

## **PE1737/A**

Police Scotland submission of 27 September 2019

The petition has been titled 'Review of hate crime legislation and security funding in Scotland': whilst the petition's primary focus is in relation to security funding for places of worship, I will provide a response to both aspects of the petition.

- Lord Bracadale review of hate crime legislation (Scotland)

The Scottish Government, in 2017, commissioned a comprehensive review of hate crime legislation in Scotland with Lord Bracadale being appointed as the chair. Following an extensive review of how current legislation operates, Lord Bracadale published his report with recommendations in May 2018. Following this the Scottish Government held a public consultation on hate crime entitled 'One Scotland: Hate Has No Home Here' in November 2018. This consultation closed in February 2019.

Police Scotland provided views to both Lord Bracadale's review and the subsequent consultation. Police Scotland welcomes the review of existing legislation. Recommendations including consolidation of existing legislation to simplify the legal landscape, the opportunity to modernise elements of the system including the adoption of the concepts of 'hostility' and 'stirring up', and the application of these concepts to new societal developments such as social media/online hate crime are particularly welcome. It is anticipated that the Scottish Government will consider all responses to the consultation on the review to develop a system of legislation which will better serve the diverse communities of Scotland, while ensuring the right balance between freedom of speech, religious expression and affording protection from abuse.

- Places of Worship – Scottish Government Funding

The petition quotes funding arrangements available in England and Wales as part of the UK Government's Hate Crime Action Plan. It is correct that this funding is not currently available in Scotland and therefore Police Scotland are not in a position to comment on the arrangements of these funds for our English and Welsh colleagues.

I can confirm that Police Scotland has recently participated in discussions with the Scottish Government's Connected Communities Unit to review security provisions for places of worship in Scotland. Police Scotland will continue to work with the Scottish Government to ensure places of worship are safe environments for all to enjoy.

Police Scotland continue to offer advice and support to all places of worship across Scotland with specific guidance available where concerns may arise.

Police Scotland currently support places of worship by offering the following services:

- Crime Prevention Surveys
- Architectural Liaison Officer Inspections
- Counter Terrorism Security Advice

Additional patrols may be provided around places of worship when there may be heightened tensions or at times of religious significance when, for example, areas in and around may have greater population or footfall.

Should the Scottish Government consider introduction of additional funding to enhance the safety for places of worship, Police Scotland would provide an appropriate role to support this initiative.