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Strategic Police Priorities Review
Police Division
Scottish Government
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Edinburgh
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Dear Sirs

Strategic Police Priorities

The Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland, SCOTSS, is the professional body representing the lead officers for Scottish local authority trading standards services. On behalf of the Society I welcome the opportunity to respond to your recent consultation paper on strategic police priorities, and I outline our response to particular questions below.

1. Do the revised Strategic Police Priorities sum up your ambitions for your police service?

Yes

Comments

Trading standards services throughout the country work regularly with their local police offices, most notably in the areas of intellectual property (counterfeit goods) and doorstep crime, where joint responses and investigations often take place. With support from the cross border trading standards team (Trading Standards Scotland), local trading standards services' work is increasingly intelligence led and protocols exist for dissemination and information sharing with the police and others. Both TSS and local authority services often work jointly with the police on working groups covering various matters of mutual interest including scams, serious and organised crime and anti-counterfeiting measures.

Trading standards services often seek the assistance of the police in situations where there is the possibility of obstruction or violence, including when seizing goods from premises or entering domestic premises under a warrant.

Though our functions are very different, in many ways the aims and objectives of trading standards run in parallel with the main purpose of policing as set out in the policing principles and reproduced in page 5 of the consultation document, namely:

*"(a) that the main purpose of policing is to improve the safety and wellbeing of persons, localities and communities in Scotland, and
(b) that the Police service, working in collaboration with others where appropriate, should seek to achieve that main purpose by policing in a way which—
(i) is accessible to, and engaged with, local communities, and
(ii) promotes measures to prevent crime, harm and disorder."*

In answer to the specific question above, SCOTSS members' ambitions would be for the police services which we work with to be responsive to our needs and, where appropriate, help us carry out our functions effectively. Of the six priorities, two are particularly relevant to SCOTSS members and the services that we provide and we would comment as follows:

Localism – the role of the LALO (Local Authority Liaison Officer) is key to ensuring that the police has channels of communication and effective liaison with local authority service providers, who themselves have close links to communities. We are particularly supportive of this role, however in our experience LALOs tend to move on fairly regularly meaning that personal links and local knowledge is lost and rebuilt too frequently. Additionally, the effectiveness and willingness of the LALO to engage with our services can be variable and can appear to be dependent on the individual. We would welcome more consistency so that any impact of changes in personnel is minimised.

Collaborative Working – our members' authorities have successfully worked in partnership with the police in Scotland in many areas of work for many years, as described above, to achieve the "better outcomes" referred to and we look forward to continuing to do so and strengthening our relationships.

Examples of mutually beneficial collaborative working between Police Scotland and local authority trading standards services include Operation Alexander which tackled the issue of retail sales of NPS in December 2015, and effectively removed these shops from the high streets. Similarly, Operation Monarda has produced positive results in dealing with Doorstep Crime in our communities.

Improved lines of communication and intelligence sharing would undoubtedly help establish and enhance collaborative working. Local authority trading standards services and Trading Standards Scotland have made strides in recent years in our recording, handling, and use of intelligence and so are in a better position now to integrate with joint, intelligence-led operations, including at their planning stages.

We particularly support the aspiration of "working towards shared measures of success". More generally, we would welcome discussions on developing a template for a "Memorandum of Understanding" between Police Scotland and local authority trading standards services, this is something that SCOTSS had discussed with ACPOS for many years.

2. Do the revised Strategic Police Priorities reflect the needs of your local community or the communities you serve?

Yes

Comments

The priorities are clearly set out and well explained. In welcoming these we would refer again to the points made above regarding steps that could possibly be taken to ensure closer, more consistent and possibly formal working arrangements between police and trading standards to help both achieve their goals.

3. Do you have anything to add to our impact assessments?

No

Comments

Nothing to add.

I hope this is helpful, but if you wish any further input from SCOTSS, in relation to these or any other matters, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Peter Adamson
Chairman SCOTSS