

## **Accountability of ACPOS**

### **1 Introduction**

1.1 ACPOS developed from a Committee of Chief Constables, into an Association incorporating all Chief Police Officers in Scotland. In recent years membership has extended to executive level support staff in police forces.

1.2 The membership and positioning of ACPOS undergoes continuous review and adjustment, with the creation of a limited company in 2007, (and the separation of the staff association function to the Scottish Chief Police Officers' Staff Association (SCPOSA), and realignment to ensure account is taken of developments such as the SPSA.

### **2 Purposes**

2.1 ACPOS has developed in complexity since the first Committee of Chief Constables, and is now an organisation which seeks to represent the professional interests of policing in Scotland. There is a mirror organisation representing Chief Police Officers of England, Wales and Northern Ireland (ACPO) with a full time President and Office Bearers.

2.2 In 2007, in acknowledgement that without any legal status, ACPOS was unable to undertake even limited legal activity without reliance on a 'host' police force/authority, a company limited by guarantee was established. Beginning its life as ACPOS Ltd, the company is now registered as Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland. The post of General Secretary was established and a Board of Directors appointed. This legal body maintains the same style of management as in the unincorporated environment with an elected chief constable serving a limited period as President, with Vice President, Executive Vice President (formerly Honorary Secretary), Company Secretary and Past President, making up the Board. The object of the Company is 'to promote, for the benefit of the public in Scotland, the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in Scotland.' This charitable objective has been accepted by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and ACPOS is now a registered Scottish charity.

2.3 None of the offices is held on a full time basis, other than that of the General Secretary.

2.4 ACPOS decided to establish a Media/Communications Unit in 2005 in the face of a growing media demand for Chief Officers to speak on behalf of policing in Scotland (and not on behalf of individual forces or staff associations). The core unit also comprises a Freedom of Information Co-ordinator, Intranet/Internet Administrator and General Secretariat support.

### 3 Structure

3.1 ACPOS does not have a hierarchical structure in terms of command and control. While there are office bearers, these are for organisational and representational purposes, not for executive direction or control.

3.2 In Scotland, ACPOS is principally concerned with coordinating and leading change in policing practice, and achieves this through the establishment of Business Areas. The identity of Business Areas has evolved to meet the changing nature of the business which ACPOS seeks to develop. The Criminal Justice Business Area, for example was established in anticipation of the need for co-ordination of approach with the advent of criminal justice reform in Scotland. Individual forces have set up similar functional units to deliver this agenda. (see Appendix A for a list of all business areas)

3.3 Distinctively from the Business Area Approach, has been the creation of a Business Change Programme Board attended by all Deputy Chief Constables, and representatives from the SPSA, which manages the collective organisational change necessary to developing policing practice in Scotland.

3.4 ACPOS is sufficiently flexible to create, and abolish, working groupings as necessary to ensure that policing in Scotland is able to collectively meet the needs of the day. These currently include the arrangements for S-PICC, the Guardian Group, and the emerging Major Crime Coordination and Investigation Unit.

### 4 Accountability

4.1 ACPOS is often used as a generic term for the activities, membership, or collective views of chief police officers in Scotland.

4.2 The '**accountability**' of ACPOS, should be understood separately from the accountability of Chief Officers to their police authorities or senior officers.

- (a) Each chief police officer is accountable to their individual Chief Constables, in each of their forces. Within the force environment the responsibility of Chief Constables is well established. (see Scottish Executive Guidance to police authorities (2007)).
- (b) Chief Constables, while primarily responsible to their Police Authority, are additionally accountable through a wide range of legislative and inspectorate procedures, e.g. Health and Safety, HMIC, Surveillance Commissioners, etc'
- (c) ACPOS cannot bind Chief Constables to follow any agreed course of action. Chief Constables agree to participate in a variety of Scotland wide initiatives, both operational and administrative – Firearms Manual, procurement, uniform etc.
- (d) ACPOS is now a regular consultee of a range of governmental and non governmental bodies.
- (e) A Memorandum of Understanding exists between ACPOS and Scottish Government.

- (f) ACPOS has Scottish Government representation on each of its business areas.

4.3 ACPOS has adopted the Nolan Principles (See Appendix B) as the standard for the management of its business.

## **5 Leading the development of policing in Scotland**

5.1 ACPOS has developed the function of analysing, considering, and shaping the professional view of policing in Scotland. While the eight force structure remains strong, and well recognised by a range of partners across the public, private and voluntary sector, there is an increasing need for the Police Service to have a professional voice, which is not one of a staff association.

5.2 ACPOS has demonstrated its responsible approach to this role, by accepting the responsibility to develop the highest standards of policing, and by ensuring the procedures evolve to meet changing demand. ACPOS can therefore be supportive or questioning of proposed legislation (e.g. Dispersal orders), the source of proposals for change (e.g. alcohol limit for drivers), the executive lead in agreeing change (e.g. single telephone number).

5.3 ACPOS cannot mandate Chief Constables, and the local relationship with police authorities remains a keystone in the structure.

## **6 Relationships**

6.1 ACPOS seeks to build effective engagement with national and local government bodies, and associations, agencies and other bodies in the public, private and voluntary sector.

## **7 Conclusion**

7.1 ACPOS does not purport to be an Executive body for policing in Scotland. It exists to provide leadership on behalf of the Service across a range of existing and emerging issues affecting the delivery of policing, and the safety and security of Scotland's communities.

## **Appendix A**

### List of Business Areas

Crime  
Criminal Justice  
Finance Management  
Performance Management  
Personnel and training  
Roads Policing  
Diversity  
Operational Policing  
Professional Standards  
Information Management

## **Appendix B**

### **The Seven Principles of Public Life – The Nolan Principles**

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

#### **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.