

**Highland Council**  
**Community Safety, Public Engagement & Equalities**  
**Committee**  
**12 September 2013**

Agenda Item	10
Report No	CPE 36/13

**Highland Local Policing Area – Call Handling**

**Report by Highland Area Commander– Chief Superintendant Julian Innes**

**Summary**

This paper provides an update on Call Handling within Police Scotland Highland and Islands Division

**1. Background**

1.1 At the last Committee meeting it was agreed that a report would be provided on the implementation of the '101' non-emergency number at the next meeting. This has been included within this update on call handling.

1.2 During September 2012, former Northern Constabulary embarked on a substantial change in engaging with the public through a review of its:

- Call management
- Station opening hours
- Administrative support

1.3 Based on work carried out during a Best Value review in 2010, a revised call handling arrangement to provide 24/7 service for all area commands across the former Northern Constabulary area was agreed by the then Force Executive. This change in practice would assist the Force to achieve the efficiency savings required of it. It would also streamline public call handling from the disparate model of individual stations accepting calls throughout the Highlands and Islands. This would improve overall service provision across the area.

1.4 This work was then carried out with oversight through the Best Value Review Board which comprised members of the Force Executive, NJPB Convener and members.

1.5 The centralisation of call handling intended to take all non-emergency calls from dispersed stations, so as to:

- Increase standards of call-handling and requests for policing services,
- Increase and improve the supervision and consistency of call-handling,
- Reduce demand on front counter staff,
- Make more efficient use of command and control for critical incident

- management across the area, and
- Align to future national command and control proposals

As can be seen, the overwhelming reasons for changing the model related to efficient business practice and not in order to introduce 101. The introduction of 101 would have been achieved within our dispersed model but this was not assessed as robust or as efficient as a centralised model.

1.6 The 101 model, on introduction, used and still uses all the legacy numbers which the former Northern Constabulary had available to it. These numbers are now re-directed to the Inverness Area Control Room (ACR) rather than staff and officers of police stations dispersed throughout the Highlands and Islands area. Some of these areas are no longer in a position to receive calls owing to previous efficiency savings and or changes in practice.

1.7 During January – March 2013, the centralised model of call handling was incrementally introduced with all non-emergency calls being directed to the former Force Operations Centre, now ACR, on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

1.8 With the introduction of Police Scotland, also came the introduction of the single non emergency number, 101. Between 01/04/13 and 31/07/13, a total of 95,447 non-emergency calls to either legacy lines or 101 were received by the ACR: 81% of these calls have been answered within the target time of 40 seconds, with steady progress being made to reach and sustain the required target of 90%. 999 calls received in the same period have numbered 6221: 95% of these calls have been answered within the target time of 10 seconds which meets the national key performance indicator.

1.9 Prior to becoming Police Scotland and currently, Inverness ACR is operating with 6 members of staff under the model recognised as optimum by the previous Force Executive. Nevertheless, Police Scotland are actively recruiting members of staff to bring the ACR to its optimum establishment figure and also improving staff training, all of which should further increase service levels in the next 3 to 6 months.

#### **Recommendation**

The Committee is invited to note the update.

**Chief Superintendant Julian Innes**  
**Highland and Islands Divisional Commander**  
**26 August 2013**