

Thursday, 24 June, 2021

PRESS RELEASE

Police preparation for COP26 at advanced stage

Policing plans for maintaining business as usual, the wellbeing of staff and resourcing during the major climate change conference in Glasgow later this year are progressing well, a report has shown.

The assurance review by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMICS) in Scotland also highlighted areas where further work is needed and progress towards them will be checked closer to the November date of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26).

Mrs Gill Imery QPM, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, said: "This will be the biggest and most complex event staged in Scotland. It will place significant demands across policing and necessitate the largest mass mobilisation of police officers that has taken place in the UK in many years.

"As climate change is a high profile issue and as world leaders are due to attend it will attract global political, public and media interest.

"Following our review, I am confident the leadership of Police Scotland, its officers and staff are committed to the effective and efficient policing of the event whilst maintaining delivery of business as usual and monitoring and supporting staff wellbeing."

The responsibility for policing of the international summit rests with Police Scotland and the assurance review by HMICS looked specifically at arrangements for resource planning and mutual aid, capacity for day to day policing and staff wellbeing pre, during and post the event.

"Covid 19 proved to be an unexpected challenge for those involved in policing and preparing for COP26. Although the conference was delayed for a year, it did not necessarily mean there was more preparation time as many resources and personnel were diverted to support policing of the pandemic," added Mrs Imery.

"An important observation from this review is the professional commitment by officers and staff who continued to deliver policing of the pandemic and planning for COP26 against a backdrop of compliance with public health guidelines and lockdown restrictions. We also witnessed some examples of good practice which can be shared with other forces throughout the UK."

Given the complexity and challenge of policing COP26, the size and scale of the event which will put exceptional demand on resources, HMICS believed it to be inevitable there will be an element of disruption in day to day policing. However policing the pandemic had provided useful learning points for maintaining business as usual.

Among the areas in which Police Scotland has been encouraged to make progress are the briefing of mutual aid officers on the differences in public order legislation between Scotland and the rest of the UK; testing of plans and protocols; arrangements for multiple arrests and

custodies; communication of policies across the service, and management of time off which will be due to officers and staff who were at COP26 and those across the country who provided a service to their communities.

One recommendation about oversight is made in the report in addition to a number of areas for development. Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) will be asked to set up measures to monitor progress.

In preparation for COP26, Police Scotland asked the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) to carry out an external evaluation of its operational planning for the event. HMICS was asked subsequently to consider Police Scotland's co-operation with and response to the MPS review and its recommendations. HMICS found the MPS assessment had been useful and that Police Scotland was progressing its recommendations.

Ends

FOOTNOTE

Known as COP 26, the UK Government is to host the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change 26th Conference of the Parties bringing together heads of state, climate experts and campaigners to agree co-ordinated action to tackle climate change.

The event, based around Scottish Exhibition Campus in Glasgow, will be held from November 1-12 with pre-meetings taking place from October 25 at venues across Scotland. It was postponed from last year as a result of the pandemic.

Ends notes

NOTES TO EDITORS

The HMICS Assurance Review of Policing of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) is available to download at the HMICS website www.hmics.scot from 1100hrs on, Thursday, 24 June, 2021.

For media inquiries please contact

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