



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Official Report

### JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE ON POLICING

Thursday 13 June 2013

© Parliamentary copyright. Scottish Parliamentary Corporate Body

Information on the Scottish Parliament's copyright policy can be found on the website - [www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk) or by contacting Public Information on 0131 348 5000

---

**Thursday 13 June 2013**

**CONTENTS**

	<b>Col.</b>
<b>INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>111</b>

---

**JUSTICE SUB-COMMITTEE ON POLICING**  
**7<sup>th</sup> Meeting 2013, Session 4**

**CONVENER**

\*Christine Grahame (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

\*John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind)

\*Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD)

\*Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con)

\*Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab)

Kevin Stewart (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)

\*attended

**THE FOLLOWING ALSO PARTICIPATED:**

Stevie Diamond (Unison)

Superintendent Niven Rennie (Association of Scottish Police Superintendents)

Calum Steele (Scottish Police Federation)

**CLERK TO THE COMMITTEE**

Joanne Clinton

**LOCATION**

Committee Room 6



## Scottish Parliament

### Justice Sub-Committee on Policing

*Thursday 13 June 2013*

[The Convener *opened the meeting at 13:16*]

### Information and Communication Technology

**The Convener (Christine Grahame):** Good afternoon. I welcome everyone to the seventh meeting in 2013 of the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. I ask everyone to switch off mobile phones and other electronic devices completely because they interfere with the broadcasting system, even when they are switched to silent. Apologies have been received from Kevin Stewart.

Before we begin the evidence taking, I advise that, if members wish, I am minded to allow a brief discussion at the end of the meeting on the correspondence that we received today from the Scottish Police Authority on the news that three senior executives are to leave the organisation in the near future. Given that development, I think that discussion of it could take place when we look later in the meeting at business for our next meeting—which, if I am right, will be in a fortnight. Are members content with that approach?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** We will discuss the matter later. The witnesses should not worry—we will not ask them anything about it, so they can be at peace.

Let us first get on with taking evidence on information and communication technology provision. I welcome to the meeting Stevie Diamond, who is chair of Unison police staff Scotland; Superintendent Niven Rennie, who is from the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents; and Calum Steele, who is general secretary of the Scottish Police Federation. As some of you have been here before, we will move straight to questions from members.

**Graeme Pearson (South Scotland) (Lab):** I will get the ball rolling. I am sure that you have read the evidence from previous panels. What is your experience of delivery of ICT in the new single Police Service of Scotland and what are your priorities?

**Calum Steele (Scottish Police Federation):** We probably do not have a great deal to say about it, because the force is still extremely new.

It is no secret that police services have traditionally not dealt very well with ICT. We have made mistakes and some decision making has been poor, and we could certainly have done things a lot better. However, enormous opportunities are now being presented to the Police Service of Scotland. It might be that things are being sold or packaged particularly well, or that the service is thinking about its ICT requirements in a way that it did not previously—on a cross-Scotland basis. In the past, the ICT that has been acquired has depended largely on the needs in particular locales.

At this moment, with the development of, among other things, mobile data and the i6 project, massive opportunities exist for the service to do something that it has not done before, which is to have a beginning-to-end IT system that is not time or people consuming, and which can support all manner of police business.

**Superintendent Niven Rennie (Association of Scottish Police Superintendents):** I would echo Calum Steele. It is not about looking back—it is not a nice journey when one does that—but we have learned significantly and, from what I have seen, that learning has been brought into the i6 project. If we are going to reap the benefits of a national police force, the “beginning-to-end” model that Calum Steele spoke of is essential. The sooner we get on with it, the better.

**Stevie Diamond (Unison):** Unison has concerns about the state of the IT in the police service at the moment, and about the lack of a joined-up approach. However, we must temper that with the fact that any improvements in IT will impact on a significant number of my members’ jobs. For example, it is proposed that i6 will provide 80 per cent of the IT throughout Scotland, which could mean a significant number of police staff being taken out of the equation. We understand that rationalisation of the IT of the previous eight forces will reduce numbers. However, previous IT projects within the police have not been entirely successful. The whole reform process has been accelerated and condensed, and we must take our time to ensure that we get what is right for the police. There are enormous opportunities to do that, but we must be careful not to rush into something that could ultimately cost jobs and waste a lot of money.

**Graeme Pearson:** It seems from responses that we have received thus far—from this and previous panels—that whatever solution i6 delivers, it will be the way forward. However, there is a limited amount of money available. Do the staff associations view an IT solution as being such a high priority that it should be put ahead of the many other challenges that we will face in the future, or do you see it as a lower priority?

**Superintendent Rennie:** Speaking on behalf of my members, I think that IT is the priority. For far too long, we have been hamstrung by systems that cannot speak to each other, so the public are not getting the best service. For example, the system in the west for recording crime management was introduced in the 1980s, so there has been some treading water until the Police Service of Scotland could move forward with a system to replace it. Treading water is no longer acceptable: we must move forward. We are asking our officers to operate with chalk and slate, and we cannot allow that to happen any longer. *[Interruption.]*

**The Convener:** Oh! Oh! Oh! Somebody has been naughty and left their mobile phone on.

**Stevie Diamond:** I am sorry.

**Calum Steele:** The question is perfectly fair but, not surprisingly, it is difficult to answer. An IT solution is not the absolute priority, because the absolute priority is people to provide the service. The more sophisticated response would be to ask whether IT is a significant priority because it would make delivery of the service easier. I think that the answer to that is, "Yes."

We waste a phenomenal amount of time and effort—and, by default, expense—in trying to maintain what we have in order to make old computer systems work and to get them speaking to each other. We waste a phenomenal number of people hours dealing with the old systems at a time when—you will seldom hear someone promise this—we could, it can be argued, do a bit more with a bit less. If we had proper IT in place in the first place, we would not have multiple keystrokes and entries across a variety of different computer systems just to import the same information for use by a variety of agencies.

**Graeme Pearson:** We were told that the SPA had introduced 14 independent national projects and had delivered them on 1 April. At a previous meeting, I asked about the service's ability to deliver in respect of future responsibilities to victims and witnesses. The view seemed to be that that will be a real challenge. Has the introduction of those 14 independent national projects led to a turnaround, since 1 April, in the ICT support that you have received?

**Superintendent Rennie:** I would not say so—certainly not in relation to your point about the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill. A significant amount of information will have to be given to victims, and our systems cannot currently deliver that. A project such as i6, which has taken that into consideration—as well as the Carloway review developments—would be required to achieve that.

The 14 projects that you mentioned will, from what I understand of them, allow everybody to have an email address that says Police Scotland after their name, and will ensure that desk browsers allow people to access the intranet. Those are minor issues that are important for day 1, but they do not tackle the major issues that Mr Pearson mentioned.

**The Convener:** For clarification, I say that I understand that the Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Bill will probably come into force in January or February next year, so Mr Pearson might want to know whether, by then, you will be in a position to implement what is required.

**Superintendent Rennie:** I think that without i6, this will be implemented and done, but with a large input of manual labour. What we require is an IT solution that will enable officers and staff to get on with the jobs that they are required to do, rather than their carrying out additional tasks because of new legislation.

**Calum Steele:** There is not much more that I can add to what Mr Rennie has said. The reality is that, by virtue of there being so much information stored across so many different systems, there is an inherent danger that much of what could be required to provide a proper service to victims and witnesses would be lost.

**Stevie Diamond:** We are not entirely convinced that the 14 projects have been delivered in the way that has been advertised. There is no national email system; it is a sticking plaster. We have all been given email addresses that purport to be Police Service addresses, but in fact we have redirection from the eight or nine legacy email systems, which do not talk to one another. We have evidence on that.

**Graeme Pearson:** Is that reflected across many of the other 14 projects? Have they delivered new capacity, or are they, as you described them, "sticking plaster" solutions?

**Stevie Diamond:** I have experience only of the email project and of SCOPE, which is the system to co-ordinate personnel and establishment. We are meant to have a personnel system that would allow the legacy forces' systems to talk to one another, but my experience is that we do not have that. We can manually interrogate the individual systems, but the individual systems do not talk to one another.

**John Finnie (Highlands and Islands) (Ind):** I thank the people who have given us papers. The one that I want to allude to has been submitted by Dave Watson, the Scottish organiser of Unison, and I would like to direct my questions to Mr Diamond in the first instance.

We understood that operational matters would be given priority in IT systems. We hear from Mr Watson that prisoner transfers across Scotland, particularly from Lothian to Strathclyde, not only result in two hours of travel along the M8, and in the tying up of police custody and security officers, but staff report that

“each prisoner processing takes upwards of 30 minutes”.

Can you give us more information on that?

**Stevie Diamond:** Absolutely. The prisoner-processing system in Strathclyde is, to be blunt, just as it was when Mr Pearson was a probationer.

**Graeme Pearson:** Surely the system is not that old.

**Stevie Diamond:** It is a really old-fashioned system. If you want to transfer a prisoner in Strathclyde from one area to another, you have to use a floppy disk. I do not know when I last heard of any system using floppy disks. Whenever a prisoner is being transferred from the east to the west, information has to be taken from the prisoner again, as if they have just been taken into custody.

We also have evidence from police custody and security officers in Strathclyde who have been dealing with transfers that there can be a language barrier, which adds to the time to process the transfer. Thirty minutes is an average; that is the normal time it would take to process a prisoner into a cell, but it can be longer than that.

**Superintendent Rennie:** The prisoner-processing example sums up police IT very well. There has been a desire for a national prisoner-processing system since the 1990s, but we still have eight different systems. The result is that, if someone is arrested in Glasgow who had previously been in custody in Aberdeen, you cannot access their previous custody records to see what problems they created, which brings in a huge element of risk and would certainly be criticised in a fatal accident inquiry. It is only with the introduction of a system such as i6 that we will be able to address that at long last.

13:30

**John Finnie:** My follow-up question was to ask whether i6 is the route to resolving that issue.

**Superintendent Rennie:** There is no other show in town. Custody is one of the i6 programme's six elements and I am led to believe that if we do not go with i6 there is no plan B and we will continue to have the floppy disk problem to which Stevie Diamond referred.

**John Finnie:** What level of consultation has there been on such issues with those who are designing the system?

**Stevie Diamond:** We have had no formal consultation with the organisation about i6. In fact, we raised this issue yesterday at our normal consultation committee meeting because we have not had a presentation on it. We are certainly aware of the project because of the high-level presentations that have been given across the force.

Although I have been assured by the i6 team that they have been consulting our members, who are the practitioners in the six areas that i6 would cover, I cannot say that my phone has been ringing off the hook with members telling me that the team has been coming in to talk to them about it. That is a concern for us.

**John Finnie:** Just to clarify, I believe that you represent police custody support officers. However, despite the fact that you are the trade union, you have not been engaged in discussions to resolve that issue.

**Stevie Diamond:** No.

**Superintendent Rennie:** The union itself has not been involved in discussions, but there have been a number of focus groups involving its members, and running of the end-to-end process has been the subject of a lot of study. The bit that seems to have been omitted is consultation of the union.

**John Finnie:** With respect, I say that that is pivotal; after all, this is all about deployment issues, terms and conditions and so on. With regard to health and safety, any substantive changes to the workplace require—certainly, they used to—statutory consultation. I hope that the committee will raise the issue with Police Scotland to ensure that you are consulted. Mr Steele, can you tell us about the level of consultation of your members?

**Calum Steele:** Our position is very similar to that which has been articulated by Mr Diamond. There has been no formal consultation of the Scottish Police Federation over the design of the i6 platform—actually, I will not use the word “platform”, given its connotations with regard to IT in the Police Service. There has been massive engagement with the ordinary women and men of the Police Service about their requirements as stakeholders, but on the specific question whether the staff association or the SPF has been engaged in the design of i6 the answer has to be that they have not—although I note that in the past six or nine months an enormous investment has been made in time and in presentations about the opportunities that are presented by i6.

**John Finnie:** I find that astonishing.

Sticking with the word “platform”, I have raised at committee meetings the fact that such failures

come about because of a lack of control over senior individuals and suchlike. Is there anything that reassures you that there is control over current ICT projects?

**Calum Steele:** As I am sure you will appreciate, that is a very dangerous question to ask me—

**The Convener:** Those are the questions that we need to ask and to which we need answers.

**Calum Steele:** The short answer is that I do not know, but am reasonably confident that the individuals involved—particularly in the i6 project and mobile data—are sufficiently aware of the financial obligations on them.

**John Finnie:** They are not aware of any obligation to consult, it seems.

**Calum Steele:** No.

**Superintendent Rennie:** We had thought previously that the model of eight chief constables and an Association of Chief Police Officers of Scotland business unit keeping control would resolve the governance issues, but it did not do that.

However, now that we have one force under one chief constable and a deputy chief constable designate who has control of the project, I believe that we have that grip. I also understand that there have already been three Scottish Government gateway reviews of the i6 project. Our approach to the project has had a different slant to the approach that has been taken in the past; for example, there has been external consultation. I am not close enough to the project to say that everything in the garden is rosy, but from what I understand of it I can say that those involved have gone down a completely different management route to the one that was taken for the platform project.

**Stevie Diamond:** On lack of consultation, the fact that i6 covers processes such as licensing and even crime reporting means that massive numbers of police staff will be taken out of the loop because police officers will report directly into the system. That is why, as I have said, I have no confidence that my members have been properly consulted or involved in the process. No one has been knocking on my door to say, “We’ve been asked about the end-to-end process for dealing with a crime report, licensing application or whatever.” Surely if they had been asked it would have started bells ringing that they might be out of the job as a result of the new process.

**John Finnie:** Obviously, some of those bells have not been operating, historically.

My final question relates to an issue that I referred to briefly at the previous committee meeting. I do not understand the technology, but

surely the hand-held devices that officers would use would have operational implications beyond those for officers. As I understand it, information from the devices will be automatically downloaded, which has implications for Mr Diamond’s members, too. Have you been involved in any discussions around that?

**Stevie Diamond:** Yes, I have. Two pilots were established in Strathclyde and I believe that they continue to run: one is in G division and the other is in road policing. For the latter, if officers stop someone, they do a police national computer check on their hand-held devices rather than deal directly with the control room. Obviously, that will cut staff numbers if it is rolled out across Scotland—particularly given the number of stop-and-search checks that are being done just now. Currently, the PNC unit in Strathclyde is operating at absolute capacity and will take extra staff from within the control room areas to help out with the PNC work. If that requirement was taken away, it could have a huge impact on jobs.

In addition, direct inputting of crime reports would have huge implications for staff in crime recording and for those who deal with the vulnerable persons database.

**John Finnie:** It seems to me to be important that Unison is involved. I am pleased to hear that you are at least being consulted on that.

**Margaret Mitchell (Central Scotland) (Con):** Good afternoon, gentlemen. At our meeting on 30 May, Deputy Chief Constable Richardson said that he thought that it was “anomalous” that the opportunity was not taken

“to embrace ICT back into the service and to streamline some of the activities, with a single decision maker—namely, the chief constable”.—[*Official Report, Justice Sub-Committee on Policing*, 30 May 2013; c 94.]

Can I have your views on that, starting with Mr Rennie? Can you say whether your view has been strengthened or reinforced because of the recent departures of the interim chief executive and others?

**The Convener:** You were not here when I said that we would discuss that matter later rather than pounce on the panel with questions on it.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Okay. The panel can answer the first question in isolation.

**Superintendent Rennie:** The position of my association is clear. I believe that we wrote to the committee earlier in the year to say that—to quote the chief constable—we were gobsmacked when ICT went from the Police Service to the SPA. We would like the chief constable to have control of all the issues and the SPA to be a governing body that holds him to account. By such means, the Police Service would set its priorities and instruct



the ICT people to deliver to them, bearing in mind the budget that has been set aside for ICT.

**Stevie Diamond:** I echo what Niven Rennie said.

**Calum Steele:** My position is exactly the same.

**The Convener:** It is on the record that you concur.

**Margaret Mitchell:** In evidence that we have taken, we were assured that there is sufficient in-house specialist knowledge in your day-to-day dealings. Are you quite convinced that that is the case?

**Superintendent Rennie:** In respect of?

**Margaret Mitchell:** ICT provision and going forward.

**Superintendent Rennie:** A knowledge within the service?

**Margaret Mitchell:** Yes.

**Superintendent Rennie:** The service is frustrated about ICT because we feel that we have been carrying it as a burden for 10 to 15 years. The Association of Scottish Police Superintendents felt that having a national police force would mean that we would at last get joined-up ICT systems. There is general acknowledgement in the service of what needs to be done. As we have indicated, we need the end-to-end model, a national human resources system that we can all access and updating of our intelligence system, which is now 10 years old. I think that we all agree that those issues are the major ticket items for ICT.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I referred to ICT because of the Audit Scotland report and the problems with three other public sector contracts. The lack of in-house knowledge was right up there as one of the main problems. Does anyone else have any comment on that?

**Calum Steele:** I have remarkable confidence that we have very skilled people with massive ingenuity working across the Police Service. They need to have that because they are keeping computer systems going that, if they were sitting in our houses, would have been confined to the dustbin many years ago. Just about every police officer in the country carries in their pocket their own personal smart phone that has far more IT capacity than anything they work with in their offices. We also bring in many highly skilled and well-educated recruits who have experience of life. Many of them have university degrees. When they see what we are working with, they shake their heads. We certainly have people with remarkable skill and the ingenuity to make old stuff work; whether that is the best use of their skills and capacity is a different matter.

**Stevie Diamond:** I absolutely agree with that. My members deliver that IT provision daily. As Calum Steele says, their skill levels are sky-high, but they have to make do with systems that are antiquated and which would have been consigned to the bin years ago if they were in any other organisation. Our members keep those things going. It is the decisions made at management level that are questionable.

**Graeme Pearson:** May I ask a question?

**The Convener:** I think that Alison McInnes has something to ask.

**Alison McInnes (North East Scotland) (LD):** Margaret Mitchell has covered what I was going to ask about.

**Graeme Pearson:** My question is supplementary to the responses made, rather than to the question what was asked just now.

The picture presented by our three panellists seems to be different from the one that we received from the Police Authority over the previous two sessions. I have declared previous experience in these matters, although I have no personal knowledge from the past few years. I understood from previous panellists that the world had moved on; that there are adequate, though imperfect, systems in place; and that we hope to finesse those, make them national and make them work. What the panel has described today sounds like something out of *The Beano* rather than something workable for the future. Is the state of the systems that you operate being overemphasised for effect, or have you given an accurate account of your own experiences?

**Superintendent Rennie:** You would probably receive different views about the IT systems, depending on which legacy force you sat in. However, I do not think that anyone would choose to construct the IT landscape that we currently have. That is the legacy of eight police forces and an agency. Opportunities were missed; as I say, I really do not want to look back.

**Graeme Pearson:** I am more interested in the experience.

**Superintendent Rennie:** Some people sitting in legacy forces might think that the systems were fine and that they could be rolled out across Scotland. However, there would be as much cost in rolling out coded systems from the 1990s as there would be in taking us forward into the 21st century and rolling out a brand new system for everyone.

As a legacy Strathclyde officer, I can say that our systems have been, unfortunately, inefficient and poor. As I said earlier, we have been treading water while we waited to be able to move forward. If somebody has painted a picture that everything

in the garden is rosy, that is a false picture. Police officers in Scotland are hamstrung by their ICT systems.

**Graeme Pearson:** Let me be direct. Obviously, you have read the evidence that we heard recently, or listened to it first hand. Did you recognise the picture that it described?

**Superintendent Rennie:** I think that the picture that was painted was rosier than the one that police officers face every day. Stevie Diamond has already given evidence about the ICT provision on email systems. I saw your own cross-examination in relation to the HR systems. If you were to take that further, along with some of the other evidence that was given, you would find that that evidence comes unstuck.

**Calum Steele:** I would largely echo what Mr Rennie has said. For example, although there is a single HR system, it does not have a single point where one person can access it and inspect it all, and it does not comply with some of the basic elements of police regulations. Yes, there is a computer system, but it causes problems in terms of what it is expected to deliver. If you go into any police station, you will see police officers inventing their own short cuts and ways of circumnavigating the hamfisted procedure that exists for multiple information entry into a variety of computer systems.

I am not saying that there are no particularly good examples; there will be someone who has a nice, shiny laptop and a fantastic, fast-running desktop machine that lets people log in and out very quickly. For most people, however, that is not the case. I exaggerate only slightly when I say that you can make a cup of tea while you wait for the system to power up and get logged in and out.

13:45

**The Convener:** That is a bit like the system in here. You would agree, I think. I am not really here to ask something, but if Graeme Pearson is not going to ask something—

**Graeme Pearson:** You can ask something, then I will come back in.

**The Convener:** You have talked about the ingenuity of staff with antiquated—I was going to say “knitted”—computers. However, do you have any views on the investment that will be required to adequately implement and train officers and staff on any new systems that arise from the ICT strategy, including i6, given that they are really having to train themselves to be—

**Superintendent Rennie:** I have heard a number of figures bandied about. I have spoken to the project manager for the i6 programme and heard figures from him, which I do not wish to

quote, because figures in the ICT world can come and go. However, I am led to believe that the implementation of an i6 programme will have little more cost than keeping the legacy systems and their associated contracts going. I am told that it is almost cost neutral and I hope that that is the case. That information has been provided to me; I cannot swear to it, but that is what I have been told.

**Calum Steele:** I am in a similar position as far as costs are concerned and I am always mindful not to take figures that are presented at face value. It would be remiss of me to say with any degree of confidence whether the costs associated with the project are fair or otherwise. The investment needs to be made, although not made regardless.

On training, my understanding is that the system is almost intuitive. As I said a few moments ago, we have a hugely computer-literate workforce. Most of these things are intuitive and people can be self-taught. I will not quite say that the workforce is as computer literate as teenagers, who can pick up anything and make it work, even without reading an instruction manual.

**The Convener:** You can say the same about grandchildren or toddlers.

**Calum Steele:** Yes, indeed. My understanding is that the system is intuitive and easy to use and does not demand an enormous amount of time for familiarisation.

It is important that I stress that the police service is very good at breeding cynics. It would be very fair to say that. I have seen and heard many things come and go on police ICT over the years. By and large, there has been a fairly cynical approach to ICT across the bulk of the service. I can say, without fear of contradiction, that I have not heard anyone decry or talk down the opportunities presented by i6. I find that remarkable in an organisation that is capable of breeding so many cynical individuals.

**The Convener:** We are aware of that not cynical but critical outlook from the two members of the committee who are former policemen—they have told me that policemen always moan.

**Graeme Pearson:** It is realism, I think.

**The Convener:** Yes. Does anyone else want to comment on that?

**Stevie Diamond:** I find this difficult, because I understand that the police IT service is creaking at the hinges and is vastly out of date. However, I have to balance that against the financial imperative that we have. This year, we have a black hole of probably £9 million, which could see up to 1,500 jobs go by December, according to the

paper that was presented to the Police Authority in May.

I would be disappointed if we did not get an opportunity to at least have a look at the business case for i6, which appears to be the only game in town, to see whether the figures stack up. Once we look at those figures, we may be in a better position to comment on whether the programme is achievable without costing more of my members' jobs, before we even get started on looking at the impact of what i6 will do.

**Graeme Pearson:** I will change the subject matter, although my question is related. At a previous meeting of the committee, I asked whether it was feasible to join up some of these solutions with the other emergency services and thereby save some costs. For instance, if the challenges that you outline in relation to the delivery of end-to-end services nationwide are similar to challenges that the Ambulance Service, the fire service and so on face, are there any benefits to be achieved from examining what those short cuts might deliver and what efficiencies might come from them, or is it just too big a problem?

**Calum Steele:** I can only offer an opinion that I do not have the technical information to support. There is an inherent logic about what has been suggested. Anything that reduces the number of different areas in which information is stored and, potentially, accessed must be to the benefit of all those who are involved in the wider community safety sphere.

**Superintendent Rennie:** I echo that. We have already suggested that we should consider shared control rooms and suchlike in any event.

**Stevie Diamond:** Yes, there are benefits, even within what i6 can provide in terms of productions. At the moment, productions in the police and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service sit separately, so there is scope for a joined-up process.

**The Convener:** Are there any other questions from members?

**Margaret Mitchell:** The committee understands that the ICT strategy will go before the SPA board on 26 June. Has there been any slippage in that timetable?

**Superintendent Rennie:** You would have to ask the SPA—the matter lies entirely with it.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Nothing has trickled down to you.

**Superintendent Rennie:** Our association has not seen any ICT strategy or any blueprint, so I cannot comment on that.

**Stevie Diamond:** Our previous experience of finding out what is going on at SPA board meetings is the same as that of every other member of the public. We find out four working days beforehand and have no prior knowledge of what is going to be presented.

**Margaret Mitchell:** Has the strategy affected you in any way? Have you had any prior notice of what will be expected after the strategy is delivered at the end of June, even in general terms?

**Superintendent Rennie:** We have had no consultation on the strategy. The only information that we have is the evidence that has been given in previous sessions here.

**The Convener:** So we have been useful.

**Superintendent Rennie:** Yes. I understand that the Police Service has told the SPA that, from its point of view, i6 is the priority. We would echo that view.

**Margaret Mitchell:** I want to understand the logistics of it. Let us say that i6 is approved. How would you first come to know of it? How would it impact? Where would it come across your desk?

**Superintendent Rennie:** I would expect the approved strategy to be circulated by Police Scotland.

**Margaret Mitchell:** We can hope that, if you have not heard anything to the contrary, it is still on track.

**Superintendent Rennie:** Indeed.

**The Convener:** That concludes our evidence session. Thank you very much for your evidence, gentlemen. Thank you also for telling everyone that MSPs are sometimes useful—that is a first.

The next item of business is next week's meeting and how we should deal with the correspondence that we have received from the SPA.

**John Finnie:** I do not doubt that the process has been changed, but it used to be the case that any substantive changes in the workplace required consultation with the staff associations and trade unions. That was a statutory requirement. However, it is apparent to anyone that the implications of these things—whether for productions, for Mr Diamond's members, or for custodies, for Mr Rennie's and Mr Steele's members—could be significant. Can we write to the Police Authority, asking for active engagement with the staff associations and trade unions on the issue?

**The Convener:** I am not saying for one minute that the witnesses were not correct, but perhaps we should ask the SPA to confirm the position

following the evidence that we have received today.

**Graeme Pearson:** Might that be one of the questions for our panelists next time round?

**The Convener:** I have no doubt that the SPA is listening carefully—as always—to what the committee is saying and will be well prepared. We could formalise our interest by putting that request in a letter, but I am sure that what we have said today will be well listened to—including the comparison with *The Beano*, what was said about rosy pictures and so on.

We will take evidence from the SPA at our next meeting on Thursday 27 June, when we are due to conclude our evidence taking on IT provision by hearing from Chief Constable Stephen House of Police Scotland and Vic Emery, the chair of the SPA. I suggest that, at that meeting, we deal with ICT first and then move on. It will be up to members to address the correspondence that we have received from the SPA—which we received just this morning and which will now be published on our website—on the issues that have arisen as a result of the various notices of resignation and so on. Are members content that that is the order in which we will do things?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**Alison McInnes:** Yes, provided that we have enough time. That issue is of greater import than finishing off the ICT issues.

**The Convener:** Having written to the Presiding Officer to ask whether we can meet while members' business is going on in the chamber, we are still stuck, but we could try to start as near to 1 o'clock as possible. Unfortunately, chamber business that week starts at 2.15, which gives us an hour and 15 minutes.

There is another way in which we could deal with the matter. To allow us longer for that issue, we could write to the witnesses in advance—I am happy to circulate the letter in my name—on issues that have been raised by the evidence, seeking a written response on ICT matters. That would clear the decks a bit, and it would also be in the public domain.

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** If members have any questions that they want to ask, they should submit them to the clerks. I will then circulate the letter in my name. That will give us much more time at our meeting to deal with the other issue.

**Alison McInnes:** That is important. The turmoil that there seems to be in the organisation needs to be addressed.

**The Convener:** I have no intention of not dealing with that. I just thought that it was not

appropriate today, as the witnesses had not been alerted and were not suitable to answer our questions. Are members content that we will submit our questions on the evidence that we have heard today in writing to the SPA and to the chief constable—given that there were issues about who was going to be in charge of ICT—so that they will have their answers ready?

**Members indicated agreement.**

**The Convener:** Thank you very much. We will meet again in a fortnight's time.

*Meeting closed at 13:56.*

Members who would like a printed copy of the *Official Report* to be forwarded to them should give notice to SPICe.

---

Available in e-format only. Printed Scottish Parliament documentation is published in Edinburgh by APS Group Scotland.

All documents are available on  
the Scottish Parliament website at:

[www.scottish.parliament.uk](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk)

For details of documents available to  
order in hard copy format, please contact:  
APS Scottish Parliament Publications on 0131 629 9941.

For information on the Scottish Parliament contact  
Public Information on:

Telephone: 0131 348 5000  
Textphone: 0800 092 7100  
Email: [sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:sp.info@scottish.parliament.uk)

e-format first available  
ISBN 978-1-78351-322-2

Revised e-format available  
ISBN 978-1-78351-341-3