

The Highland Council

Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee - 26 March 2014

Agenda Item	6
Report No	CPE 6/14

Scottish Police Authority: consultation response on Stop and Search from the Highland Council

Report by Head of Policy and Reform

Summary

The Scottish Police Authority sought views on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland by 14th February 2014. A response was sent and requires homologation.

1. Background

1.1 The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) sought views on use of stop and search by Police Scotland since 1st April 2013. To respond within the timescale by 14th February 2014, views were sought from Members via Ward Business meetings between 13th January and 10th February 2014. Given committee timetabling, a draft response was sent on time and requires homologation.

2. The Council's response to the SPA Consultation on stop and search by Police Scotland since 1st April 2013

2.1 The submission to the SPA is attached as Appendix 1 of this report. The consultation exercise asked three questions:

- What type of data, reports, etc. have you received from Police Scotland regarding stop and search (please provide examples if at all possible)?
- What feedback have you received from individuals, organisations, impacted groups etc. on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland?
- Do you have any views on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland which you would like to share with the Scottish Police Authority?

2.2 Overall the responses to questions highlighted that Members were aware of the stop and search procedure and that there had been opportunity in committee to question the local police commander on its use in the Highlands.

2.3 Discussion had taken place at Ward Business Meetings and at the present time there were no known issues coming forward from communities or individuals on stop and search.

3. Implications

3.1 There are no resource, legal, equalities, climate change or risk implications arising from this response to the consultation.

4. Recommendation

4.1 Members are asked to homologate the response sent to the Scottish Police Authority in February 2014 in response to the consultation on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland since 1st April 2013.

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Date: 21.2.14

SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY STOP AND SEARCH CONSULTATION FORM
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Local Policing Committee:	The Highland Council
Date completed:	12 February 2014

SECTION ONE – EXPERIENCES OF STOP AND SEARCH

What type of data, reports, etc. have you received from Police Scotland regarding stop and search (please provide examples if at all possible)?

Reports are received quarterly by our Community Safety, Public Engagement & Equalities Committee (CPE) on Police Performance against the priorities of the local policing plan. Priority 5 covers the proportion of positive stop & search for drugs.

At our most recent CPE on 5.12.13 there was some discussion on stop & search. – Item 7i, between 01:21:00 to 01:30:00 approx. into the webcast which can be viewed at http://www.highland.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/111334

In summary: Two Councillors asked questions on the statistics, the outcomes and policy. In particular the benefit of 'Stop and Search' given the level of positive stops reported. In response to points raised, the Divisional Commander explained that there had been no change in policy. That the approach taken on "stop and search" activity was largely intelligence-led. It was also believed that 'Stop and Search' activity contributed to falls in levels of street violence and weapons offences.

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) representative at the meeting reported that Stop and Search was being scrutinised by the SPA. The extent to which it was used varied according to circumstances. It was for the CPE Committee to decide what it wanted to scrutinise. The SPA intended to review the Policing Plan in the coming months; this would provide the Committee with the opportunity to influence policing – it could promote local policing for example.

What feedback have you received from individuals, organisations, impacted groups etc. on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland?

The Highland Council Members have been consulted on the 'Stop and Search' policy at their Ward Business Meetings and were asked to comment on the questions included in this consultation. As part of this process Members have advised that they have not received any feedback from individuals or impacted groups on Stop and Search.

One member representing Inverness West constituency has highlighted that he has no objection to 'Stop and Search' for the purpose of tackling drug misuse, emphasising however that some individuals may see this as an invasion into their privacy. He felt that it would be beneficial to have random searches using sniffer dogs in bars so they can clamp down on drug misuse culture.

Do you have any views on the use of stop and search by Police Scotland which you would like to share with the Scottish Police Authority?

Generally Highland Members have queried the use of the 'Stop and Search' policy at the scrutiny committee and having consulted with all members through the Ward Forums the view is that it is being used in Highland appropriately and is well balanced. The Committee meets again at the end of March 2014 and this response will be brought to their attention and we will provide any further comments arising at that time.

SECTION TWO – HANDLING YOUR RESPONSE

Do you wish your organisation's response to be made public?

Yes

No

SECTION THREE – INTERNAL USE ONLY (to be completed by Scottish Police Authority Officers)

Date received:

Received by: