



Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	7th May 2024
Location	Via MS Teams
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Business Plan
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Director
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To provide members with an update on the refreshed two-year business plan for Forensic Services.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Scottish Police Authority approved the [Forensic Strategy](#) on the 29th of September 2021 following extensive consultation with staff and stakeholders. This strategy provides a clear vision as to how we can continue to provide excellent forensic services which remain at the cutting edge of scientific and technological advances, while being sustainable, providing value-for-money as a public service, maintaining, and enhancing public trust and confidence and building on our successful operating model.
- 1.2 Underpinning the strategy is a business planning process that sets out activities over an 18-to-24-month period that are prioritised to support delivery of the strategic outcomes and objectives.

Strategic outcomes	Objectives
Our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to provide excellent forensic services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on wellbeing so that our people are safe, supported and empowered 2. Support our people to be confident leaders, innovative active contributors and influencers 3. Support our people to identify with and demonstrate forensic services values and have a strong sense of belonging
Forensic Services SPA is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use innovative approaches to build our capability and capacity to provide high quality forensic services 2. Commit to making a positive impact through an increased focus on environmental sustainability 3. Drive forward the implementation of digital and new technologies to enable forensic services for the future
Forensic Services SPA delivers high quality, ethical services; and leads in order to advance forensic science	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Influence and collaborate to enable the advancement of forensic capabilities 2. Promote exceptional customer service for our services and focus on best value 3. Embed ethical considerations into every aspect of our forensic services
Forensic Services SPA works collaboratively with partners to serve the needs of the public and Criminal Justice in Scotland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate and work effectively with criminal justice partners to develop strategies to maximise the value of forensic science particularly where there are increasing demands 2. Adopt a whole justice sector approach to design new future-focused services with partners 3. Demonstrate and promote the value that forensic services provide to our customers, partners and the public

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON REPORT TOPIC

2.1 In developing the business plan consideration has been given to the current organisational challenges associated with:

- Delivery of the performance framework and continuous improvement
- Operational and strategic risk management and in particular risk that is outside of appetite and tolerance
- The Directors annual priorities
- Supporting our people

Link to the Performance Framework

2.2 The [Performance Framework](#) for Forensic Services was approved in October 2023 by the Forensic Services Committee. This document sets out an effective approach to performance management which is important to the success of the organisation. It ensures that Forensic Services remain focused on what is important to the Scottish public, through collaboration with our partners, to continue delivering a high quality, timely, fit-for-purpose and value-for-money service.

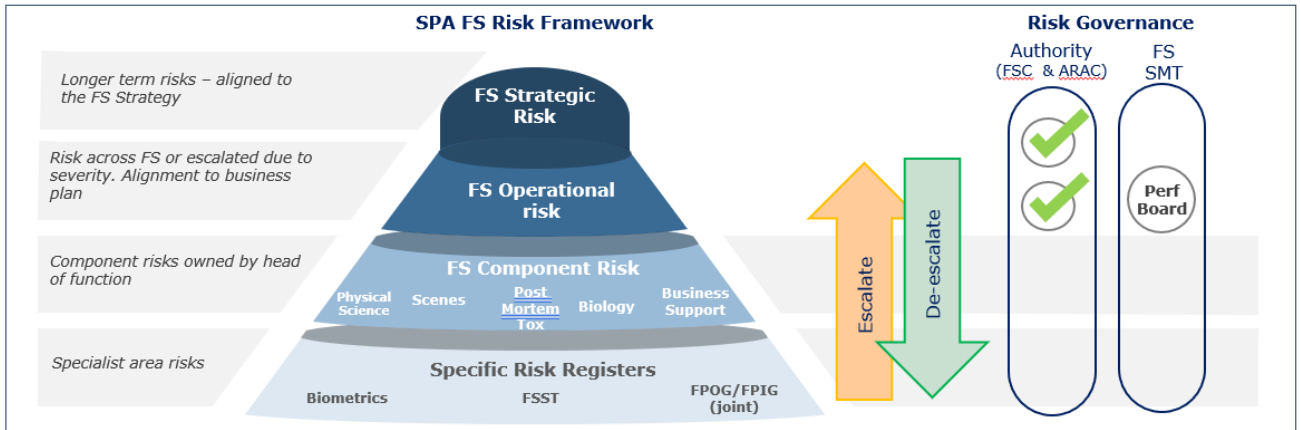
2.3 The performance framework is, in effect, a summary of the key internal processes through which Forensic Services sets, delivers, monitors, and reports on its priorities; as such it encompasses elements of strategy, finance, performance, people and risk management.

2.4 The business plan is intrinsically linked to the performance framework as it highlights the short to medium term activity that needs to be prioritised to support improvement in particular areas of performance.

Link to Risk Management

2.5 Forensic Services utilises a risk management framework structure that supports a bottom-up approach to the escalation of risk and the fundamental principle that the risks at the two highest levels reflect cumulative risks.

2.6 Effective identification, management and reporting of risk plays a key part in supporting delivery of FS objectives across the business from strategic to day-to-day services to partners.



- 2.7 Operational and strategic risks are reported to the Forensic Services Committee. Where risks are identified as being outside of the agreed level of appetite and tolerance, action plans prioritised to reduce the level of the risk within acceptable levels.
- 2.8 There are 7 out of 26 operational risks currently outside of appetite and tolerance. For each of these risks there are several mitigating actions in place that aim to manage and reduce the risk over time. These actions are prioritised in the business plan and there is clear linkage between timescales of planned business activity and the management of risk.

Link to the People Plan

- 2.9 Forensic Services can only deliver an effective forensic service to our partners and the communities of Scotland with our people – highly-trained and qualified scientific and support staff - who collectively support the Criminal Justice System, Public Health and the public.
- 2.10 The people plan aims to provide strategic context and priorities for the organisation on people related matters, with a focus on:
- *Positive Culture Change*
 - *Practical methods to support our People.*
- 2.11 The Business Plan brings out the more critical projects from the people plan to put them in context with other planned activity across the organisation to ensure that they are appropriately emphasised and prioritised amongst other activities.

Link to the Directors Priorities

- 2.12 On an annual basis the Director of Forensic Services will set out their priorities for the year ahead. Activity associated with these priorities is set out in the business plan.
- 2.13 In considering all the demands on the organisation, it is important that the capacity available to undertake this work is considered to ensure that the plan is achievable and that the right focus is considered. The balance of all the elements described above have been considered in the development of the revised two-year business plan, which also encompasses some carry forward activity from last year.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no financial implications in this report. The planned activity has been considered in budget discussions for 2024/25.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are personnel implications associated with this paper in that each activity noted on the plan will need to be completed as per the timescale indicated.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this paper.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are reputational implications associated with this paper, activity set out is required to deliver on the Forensic Services strategic outcomes.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are social implications associated with this paper, specifically the activities that relate to drugs driving and also improving diversity and inclusion in forensic science.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 8.1 There are community implications associated with this paper, specifically the impact on Scotland's communities from drug-driving.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no equality implications associated with this paper.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no environmental implications associated with this paper.

RECOMMENDATION

Members are requested to discuss the information contained in this report and to approve the two-year business plan.

The Forensic Services Business Plan Balanced Scorecard for 2024/26

Our People – Integrated with the People Plan

No	Activity	By	Owner	Why?
1	Develop an inclusivity programme for FS – according to the plan which will be developed post the diagnostic work in Q1 (2024/25)	End Q2 2024	Dir	To ensure that Forensic Services values diversity and is an inclusive environment to work within for all
2	Ongoing development and delivery of the leadership and management development programme	Ongoing	HOFIS	To ensure that our managers have the necessary skills to meet expectations and deliver for the future
3	Embed the new management structure and ensure empowered and inspiring leadership is in place across the organisation – launch and review.	Launch May 24	COO	To ensure that our leaders inspire, support, and manage our people to deliver the best services to the public.
4	Introduce an ongoing process for absorbability mapping and impact analysis prior to the implementation of change.	End Q1 2024	COO	To ensure that when change is implemented it is managed alongside service delivery and has the best chance to deliver the benefits
5	Adopt a consistent and focussed approach to bringing people back to work after long term absence in line with organisational policy and procedure.	End Q2 2024	HOFIS	To ensure that we have a consistent and effective approach to support our people back into work after a long period of absence
6	Progress consultation to integrate Postmortem Toxicology into the new operating model for Forensic Services	Q3 2024	COO	To ensure fairness for staff and to maximise the benefit of collaboration across toxicology services

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7	Review the recruitment processes within Forensic Services to improve efficiency and to assess improvements in selection (with a focus on inclusivity and resilience)	Q4 2025	COO	To ensure that we recruit the right people into roles in the organisation and that candidates have a good understanding of roles
8	Implement an apprenticeship pathway into Forensic Services with a focus on increasing diversity within the organisation.	Q2 25/26	HOFIS	To have a pathway into a career in forensic science that does not require a degree on entry, this will improve diversity within the organisation

Our Resources

No	Activity	By	Owner	Outcome
9	Develop a full business case and secure funding for a long-term sustainable model for drug driving toxicology services.	End Q2 2024/25	COO	To ensure that appropriate toxicology analysis capacity is in place to meet future partner requirements.
10	Develop and deliver the 2024/25 Efficiencies plan for Forensic Services	Ongoing	HOFIS	To identify and deliver efficiencies in our processes to allow savings to be re-invested in delivery of the operating model and other areas of business development.
11	Develop a full business case and secure funding for a new Core Operating System for Forensic Services including the associated data migration full business case – timescale to be confirmed following replan.	TBC	HOCD	To identify a replacement for our EMS (Evidence Management System) and replace it with a fit for purpose core operating system that improves productivity across the service
12	Implement a centralised purchasing approach for Forensic Service to manage business as usual and capital purchases.	End Q1 2025/26	HOFIS	To purchase materials, equipment and consumables in the most efficient manner allowing savings to be re-invested in the deliver of the new operating model and other areas of business development

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13	Develop an options plan to consider the external financial environment and progression to delivery of the Forensic Services Strategy	Q3 2024/25	Dir	To understand options and content of business activity and to manage strategic stakeholder engagement.
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Our Processes

No	Activity	By	Owner	Outcome
14	Complete the implementation of the new operating model (within financial constraints) through phases of workstream delivery.	Q1 2025/26	HOCD	To deliver the benefits of the new operating model and to ensure we can respond to the changing needs of partners
15	Complete the delivery of the Quality Improvement Plan	Q2 2024/25	HOQA	To ensure that our management system works effectively and that we can provide the appropriate assurance on the quality of the work we complete.
16	Complete the delivery of the refreshed Toxicology Improvement Plan to build internal capacity – according to the plan.	Q4 2024/25	HOF	To ensure that there is sufficient internal capacity to meet current levels of demand and to reduce pressure on the team
17	Develop the long-term Digital and Data plan for Forensic Services and work with Digital Division to assess any gap between ambition and support.	Q3 2024/25	HOFIS	To ensure that any digital and data risks are identified and that plans are in place to identify what is required to enable delivery efficient forensic services in the future.
18	Working with professional support services develop technical roadmaps for each forensic discipline.	Q3 2024/25	HOFIS	To understand how technology is developing internationally in support of forensic disciplines and that this is captured in long term investment planning.

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19	Develop the Research Development and Innovation strategy for Forensic Services including stakeholder engagement and prioritisation process.	Q3 2024/25	HOCD	To ensure that the research and innovation that is planned and delivered meets strategic objectives across the justice system
20	Deliver a programme of change to maximise the efficient use of DNA reagents to maximise quality and minimise cost.	Q4 2024/25	HOF	To ensure that best value judgements are made in the use of costly DNA consumables and to achieve savings in this area as detailed in the efficiencies plan
21	Develop a plan to outline extension to the scope of accreditation for Forensic Services with reference to the iterative implementation of the Forensic Science Regulator (England and Wales) Code of Practice	Q2 2024/25	HOQA	To prioritise how we expand our scope of accredited services and focus on how we could comply with the FSR code of practice alongside forensic science organisations in England and Wales

Our Partners

No	Activity	By	Owner	Outcome
22	Fully implement the performance framework across the organisation with routine reporting internally and externally	End Q2 2024/25	COO	To ensure that objectives and performance is managed for everyone in line with organisation priorities and that focus is balanced across the framework of activities
23	Deliver on the recommendations from the HMICS review of drug driving – as per the action plans agreed with HMICS.	Q4 2024/25	HOF	To ensure that the learning from the review is acted on and delivers the benefits set out in the report
24	Develop the 5-year demand forecast for forensic service provision required by COPFS and Police Scotland – 3-month SLWG.	Q2 2024/25	HOFIS	To ensure that we understand our partners expected levels of service (demand and changing focus) in the long term to allow the strategic workforce plan to be delivered

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25	With professional support services redesign the Strategic Workforce Plan in alignment with the demand forecast	Q3 2024/25	Dir	To ensure that we shape the workforce in Forensic Services to deliver on the long-term requirements of our partners and the public
26	Develop a joint biometrics strategy with Police Scotland to deliver on the recommendations from the assessment of compliance with the SBC Codes of Practice	Q4 2024/25	COO	To ensure that public confidence in the proportionate use of quality biometrics is maintained in line with the standards set out by the Scottish Biometric Commissioner
27	In collaboration with the Leverhulme Institute complete the proposed research into the value of forensic science	Q4 2025/26	HOCD	To be able to articulate and quantify the benefit of forensic science particularly in relation to violence against women and girls and in the investigation of acquisitive crime
28	Review the approach to stakeholder engagement in alignment with the new roles and responsibilities within the operating model.	Q3 2024/25	COO	To ensure that we have the right opportunities to engage with stakeholders to keep the direction of Forensic Services focussed in the right areas