

NOTE: Update will be reflected in the papers to the next public session of the Scottish Police Authority on 30 April 2020.

SPA Board Update – COVID 19 – 23rd April 2020, 10 am (teleconference)

Attendees: Members

David Crichton (DC)
Matt Smith (MS)
Martyn Evans (ME)
Tom Halpin (TH)
Michelle Miller (MM)
Elaine Wilkinson (EW)
Mary Pitcaithly (MP)
Bob Hayes (BH)
Caroline Stuart (CS)
Grant Macrae (GM)

Attendees: Officers

Lynn Brown (LB)
John McCroskie (JM)
Barry Sillers (BS)
Catherine McIntyre (CM)
Lynne Clark (LC)
Vanessa Ewing (VE)
DCC Will Kerr (DCC WK)

Apologies:

Jane Ryder (JR)

Introduction and Update

DC introduced DCC Will Kerr to provide a situation update.

DCC Will Kerr provided a brief update to Members noting that an in depth discussion is planned for the SPA Board meeting on 30th April.

Op Talla - DCC WK highlighted the key things to note - that of the 4 E's, the first 2, Explain and Engage are based around public health guidelines. It is important to get the communications to the public right around this to ensure legitimacy and policing by consent is maintained. Of particular importance is officer wellbeing and ensuring access to PPE. Briefing and training packages and ICT are all being addressed in support of this.

DCC WK confirmed that while the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) had now been established an internal group was also being convened under the direction of ACC Ritchie and this information hub will consider the application of the wider public interest test and what appropriate information can be put into the public domain.

Exit Strategy – The First Minister is launching a consultation document expected today, following the 3 R's – Respond, Recover and Renew strategy. ACC Higgins will take the lead on the exit strategy for Police Scotland (PS). PS is linking in with Scottish Government (SG) throughout this process to ensure up to date advice is available and to get the necessary specificity to inform planning. The key issues to be considered will be making sure the tone, stance and communications around this strategy are right and also identifying those who could be disproportionately affected by the process. PS are looking to external expertise to help them address these issues.

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It was also noted by Members that detailed discussion on some of the key issues raised would take place in the Resources Committee today.

DC has been in contact with PS and SG on the exit strategy and agreed that the next phase would be potentially more difficult to maintain. DC also wanted to commend the work of PS to date.

DC also noted that the next phase of work raises some challenges for the Authority and suggested that the Board meeting on the 30th April re-visit this taking into account the First Minister's document. To that end DC asked that Members send any further thoughts to him and these will be collated and shared with DCC WK.

ACTION: The exit strategy phase raises particular challenges for the Authority and DC asked that Members share their thoughts on this as soon as possible to feed into the PS internal group.

DCC WK went on to talk the Members through how PS are working to maximise police contact with the public during the COVID 19 outbreak and provided a paper in support of this. In addition an update on shielding was provided and how PS are working to offer practical support to SG. A paper on shielding was previously circulated to Members.

Independent Advisory Group – ME noted that the IAG had now met 3 times and intends to meet twice weekly for the immediate future. Both ME and DCC WK noted that a clear focus on the differentiation between the role of government and role of policing will need to be maintained throughout the lifetime of this group.

DC reinforced this point and is speaking regularly with John Scott, QC, who is leading the IAG and will provide update to the Board meeting on 30th April. DC also noted that the terms of reference for the IAG is expected to be signed off on Friday and the membership finalised.

Director of Forensic Services Update

TN pointed the Members to the COVID 19 Impact paper that was considered by the Forensic Services committee on 20th April and noted that a further update paper will be provided to the Board on 30th April.

TN confirmed that good engagement is taking place between FS, PS and the Health & Safety Executive in particular around PPE and that the situation will continue to be monitored. TN also gave an update on absence figures, testing and roll-out of Microsoft Team. In terms of phase 2, FS is engaging with PS and COPFS around the interpretation and impact of the legislation and prioritisation going forward. In addition FS is looking at the application of the social distancing guidelines in all their facilities.

CEO Update

LB pointed the Members to the update paper on ICV which was provided in response to an action from the last meeting. The work on commissioning a survey is also underway and a full update will be included in a report to the Board on 30th April.

Closing Remarks

DC asked Members to note that the chief constable will be providing an update at the 30th April Board and in particular the work ongoing around the exit strategy. DC also asked Members to provide update at the Board on any COVID 19 related considerations at each of the committees.

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VE suggested that papers and updates being provided to Members should be packaged up and made available in public. This could include an updated website note; any publishable papers; a pointer to access committee papers and the upcoming additional Board on 30th April.

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