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Convener
Criminal Justice Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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6 October 2023

Dear Convener

Scottish Government's response to the HMICS Assurance Review of Vetting Policy and Procedures within Police Scotland

As you will aware HMICS has now published the outcome of its review of vetting procedures within Police Scotland, which makes a total of 15 recommendations, one of which resides with the Scottish Government.

The public will rightly seek assurance that action is being taken at pace by Police Scotland to address the review's findings, and similarly I am sure that the Criminal Justice Committee will be considering its approach too. With that in mind, I would like to update you on the Scottish Government's position in relation to the important matters raised in this report.

It is vital the public have confidence in policing. Vetting is a key strand in providing that assurance and I would like to assure you that the Scottish Government is considering the detail of the report and its recommendations.

Work is currently underway within Police Scotland to address the Review's recommendations, and I welcome the statement from Deputy Chief Constable Alan Spiers which acknowledges that the onus is on Police Scotland to earn public confidence by delivering further improvements to its vetting checks and processes. I have asked my officials to encourage pace within Police Scotland to address the improvement actions identified by HMICS.

In respect of the specific recommendation for the Scottish Government, I would like to assure you that I am committed to exploring the legislative basis for vetting, particularly in the context of the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) Scotland Bill introduced to

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Parliament earlier this year. My officials have begun work to explore the legislative basis for vetting, and will be discussing this further with policing stakeholders, as appropriate.

I will provide a further update to the committee in due course, and as ever I am happy to answer any questions you or members of the Committee may have.

Yours sincerely



ANGELA CONSTANCE

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