

LETTER SENT VIA EMAIL ONLY

John Finnie MSP
Convener
Justice Sub-Committee on Policing
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh

17 April 2020

Dear John

SPA Update on Oversight of Policing of COP26

I am aware of the Sub-Committee's interest in the policing of the COP 26 climate conference, and Scottish Police Authority (SPA) has written previously with details of its enhanced oversight arrangements.

I am writing to provide a brief situation report on where SPA consideration of the policing of COP 26 has reached at this stage, following the announcement on 1 April 2020 by the COP Bureau of the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and the UK Government that the COP26 UN climate change conference has been postponed due to COVID-19.

Dates for a rescheduled conference in 2021, hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, will be announced in due course. The UK Government has, however, confirmed that the conference will take place in 2021 in Glasgow at the SEC.

Police Scotland Planning

Following the postponement, Police Scotland have categorised their plans into three levels. Category one – issues where planning must continue despite the postponement of the conference; category two – areas where planning must continue, with less dedicated resource; and category three – areas where planning can be suspended until the new date is known. Rightly, some members of the COP 26 planning team have been redeployed, primarily to support the service's response to COVID 19. Those who remain are working on category one and two issues.

Risks

A number of new risks present themselves due to the change in circumstances. These are likely to continue to change depending on how the COVID-19 situation develops and may result in some risks being de-escalated and vice versa. The timing of the rescheduled date in 2021 will also be a risk factor, given other demands and events now scheduled for Scotland in 2021. The SPA Policing of COP26 Oversight Group will continue to closely consider relevant risks and the mitigating actions.

Business Cases

While the additional time may allow some business cases to be developed in a less time pressured way, it is important that Police Scotland continue to work on the key business cases for presentation to the UK Government. The critical ones where agreement and approvals are required in the shorter term include mutual aid arrangements, Airwave and ICT.

External Operational Assurance

At this point in time, the Metropolitan Police are still in a position to provide external assurance of the operational planning for COP26. The format of that assurance may require to be adapted given the current situation. Their ability to undertake this role will be kept under review. HMICS are developing their plans for assurance which, again, will be dependent on the developing situation.

Ongoing SPA Oversight

The SPA Policing of COP26 Oversight Group held its most recent meeting by teleconference on 8th April to discuss recent developments. The Group agreed to meet again in 6 weeks to assess the situation at that time alongside any developments that may have taken place in the interim period. The UK Government and Scottish Government governance groups continue to meet and the SPA will, as usual, be represented at those meetings.

I hope Sub-Committee members find this situation report useful and I commit to write again when there is a substantive update, clearly including clarity over a rescheduled date in 2021 for the event.

Yours sincerely



Tom Halpin
SPA Member and Chair of SPA Oversight Group on Policing of COP 26
Scottish Police Authority