1. I refer to your correspondence dated 12 February 2010 in connection with the above subject, which has been considered by members of Crime and Equality and Diversity Business Areas. I can now offer comment on the questions where ACPOS has involvement/information. We acknowledge that we have missed the deadline, but hope that the submission may be of some assistance.

To what extent does reliable data on migration exist to inform public policy-making?

2. As stated in the response submitted for the committee’s meeting on 26 January 2010, on a national level Scottish Police forces refer to official sources including the General Register Office for Scotland (GROS), the Department of Work and Pensions, Home Office and UK Borders Agency statistics. However, these figures need to be interpreted with caution as for example many migrant workers are not officially recorded by the Workers Registration Scheme, as it does not require certain self employed workers to register. The sources and methods of data collection are varied and at times dependent on the actions taken by migrants such as registering with a GP. In addition, due to the time frame in the collation and publishing of this type of data it can be of limited value as the policing provision may already have had to adjust to meet immediate demands.

3. At a local level, a more accurate picture of inward migration is achieved through a multi agency approach, and the police rely on information provided by partners to identify specific needs and determine appropriate policing methods. Links to organisations such as the Strategic Migration Partnership and local Regional Equality Councils are key. This is coupled with information from local officers, and police community advisors, to try and determine an overall picture of the community. However, much of this is anecdotal with limited accurate statistical data being available.

4. Although the Gateway Protection Programme caters to individuals in quite specific circumstances, it shows the potential benefit of accurate data in advance. Public services are able to have appropriate strategies in place to manage the sudden demand resulting in quicker integration and cohesion. The resident community is prepared, and concerns which can appear with a large influx of migrants to an area, can be mitigated.

5. Overall, there is a lack of accurate data on migrants which limits the ability to identify and define trends at an early juncture and so inform public policy making.
How do the media portray the contribution of migrant communities in Scotland?

6. The media portrayal of migrant communities is in the main negative and therefore migrants are often viewed with suspicion and distrust within the communities they are integrating with. In the event of a court case for example, if the accused is not Scottish born, it is invariably mentioned, which may attract adverse reactions.

7. Communities, partner agencies and organisations regularly comment that they feel that the media rarely puts across the positive case for migration and all too often official reports related to migration issues are reported upon with extreme headlines and adverse connotations.

How can positive messages regarding the contribution of migrant populations to Scottish society be effectively disseminated?

8. Scottish forces have identified the importance of being part of a multi agency response to promote events and good practice examples of community cohesion with established and migrant communities. However it must be acknowledged that there is limited interest shown by the mainstream media in these positive stories.

9. Support for community events which focus on cohesion and the benefits of inward migration need support from Government at the highest level to generate media interest, as was provided to Operation Reclaim in the Sighthill area of Glasgow.

10. Positive high profile role models from the migrant community would reinforce the contributions by migrants and put a face to the ‘anonymous’ migrant population.

11. Organisations like regional equality councils are important. Through their community-based projects they can provide education and understanding at ‘grassroots’ level, which promotes the positive aspect of inward migration.

What is the degree of alignment of Scottish public services with migrant populations?

12. The ACPOS Equality and Diversity Strategy as launched in 2009 outlines our commitment to exploring new forms of community policing skills to meet the needs of an ever changing diverse society and culture. All Forces provide a number of informative documents in a range of languages, and provide interpretation services, which officers can access when coming into contact with a non-English speaker. All forces have community based staff with a specific remit to engage with the communities they serve and feed back information to shape their service response.
What is the effectiveness of public sector responses to changing migration patterns?

13. As with other public sectors, it is difficult to specify the effectiveness of policing services to changing migration patterns. Community based staff have identified residential pockets of migrant communities and through engagement at one stop advice shops, youth events and migrant worker seminars have built trust and confidence. However, there are few study results on outcomes available to identify such effectiveness in an empirical manner, for any of the public sectors. The police service engage with partner agencies and organisations to share information and identify where services can be improved, one such example at a National level is the COSLA Strategic Migration Partnership.

What is the degree of awareness of the rights of migrants?

14. All police officers and staff receive nationally agreed training on diversity issues. Community based staff continually build on knowledge through engagement and working with organisations like Positive Action in Housing and the Scottish Refugee Council provides an understanding of the issues facing migrant communities and their rights.

15. Although no specific research was identified there is a general consensus between the Scottish forces that migrant’s knowledge of their rights is limited. The Grampian Regional Equality Council has produced a document titled ‘Living and Working in the North East of Scotland’, which is available in different formats and languages and gives details of a migrant’s rights, along with the services available to them. Most Forces and local authorities have similar such documents for migrant communities in their area.

What is the scale of the trafficking issue, in terms of the number of people involved and the geographical areas which people trafficked tend to be sourced from?

16. Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCG) exist and they cause devastating harm to our communities. Their members are ruthless and selfish and every community is affected. Drugs and prostitution affect every area of Scotland. From the preliminary findings from the SCDEA Serious Organised Crime Mapping Project (June 2009) there are a minimum of 360 serious organised crime groups operating in Scotland, with indications from the SOCG mapping work that 10 SOCG are involved in trafficking of individuals into Scotland.

17. With specific reference to human trafficking evidence is limited predominately due to the covert nature of the illicit business, but at least 79 individuals were thought to be victims of human trafficking in the year to March 2008.
What is the nature of the problem? Are people trafficked primarily for reasons related to sexual exploitation or with regard to false labour?

18. Evidence of facilitation and human trafficking through our ports has been identified during the last 4 years; predominantly involving travellers from Eastern Europe, Africa and Asia. Like legitimate business, SOCG diversify in order to limit their risk. As a result SOCG in Scotland are involved in significant criminality out with the drugs market, including human trafficking, people smuggling, fraud and Intellectual Property Crime (IPC). Furthermore, human trafficking provides SOCG with cheap labour for use in their other areas of crime including prostitution, use as gardeners in commercial cannabis cultivations and as sellers of illegal or counterfeit goods.

19. There are however significant gaps in our knowledge and work is ongoing to provide a better understanding of the scale and nature of the threat as it impacts on our communities.

20. The new Scottish Intelligence and Co-ordination Unit (SICU) will co-ordinate intelligence on SOCG, human trafficking, serious and complex fraud; developing links with the Scottish Prison Service, the Scottish Business Crime Centre (SBCC), the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), Europol and the Regional Intelligence Units (RIU) across England and Wales. The SICU will also house officers from SOCA, UKBA and HMRC and through partnership working will continue to produce a dynamic picture of SOCG through mapping.

Given the degree of criminality that tends to be involved in human trafficking what problems does this present for public sector agencies seeking to assist the victims of this activity?

21. Victims who have no real understanding of Scottish policing may be fearful of the police and indeed other national agencies including UKBA. They may believe that the police are corrupt and that UKBA may deport them. Fear plays a part in the decision making of many victims in relation to retaliation by crime groups either in Scotland or back in their home country against family members. As such, victims are less likely to make themselves known to authorities. There is also a requirement for the public sector (health education and policing) to be aware of the cultural issues that exist with victims and victim care. Rehabilitation and safety remain key.

22. A Human Trafficking Unit has recently established within the SICU, resourced through the provision of additional funding from Scottish Government. The overall aims of the unit are: to improve awareness and understanding of the threat from human trafficking in Scotland and to coordinate intelligence activity against individuals and networks involved in human trafficking in Scotland.

23. On 30 March 2010, the first ever joint workshop on human trafficking led by the SCDEA and Scottish Government was held at Rosebery House in
Edinburgh. This will provide a platform for further work between law enforcement and victim support groups.

24. I trust that the foregoing is of assistance to you.

Caroline Scott
Assistant Chief Constable
ACPOS General Secretary
21 April 2010