament to the joint statement from the Scottish Police Authority and Phil Gormley, announcing his resignation as Chief Constable.

Mr Matheson said: "As members will be aware, Phil Gormley has today tendered his resignation from the post of Chief Constable and will leave Police Scotland with immediate effect.

"I respect the decision of the Chief Constable and hope this enables policing in Scotland to move forward with a clear focus on delivering the long term strategy, Policing 2026, that Phil Gormley helped to develop.

"While the management of the police service has been the subject of close scrutiny in recent months I would like to pay tribute to all those officers who have continued to serve the people of Scotland every day, helping to keep crime at historically low levels and making our communities safer.

"I have spoken with Susan Deacon, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority, which will undertake the process of appointing a new Chief Constable.

"Professor Deacon informed me yesterday that the Scottish Police Authority were in discussions with the Chief Constable's representatives regarding his future and provided assurance that the appropriate processes were being followed.

"Going forward, I am encouraged by the commitment she has made to improving the robustness of decision-making in the Scottish

Police Authority.”

Scottish Liberal Democrat leader Willie Rennie said: “The resignation of Gormley should not lead people to believe all the problems in Police Scotland are solved.

“With lawyers exchanging blows, the relationships at the top of Scottish policing were damaged to such an extent that it became impossible for Phil Gormley to return.

“The rate at which Chief Constables and SPA bosses have come and gone points to a much deeper issue. Problems are hardwired into the structures they are operating within.

“Powers over policing should be shared across more individuals and communities to avoid these situations, rather than hoarded on the desk of the Justice Secretary. An independent expert review of how policing structures are operating is essential to inject accountability, transparency and localism back into the system.”

Labour Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Justice Daniel Johnson said:

“Police Scotland has been riddled by crisis and controversy for years now, but the case of Phil Gormley descended into utter farce and raised serious questions about ministerial oversight.

“This sorry affair has dragged the reputation of Scottish policing through the mud and must be incredibly demoralising for rank and file officers who put their lives on the line to keep communities safe.

“Regardless of Mr Gormley’s decision to resign, there are still serious questions for Michael Matheson to answer.”