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SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY

1 Pacific Quay
Glasgow
G51 1DZ

SPAChiefExecutive@spa.police.uk

LETTER SENT BY E-MAIL ONLY

Rachel Currie
Research Fellow
The Article 11 Trust
162a Southwark Bridge Road
LONDON
SE1 0DG

Rachel.Currie@Article11Trust.org.uk

21 March 2022

CO-032-2022

Dear Ms Currie

REPORT ON POLICING OF COP26

I refer to your correspondence of 21 February 2022 regarding the NetPol/Article 11 Trust report on the policing of the Glasgow COP26. The Chair has asked me to reply.

Thank you for sending a copy of the report. The Authority was aware of the report from when it was published in December 2021.

We were also aware of some of the issues raised through social and mainstream media coverage and parliamentary questions during and immediately following the COP26 conference. Your report was an interesting early perspective on the policing of COP26.

The Authority's oversight and assurance-seeking of Police Scotland's planning and delivery of policing COP26 has been extensive. Over and above formal governance structures, a dedicated [Oversight Group](#) was established in 2019 to provide additional detailed scrutiny of Police Scotland's preparedness for policing this significant international event. The Group was chaired by an Authority member, and attended by two additional members, Police Scotland, HMICS and Scottish Government officials.

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An Independent Advisory Group (IAG) was also established, chaired by John Scott QC to offer further focused public oversight and assurance around the planning and delivery of the event with a focus on human rights and facilitating protests. The IAG's membership consisted of a range of external bodies and organisations such as Amnesty International, Friends of the Earth and the Children's Commissioner. The group has, as reported to the Authority and our Oversight Group, considered some of the concerns in your report.

You refer to the early reflections reported to the Authority's meeting in late November 2021 from Police Scotland, John Scott QC on behalf of the IAG and representatives of Glasgow City Council. These initial reflections added assurance to the Board around the evidence given by Police Scotland and other commentators that the policing of the event was largely a success. The touchstones of critical importance were around the data on outcomes. There was no violence, disorder, damage or injury at any substantial level recorded. There were remarkably low levels of arrests and complaints compared to anticipated levels taken from the experience of other police services at recent such large scale, international conferences.

For further assurance we sought the views of the people of Glasgow via [independent public polling after COP26](#) had ended. This was a further layer of assurance from Glaswegians giving clear evidence of support for Police Scotland's approach to policing their city.

Most recently, the Authority's Complaints and Conduct Committee met on 2 March and considered a [report on the number, nature and status of complaint and conduct matters](#) received during and in respect of policing of COP26. You can read that report on the Authority's website. If there is any individual who NetPol/Article 11 Trust have engaged with to inform their report who has not already raised their concerns formally, we would strongly encourage them to do so to ensure appropriate recording and consideration of the issues. You can direct anyone who has yet to raise a complaint to Police Scotland's website: [Make a formal complaint - Police Scotland](#).

Each of the above sources have informed the Authority's position to date - that overall the policing approach was proportionate, fair, positive and balanced carefully the rights of individuals to protest with the need to maintain the safety and wellbeing of citizens and communities. Indeed, this position has been widely recognised, attracting national and international interest and positive comment.

Of course there is always learning from such enormous events and this was acknowledged by the Chief Constable publicly in November. The Authority and Police Scotland recognise the value and benefit of reflection and learning to improve the approach for future global events. This work continues through the Authority's COP26 Oversight Group and reporting to public sessions of the full Authority. The IAG chaired by John Scott QC will also report independently on the policing approach to the event in the coming months.

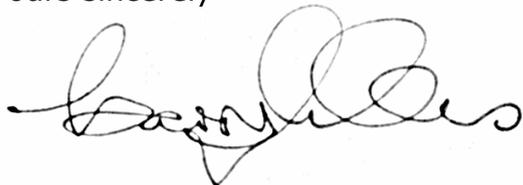
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At the moment, based on the sources referred to above, and the fact that the IAG has not yet reported, the Authority sees no need for a public enquiry into the policing of COP26 or the stop and search powers used.

For completeness, I have copied your correspondence and the report to Police Scotland, HMICS and John Scott QC for their information.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Barry Sillers', written in a cursive style.

BARRY SILLERS

Acting Chief Executive (Strategy and Performance)

Copy to: Iain Livingstone QPM, Chief Constable, Police Scotland
Gill Imery QPM, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland
John Scott QC, Chair, Independent Advisory Group (Policing COP26)