30th March 2017

The Convener
Justice Committee
Room T2.60
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

POLICE
SCOTLAND
Keeping people safe

Chief Constable
Philip Gormley QPM

ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE
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Dear Convener

Railway Policing (Scotland) Bill – Supplementary Written Submission

I refer to your e-mail dated 28 March requesting a supplementary written submission from Police Scotland to provide clarity on the following two areas:

The number of times where requests for assistance by the BTP have been turned down by Police Scotland.

In 2016, there were 1749 incidents recorded on the Police Scotland STORM Unity Command and Control system as an ‘External Force Request’, which BTP is categorised as. Whilst this does not include pre-planned operations, it is indicative of the number of occasions Police Scotland has been requested to initiate a response from another Force or Agency. Without interrogating the text of each incident it is not possible to determine exactly how many of those incidents are attributable to BTP and therefore whether or not Police Scotland have ‘turned down’ requests for assistance.

There were also approx.4500 phone calls received from the BTP Contact Centre during the same period across Scotland. However, as before, without listening to each individual call it is not possible to determine exactly the context of the communications between Police Scotland and BTP and whether or not Police Scotland have ‘turned down’ requests for assistance.

Following the recent incident at Westminster, a request was circulated on behalf of the Chief Constable of BTP for Forces outside London to pay attention to Category ‘A’ stations, by means of armed patrols within those stations. This request was considered and, following an assessment of the threat, Police Scotland turned down the request as there was no intelligence to support such a deployment.

The current costs of the mandatory 11 week training programme for police officers, broken down by cost per week, and an estimate of what the expected costs of providing an additional three weeks training might be.

As previously highlighted in my letter to the Committee, dated 27 March 2017, the 11 week training programme for students at the Scottish Police College (SPC) is under review to ensure it remains flexible and relevant. This review will also incorporate a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) of the current BTP three week course.
These should not be viewed in isolation as it is the intention of Police Scotland to weave the key elements of the BTP training through the students programme and rationalise the length of the course from 11 weeks + three weeks to something which will provide an enhanced service to the rail industry, whilst being balanced and proportionate.

Once the 11 week programme has been reviewed and the TNA completed we will be in a better position to understand the content and delivery methods of the inputs required for all aspects of the students training and the costs associated with that. The aspiration of Police Scotland however is that the new training programme, as a whole, will be delivered within existing structures and at a relatively low cost.

I trust this is of assistance, however should you require any further information please feel free to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Bernard Higgins
Assistant Chief Constable
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