

# ACPOS NEWS RELEASE

Thursday, 24 May 2007

For Immediate Use

## **Scotland's chief police officers look to meeting the demands of an ever-changing society as policing is reformed and modernised**

In his end-of-term address to Scotland's senior police officers, Northern Constabulary Chief Constable Ian Latimer, out-going president of the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS), called upon his colleagues to continue their efforts in reforming and modernising the 16,000 member-strong Scottish Police Service.

"The Scottish Police Service operates in a society which is subject to ever-increasing demand at a time when there is a continual and rapid, demographic change."

Mr. Latimer stressed the service's ability to demonstrate clarity of purpose and flexibility of response as a prelude to speaking about the major issue facing policing in Scotland today – its structure as an under-base to addressing the spectrum of protective services – having recently conducted a Capacity and Capability Study focussing on five key work streams: serious and organised crime; major crime investigation; counter-terrorism; firearms; and, public order.

"The review has had a strong emphasis on the principle of inter-operability between forces on either a geographical, strategic alliance, lead force or collaborative basis to allow for the delivery of sustainable and effective protective services throughout Scotland," Mr. Latimer explained.

In addition, he spoke on the development of a roadmap with a strategic vision for future counter-terrorism policing across Scotland and the development of the new 'Business Change' arrangements (which will enable Scotland's police forces to progress towards common Integrated ICT systems which support an agreed National Business Model of Policing).

"This will allow individual Chief Constables to have the capability to target resources, effort and emphasis on those operational policing priorities, activities and outcomes which are consistent with agreed community needs and expectations" he added.

The out-going president felt that ACPOS has contributed significantly in taking forward the delivery of the recommendations made by Sir Michael Bichard, following the tragic Soham Murders:

"This is a critical piece of work which will ensure that appropriate structures, working practices and technical systems are in place throughout Scotland and the United Kingdom and is a key element in the development of integrated national IT systems, the introduction of information management protocols

and the enhancement of vetting and barring procedures relating to working with children and young persons.”

Another area mentioned in his address was the significant progress that has taken place in relation to the development of a National Performance Management Framework for Scotland, with £5.3 Million of funding provided through the Efficient Government Fund to establish a common IT Performance Platform. This platform will assist in driving performance improvement throughout Scotland and remove much of the duplication in data collection and reporting.

During his speech, Mr. Latimer also reminded his colleagues of:

- the new Police Complaints Commissioner, who began work on April 1, and now provides independent scrutiny of how the police service handles non-criminal complaints from the public;
- the continued development of working arrangements with many of the police service’s existing partners, such as in Community Planning, where relationships are maturing and many examples of good practice designed to meet community needs are now emerging; and,
- the continuing challenges in tackling the difficult issue of sex offender management.

“The development of Community Justice Authorities (CJA) and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA’s) will have a significant impact on this important area of police activity and, once fully-established, will enhance the arrangements which are in place to enable agencies to monitor and manage both Sex and Violent Offenders more effectively.”

And he reminded them of the revised Scottish Strategic Assessment, which - for the first time - now considers all three levels of criminality, within the National Intelligence Model, and enables police forces to identify and prioritise issues which range from youth disorder to serious and organised criminality and counter terrorism.

Mr. Latimer re-iterated his welcome of the establishment of the new Scottish Police Services Authority (SPSA) which has a remit to provide support services to Scottish police forces on a national basis as well as maintaining the Scottish Crime and Drug Enforcement Agency (SCDEA), which has been placed on a statutory footing and been given new statutory functions.

“The SPSA has had a difficult birth and there is a continuing need for constructive dialogue with the SPSA to develop both formal and informal communication networks which embed a customer-supplier relationship which meet the needs of the Police Service,” he told the 43-member-strong Association.

On the emphasis placed on public sector reform, he said, “There has been much discussion during the last 12 months on policing and public sector reform with the Executive document, *‘Transforming Public Services’* seeking views on how the transformation of Public Services could be achieved.

“Within the ACPOS environment, there has been broad agreement towards the emerging views and whilst we have been active contributors to the debate

perhaps, to this point, as leaders of the service, we have been too passive in articulating our professional view.

“It is evident that a ‘one size fits all’ approach will not suffice and it is also clear that change should not only be about re-structuring, if at all.”

He welcomed the opportunity to engage with the new administration and, in particular, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice Mr. MacAskill and the Minister for Community Safety Fergus Ewing. ACPOS looks forward to sharing police service professional views to assist in informing and shaping the thinking of Ministers as they develop and set their priorities for policing and the criminal justice sector.

“We welcome the commitment to provide an additional 1000 police officers and will work with the new administration to maximise their visible impact within our communities; however, policing budgets are already very tight with significant cashable and non-cashable efficiency savings having to be made in this financial year for police forces merely to standstill.

“As Chief Constables,” he opined, “we are committed to ensuring that we establish a service which is fit for purpose in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and which plays a pivotal role in creating safer communities within Scotland. It is my view that the next stages of continuing reform must be well founded, evidenced, affordable and grounded in practical reality.”

Mr. Latimer believes that the Scottish police forces must retain the existing strengths of local accountability and governance put in place an increased capacity and capability to deliver across the protective services including counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime and maintain the delivery of a highly visible, community-focussed style of policing which tackles anti-social behaviour, provides public re-assurance and builds public confidence within our communities.

“The debate in my view should not be about re-structuring and the number of police forces as an end in itself. Co-terminosity with local authority, health and criminal justice partners who focus on agreed joint activity and commit to joint outcomes is paramount.

“I do believe, however, that is in the best interests of our communities in Scotland and the police service to bring this debate to a close and commit to a clear vision of the future of policing in Scotland.

In concluding his address, Mr. Latimer re-emphasised that ACPOS is determined that policing should continue to be at the forefront of public service responsiveness: “The challenges which policing faces for 2007/08 are significant; however, the work which has taken place in the past year creates a strong foundation.”

**-end-**

**For further information, contact: Graham MacDonell, Communications Officer, ACPOS at: 0141 532 2062 or at 07771 842 881.**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**Copies of Mr. Latimer's full address can be e-mailed directly upon request.**

**Mr. Latimer will not be available for any media interviews during the balance of the AGM.**

**Interviews with in-coming ACPOS President Colin McKerracher, Chief Constable of Grampian Police, can be arranged during June as he takes office on July 1, 2007.**