SUBMISSION FROM FIFE CONSTABULARY

1. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and provide a view to the Local Government and Regeneration Committee regarding the 'development of shared services and other innovative ways of achieving economies of scale… on developing new ways of delivering services.'

2. It would be wrong of me to comment in detail regarding those areas primarily aimed at the services delivered by local authorities and as such I will rather focus on my viewpoint from a Community Planning Partner.

3. Overall I believe that legislation and government focus should facilitate and support capacity building initiatives that empower and develop communities to direct and influence partnership activity. Service delivery should be seen through the prism of community engagement by public sector partners in developing active citizenship to promote positive partnerships in driving long-term solutions to quality of life issues.

4. In line with the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 to secure best value partners must demonstrate an ability to consult with the public in order to be responsive to the needs of communities, citizens, staff and other stakeholders to ensure priorities and actions are fully informed. The challenge lies in delivering organisational objectives and allied outcomes such as Single Outcome Agreements in partnership with communities to deliver long-term, sustainable solutions to increase community wellbeing and quality of life.

5. A legislative framework supporting police and partners engaging with communities to deliver local services already exists, including the Community Empowerment Action Plan and the National Standards for Community Engagement. At a local level Fife Constabulary is building on its Community Engagement Model to develop engagement activity to bring partners and communities together to develop localised priorities and solutions.

In what ways are CPPs being involved in driving the move toward new service delivery methods? What is hampering their involvement and how can it be overcome?

6. There is still the underlying imperative to develop a higher degree of community engagement and activism from which to empower citizens to deliver long-term sustainable solutions at a local level. In this vein, cognisance should be taken of the Christie Commission report highlighting the need for the

7. development of cohesive collaborative working practices throughout the public sector and beyond. Fife Constabulary has developed a community engagement model which empowers citizens to set localised priorities addressing issues directly affecting the community. The challenge lies in pooling partnership resources in the face of shrinking budgets and asset base.

8. Scottish Institute of Policing Research reports mirror these sentiments in highlighting "the key challenges ahead lie at the macro level in maintaining the Community Engagement

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Model in a new era of police austerity and reform; and at a micro level, in informing and involving a greater number of the Fife public. In doing so the CEM can deliver greater value for money by showing there is substance and value in the meetings; it is serving the community beyond the narrow measures of police performance…”

9. In a period of stress on public sector budgets, an impetus to develop service delivery capacity, as well as evidencing value for money will require partners to revisit the community planning landscape to ensure whole system relationships between partners and communities are developed. To achieve these objectives innovative collaborative initiatives to enhance community engagement should be supported to give communities the ability to influence multi-agency resources in delivering long-term sustainable solutions.

10. In Fife an Enhanced Community Engagement Model is being piloted to give partners and citizens the opportunity to develop and chair engagement meetings tailored to local needs. A governance framework is being developed that forms a thread of accountability through partnership activity. By working more closely partners are identifying joint outcomes, reducing duplication of interventions and utilising joint multi-media and reporting mechanisms. The initiative is sponsored and evaluated by the Fife Partnership Board to ensure cross partnership buy-in and adherence to Single Outcome Agreement medium and long-term outcomes.

11. Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Garry McEwan
Director of Operations