

Reaction to departure of Chief Constable

The Chief Constable Sir Iain Livingstone, QPM, announced his intention to resign in summer 2023 to the Scottish Police Authority meeting on Thursday.

He is the longest serving Chief Constable with Police Scotland.

This is the second time he has resigned from Police Scotland, having intimated his intention in 2017, only to take up the permanent position as Chief Constable the following year.

Justice Secretary Keith Brown has thanked the Chief Constable for his distinguished leadership of Police Scotland as he prepares to step down.

His decision to retire later this year follows a distinguished period leading the UK's second biggest force and major policing operations. These included the policing of the Covid pandemic response, the COP26 climate summit in Glasgow and the memorial period throughout Scotland following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Justice Secretary Keith Brown said: "I would like to pay tribute and offer my thanks to Sir Iain for his long and distinguished service to Scottish policing. As Chief Constable of Scotland he has led the force through what history will show to be hugely significant events.

“The successful policing of COP26, when the world’s focus was on Glasgow, has been widely applauded as was Police Scotland’s response to the Covid-19 pandemic. During that time, officers were praised for their measured and proportionate handling of an unprecedented crisis, and we have Sir Iain to thank for that strategic direction.

“Most recently the sensitive and effective policing operation put in place following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth provided a fitting tribute. Again, Sir Iain can be rightly proud of the strong and inspiring leadership he provided, which drove forward the whole Police Scotland response.

“Sir Iain leaves the second largest force in the UK in great shape as it prepares to mark its tenth anniversary – and that is a fitting and lasting legacy to his life of service.”

UNISON police staff branch secretary Michelle Brewster said: “It is not a surprise that Police Scotland’s chief constable Sir Iain Livingstone is retiring earlier than expected. Police services are facing unsustainable Scottish government cuts, which will set policing back years. I found Sir Iain Livingstone to be honest and genuine and he understood the vital role of police staff in fighting crime and keeping our communities safe.

“I would like to wish him all the best in his retirement and thank him for fostering a strong relationship with UNISON. We didn’t always agree but he was determined that we should all work for the good of the communities we serve. We expect the new police chief to follow in his footsteps and to sit down with a new First Minister to set policing on to a more positive way forward.”

Scottish Liberal Democrat justice spokesperson Liam McArthur MSP said: “Sir Iain Livingstone deserves thanks for his service and dedication to leading Scotland’s police service.

He was always approachable and I wish him well for the future.

“The rate at which Chief Constables and police authority bosses have come and gone over the past decade points to much deeper issues.

“Problems are hardwired into the structures of Scottish policing as a result of the SNP’s botched centralisation. Ministerial distraction has added to their burden.

“The police are picking up the pieces of the mental health crisis because NHS services are overwhelmed. We need to recruit a legion of specialist mental health staff to work alongside the police to get people the expert help they need, enabling officers to focus on fighting crime instead of being social workers of last resort.

“It is time to inject accountability and localism back into policing, transform mental health services, and scrap plans that would repeat the mistakes of centralisation in social care.”



Chief Constable Iain Livingstone