

Police and Fire Reform: Local Scrutiny and Engagement Learning Network Event 5: 20 February 2013

Welcome

Andrew Fyfe (Chair – ODS Consulting) opened the event, pointing to the remarkable progress that had been made. He highlighted that this event provided the opportunity to pause, and look both forward and back in relation to fire and police reform, in advance of the launch of both single services in April 2013.

PART ONE: LOCAL DELIVERY: DAY ONE AND BEYOND

Keynote Address: Kenny MacAskill MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice

The Cabinet Secretary for Justice highlighted that it was just 28 working days before the most ambitious reform of police and fire services in a generation. He stated that the changes would put Scotland at the vanguard of UK police and fire services, and would protect both from Westminster cuts. He highlighted that it would also provide all communities across Scotland with equitable access to expertise and equipment; would better integrate services with community planning; and would strengthen the connection between services and communities. This would be done in a way which promotes prevention, early intervention and equality.

Mr MacAskill stressed that reform also offers opportunities to make a real commitment to local delivery and community involvement. The Scottish Government is not dictating local approaches, but is building on local knowledge and expertise using a flexible and enabling approach. It aims to ensure equal access to services across Scotland, but with local involvement and focus.

Mr MacAskill set out the positive progress made, with Chairs, Board members and senior staff appointed – and community engagement at the heart of the role of Local Commanders and Local Senior Officers. He thanked everyone for their important contribution, stressing that police and fire reform offers huge opportunities for local services while at the same time enabling shared skills and shared expertise.

Questions for Kenny MacAskill MSP

Q: Peter MacKenzie, East Lothian Council – Given the ‘wellbeing’ aspect of policing, is there any overlap between policing functions and health – particularly male mental health and suicide?

Q: Cllr John Syme, Dumfries and Galloway Council – Can reform offer opportunities to ensure that the judiciary system builds on the hard work of the police?

Mr MacAskill gave assurances that the importance of the links with health and the judiciary system were recognised. He explained that the first meeting he and the Chief Constable had was with the Chief Medical Officer and Cabinet Secretary for Health. He recognised that there were strong links to addiction, self medication and mental health issues – which could be difficult to diagnose and support. He emphasised that there was recent evidence that there had been significant progress in building the support and access to experts available to judges and sheriffs. He

stressed that improving links between the police and judiciary system was a two way process, built on discussion, relationships and trust.

Keynote Address: Roseanna Cunningham, MSP, Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs

The Minister stressed that she was extraordinarily pleased with the progress made to deliver new police and fire services for Scotland. She highlighted the important role of the Learning Network in sharing ideas and good practice to get the best for Scotland. She set out her vision that police and fire reform should help to tackle both crime and fear of crime – so that everyone can live a life free from both. To do this, we need to tackle the root causes of crime and work to deliver longer term outcomes.

The Minister set out the four pillars of public service reform – prevention, partnership, people and performance – and stressed that there was good work already happening in these areas. Reform offers opportunities to deliver better outcomes for communities, increased democratic scrutiny and stronger connections with communities. She stressed that the reform could result in more elected members shaping and challenging police and fire service activities, and that there was already evidence of this through the Pathfinders.

The Minister highlighted that transformational service reform was essential. It offers opportunities for historic change. The financial challenge made reform necessary, but it offers real opportunities to make communities safer and stronger. The Minister thanked everyone for their effort in working towards reform to date.

Questions for Roseanna Cunningham MSP

Q: Douglas Yates, Scottish Police Authority – How do the Community Justice Authorities fit into the reform? What are the links between the Single Police Force, SPA and Prison Service? And what are the links with Alcohol and Drug Partnerships, Health Boards and local authorities?

The Minister pointed to an ongoing review into the Community Justice Authority landscape. She said that the Scottish Government would like to work through these connections and links with partners. It is currently consulting and working with COSLA and the Association of Directors of Social Work (ADSW). It is clear that the Scottish Police Authority has a role to play, and we need to work together. This includes joint working at a local level, to address past issues and shift attitudes and practice.

Keynote Address: Vic Emery OBE, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority

Mr Emery stated that it was clear that we were, collectively, entering an exciting and challenging world in relation to service reform. Substantial progress has been made. The focus so far has been on ensuring that the police service is operationally, legally and financially ready for day one. But this is only the start of the reform journey. The SPA has clear aspirations beyond day one:

- a shared commitment to making communities safer, stronger and with a better quality of life for individuals;

- effective local policing, alive to national and international issues, which offers best value and is accountable; and
- services which are responsive to community priorities.

Mr Emery stated that achieving these aspirations will have to cost less every year for the next few years – but the quality of police services should not fall. Reform offers a new opportunity for services:

- modernisation – building on what is best about existing services;
- efficiency – with common systems and support;
- involvement and scrutiny – with genuine involvement in priorities, opportunities to influence service design and standard and robust information which allows for effective scrutiny; and
- partnership – working with others to jointly agree outcomes.

Mr Emery highlighted that a named SPA Board member will be the lead contact for each local authority on scrutiny and engagement. The SPA will work with local authorities to ensure that scrutiny activity is complementary, and to help communities to influence the services that they receive. The SPA will be holding public meetings covering every local authority area in the near future. At the heart of its approach is a commitment to be open, transparent, visible and accessible to all communities and partners.

Keynote Address: Jimmy Campbell, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board

Mr Campbell gave apologies from the Chair of the Board, who was unable to attend. He explained that the Board had taken a practical and pragmatic approach to ensuring that services were ready for day one. This has involved:

- Establishing a strategic leadership team with the skills, experience and support to enhance existing excellent services;
- Building the foundations of a Board – which has had its first meeting;
- Establishing a committee structure – with four committees on Audit and Risk; Employee Partnership; Service Transformation; and Local Engagement. These committees will be in place by the end of March 2013.
- Programme management – the Scottish Government has handed over key aspects of programme management to the Board – including risk management; delivery on benefits; day to day management; and service transformation.
- National and local links – Each local authority will have a single point of contact with the Board, with four Board members allocated to each local area.

Keynote Address: Stephen House QPM, Chief Constable of the Police Service of Scotland

Mr House explained that each local area had now produced an Interim Policing Plan. Arrangements are now 99 per cent there for a shared way ahead for local level policing – but this is not the end. Plans were put in place very quickly, and will develop. Mr House expects that reform will offer three main benefits:

- reinforcing and strengthening local policing;
- reinforcing and strengthening links between police and communities; and
- equality of access to specialist services across Scotland.

Each area now has a designated Local Commander, who will work to achieve the strengths and opportunities set out in local plans, and to balance national and local issues – including the priorities set out in the Single Outcome Agreements for community planning partnerships. There are real differences in local priorities within each local plan, and these have been developed to reflect local concerns – while also linking to the Single National Policing Plan, the three year SPA Plan, and the four strategic Scottish Government priorities.

There will be significant scrutiny on the delivery of these plans. The plans will act as magnets for drawing in other partners, and developing interactive solutions. Mr House is optimistic and positive that policing is strong and will get stronger and improve in the future.

Keynote Address: Alasdair Hay, Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr Hay's key message was 'business continuity'. Communities rely on fire services, and the emergency response can't fail. And the service really needs to ensure that its vital preventative work continues, with prevention a key theme in reform of the public sector.

Mr Hay stated that there are already fantastic police and fire services in Scotland, and that reform offered a unique opportunity to improve services. The Board will bring a greater range of skills, and joint working with the Board, other partners, communities, voluntary organisations and others will improve the safety and wellbeing of people in Scotland. The fire service is well placed to contribute to all national outcomes – it is not only an emergency response service.

Mr Hay explained that reform would offer three benefits:

- protecting front line outcomes – building on existing great work;
- allowing more equitable access to specialist rescue services and national resources like global terrorism preparedness; and
- strengthening relationships with communities – building a national services which genuinely empowers communities to make local decisions.

Local plans have been developed in partnership, and Local Senior Officers know what they are responsible for delivering and the authority they have to act. They will be held to account with robust performance management systems.

Question Time Panel Session

Panel members: Vic Emery, Jimmy Campbell, Stephen House, Alasdair Hay, Cllr Neil Crooks (COSLA) Richard Foggo (Scottish Government)

Q: Misheck Muchemwa, SEMPER Scotland – How does the SPA plan to hold the Police Service of Scotland Chief Constable to account, given that the SPA is responsible for some staff?

Vic Emery said that the SPA had drafted a Scottish Policing Strategy, which would be supported by the Local Policing Plans. These will be used to ensure that what is in the plans is being delivered. The SPA is responsible for some maintenance functions, which will be provided by a 'corporate body' which supplies services and reports to the Board.

Q: Cllr Stephen Thompson, Dumfries and Galloway Council – How is the SPA going to ensure that the Independent Custody Visitor Service continues and embeds good practice?

Vic Emery explained that the Independent Custody Visitor Service had not been delivered consistently across Scotland, and a working group (headed by Douglas Yates) was reviewing best practice. He explained that this service was previously funded by local authorities, so there would need to be discussion about how to resource this important service.

Q: Cllr Craig Peacock, Dumfries and Galloway Council – Community confidence in a national police and fire service is sceptical. How can communities be convinced that the very successful existing services will continue to be resourced?

Alasdair Hay explained that they had visited rural and remote areas, and developed Local Plans to serve the needs of varied communities – and these Plans need to be approved by local authority determined scrutiny arrangements. The approach has been to involve people from the beginning to reassure them that they have a say.

Stephen House said that with reform, he couldn't promise that things would stay the same – it is inevitable that communities will be concerned about losing resources. However he emphasised that communities would not lose frontline services – and availability of some like roads policing and armed response would increase. He explained that the financial circumstances are challenging, and maintaining an eight force structure would have resulted in a need to cut service provision. The focus is on maintaining the quality of service through changing the model.

Cllr Crooks said that in Fife – also a unitary authority – communities had concern about a disconnect between local authorities and the Boards. He was pleased that the police and fire services were identifying a lead Board member for each local authority, which should help build confidence. He felt that communities had very high levels of confidence in police and fire services currently.

Q: Alistair Shaw, West Lothian Council – Could the police and fire services hold joint public meetings in each local authority area, given both are planning this approach?

Vic Emery stated that he had no objection to shared public meetings, but the police meetings are formal Board meetings too. Jimmy Campbell also said that public meetings would be held before Board meetings, and suggested that joint Board meetings would not be useful – but highlighted that there would be lots of commonality in the issues Boards were considering and he was keen to see joint public meetings both locally and nationally. Cllr Crooks felt that there were real opportunities to develop joint work, but that there were real differences in the language used by both services which could result in a big learning curve for communities.

Q: Peter MacKenzie, East Lothian Council – Should the police be doing a lot more in relation to mentoring to tackle problems of male mental health and suicide?

Richard Foggo said that it was important to separate diagnosis and treatment of male mental health issues. The Scottish Government can provide a strategic framework for promoting prevention and problem solving. This needs a joined up and asset focused solution, with fire and police services both key partners.

Stephen House suggested that the best approach would be to work closely with active and involved partners who have the skills around mentoring and support – with the police sticking to their skills set in relation to being the first line of response.

Q: Janice Winder, West Dunbartonshire Council – What are the national aspirations for CCTV – and is some national co-ordination or improvement possible?

Stephen House explained that while there were lots of different models across Scotland, he did not feel that the police should be suggesting what the best model was. CCTV is an excellent resource for detection and public confidence, but in the current financial climate it is unlikely that a national integrated system would be possible. Richard Foggo stated that the Scottish Government was happy to provide a clearing house and strategic perspective to enable discussion on sharing best practice.

PART TWO: GOOD PRACTICE CASE STUDIES

Case Study Presentations

- **Garry Burnett (Grampian Fire and Rescue Service)** – Garry presented on the experience of developing an outcomes focused Aberdeen City Local Fire Plan. The focus was on performance which is measurable – “we will have succeeded if...”. The outcomes in the Fire Plan were linked to other policy areas, like antisocial behaviour, violence, drugs and alcohol – focusing on the areas the fire service can influence. This approach relies on good evidence, and was built on data from the Community Safety Strategic Assessment. Partners now sit round the table fortnightly to assess performance, and the new Hub for Fire Safety will provide daily figures on a 24 hour basis.
- **Matt Richards (Lothian and Borders Police)** – Matt presented on community engagement in the Edinburgh Local Police Plan. Communities and coproduction were at the centre of their approach. This involved surgeries in places like prisons, job centres, schools, young people’s units and universities; summits with partners from the public and voluntary sector; and open door sessions. A total of 3,000 surveys were completed – and there was strong synergy between local and national priorities.
- **Jeanette McDiarmid (Lothian and Borders Police)** – Jeanette presented on joint tasking in community safety in West Lothian. Joint tasking has seen a decrease in meetings from 11 to 3 per month. There is now daily partnership tasking, with partners sharing information which allows issues to be dealt with early on. For example, information about alcohol misuse in a particular area allows for targeted fire safety visits; or litter which is a fire hazard can be removed. The Community Safety Strategic Assessment was essential in informing the joint tasking approach. This approach has seen a 30 per cent reduction in antisocial behaviour.
- **Roger Mennie (Dundee City Council)** – Roger presented on elected member influence on local police and fire plans, particularly around prevention and performance. This approach involves local community planning partnerships (on which elected members for the area sit) and the Policy and Resources Committee (open to all elected members) receiving detailed statistical information and advice on crime and fire prevention, which can be compared across Dundee. This allows for constructive challenge, meaning

that all elected members can influence the approach at a local and city wide level. It also ensures joint working between partners at a local level; encourages discussion amongst elected members in relation to prevention and early intervention; and results in more effective outcomes for communities.

- **Evelyn Johnston (Highland Council)** – Evelyn presented on supporting elected members in their scrutiny role through training and feedback. A new committee – the Community Safety Community Engagement and Equalities Committee – was set up to provide effective scrutiny and engagement. Elected members received training, which was very successful. There has also been a commitment to providing information in a more user friendly way, using plain language.

Question Time Panel Session

Panel members: Garry Burnett, Matt Richards, Jeanette McDiarmid, Roger Mennie, Evelyn Johnston, Richard Whetton (Improvement Service)

Q: John Evans, Victim Support Scotland – Were there any issues about information sharing in West Lothian, in relation to joint tasking?

Jeanette McDiarmid explained that initially there were problems and some reticence. There is a data sharing agreement in place. Sometimes partners provide broader data – for example for a street rather than a particular house. Victim Support also participates and shares information.

Q: Gary McKewan, Fife Constabulary – In Edinburgh, how will it be demonstrated that community priorities have been delivered?

Matt Richards explained that multimember ward level plans will be published. Key performance indicators are being reset in line with local priorities. There will be a media strategy to ensure that communities receive feedback on the local input to the plan. And elected members, local partnerships and community councils will also receive feedback.

Q: Cllr John Syme, Dumfries and Galloway Council – What experience is there of working with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) who may not always have had a great relationship with the police?

Jeanette McDiarmid said that in West Lothian, the local authority still had a housing function (and the majority of stock was owned by the authority) but they had also had no problem working with RSLs. They had a previous initiative which had helped to build relationships, and the Leader of the Council had met with RSLs. Richard Whetton said that RSLs were engaged in most of the Pathfinders to some degree. Garry Burnett said that RSLs and housing were a prominent part of the partnership in Aberdeen.

Q: Moi Ali, SPA Board – Is there a place for social media in engaging ‘hard to reach’ groups, particularly young people?

All members of the panel felt that there was a place for social media. Matt Richards said that in Edinburgh, social media can be particularly useful for involving people who may generally avoid speaking to the police, and it also makes analysis very simple. They have also worked with the voluntary sector who often have good trusted relationships with communities. Garry Burnett said that working with

partners, such as housing, can be a good way of reaching people – for example when they get the keys for a new house.

Q: How is proceeds of crime funding accessed?

Richard Foggo explained the process for accessing CashBack funding – with the main criteria being that it needs to benefit youth activities locally. Around 95 per cent of Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) funding goes to CashBack, with the remainder on administration. To apply write to Richard Foggo or Kenny MacAskill MSP with your ideas.

Q: Jackie Doig, Scottish Community Safety Network – Will there be some kind of translation or consistency in language to help partners to work together? How will national organisations engage with the national police and fire services?

Evelyn Johnston said that it was important that there is a common language. In Highland, there have been changes to the committee reports to make them simpler and more easily understood. Jeanette McDiarmid said that the police recognise that different organisations and teams use different language, and that there will be a corporate approach to standardising language used in West Lothian.

Next Steps and Closing Remarks, Richard Foggo, Scottish Government

Richard Foggo thanked everyone for their attendance at the Learning Events. He said that the final Scottish Government Project Board meeting would be held in March 2013. However, there appears to be great enthusiasm for continued networking and support beyond 'day one'. The national guidance was also very well received. The Board will therefore consider whether the Learning Network will continue.

Links

This event was on twitter under #lse5 and you can get further updates by following @theLSEnetwork.

Copies of the presentations for all five case studies are available at <https://knowledgehub.local.gov.uk/group/localscrutinyandengagementnetwork>