



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	28 September 2023
Location	The Grand Hall, Merchants House, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Deputy Chief Constable Designate Report
Presented By	Fiona Taylor QPM Deputy Chief Constable Designate
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

This report is submitted as a Standing Agenda Item.

1. BACKGROUND

The purpose of Police Scotland is 'to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland' and our focus is Keeping People Safe. This paper is intended to provide Members with an update on key activity and events.

2. TACKLING THREAT AND RISK

SERIOUS VIOLENCE INCLUDING HOMICIDE

Police Scotland recognises the impact that serious violence including homicide has on victims and families, and the wider impact such criminality can have on community safety and cohesion. Police Scotland drives consistently high standards of homicide investigation, underpinned by empathy, compassion, professionalism and justice. Every death is unique, and every homicide investigation presents its own particular challenges.

Since the last update to the Board, Police Scotland has led investigations into two instances of homicide across Scotland.

Owing to the professional response by officers from local crime division, assisted by officers in Police Scotland's Major Investigation Teams, both homicide investigations have resulted in the identification and arrest of an accused person and the circumstances have been reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS).

Significant Update - Murder of Anthony Ferns

On Thursday 18 April 2019, Anthony Ferns, aged 33, was assaulted whilst within his car on Crebar Street, Thornliebank. Tragically, Anthony succumbed to his injuries, and died a short time later.

A murder investigation was launched and this had been the only undetected homicide since the inception of Police Scotland.

On Friday 15 September 2023 four males, aged 37, 48, 54 and 67 were arrested and charged in connection with Mr Ferns' death and appeared at Glasgow Sheriff Court having been charged in relation to the murder.

Significant Sentence - Culpable Homicide of Anthony Parsons

On 29 September 2017, charity cyclist Anthony Parsons, aged 63, was hit by a car driven by Alexander McKellar, aged 31. Alexander's brother, Robert McKellar, also aged 31, was a passenger in the vehicle at the time.

The incident was not reported to the police and no medical intervention or assistance was sought for Anthony Parsons, who tragically died from his injuries. Mr Parsons was reported as a missing person, and despite exhaustive investigation work carried out by officers at the time, and extensive coverage in the media, the brothers did not come forward to disclose what happened.

In December 2020, information received led to the brothers being arrested and charged, and following searches carried out in January 2021, the remains of Mr Parsons were recovered from a remote area near to Bridge of Orchy, Argyll and Bute.

On Wednesday 26 July 2023, Alexander McKellar pled guilty to Culpable Homicide and Attempting to Defeat the Ends of Justice and Robert McKellar pleaded guilty to Attempting to Defeat the Ends of Justice. They were sentenced to 12 years, and 5 years and 3 months, respectively.

The brutal and uncaring actions of these men left the family of Mr Parsons distraught, and our thoughts remain with the family and friends of Mr Parsons.

I would like to thank the local community for their help and assistance during this complex investigation and thank members of the public who came forward and provided information, so bringing these men to justice.

SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

Police Scotland is committed to working with partners and use every tool and tactic at our disposal to tackle Serious and Organised Crime and identify all those who profit from such criminality.

On Tuesday 5 September, an intelligence led day of action was undertaken to target county lines drug activity in Edinburgh. Eight men were arrested, cocaine worth around £225,000 and £30,000 cash was seized across eight addresses in Edinburgh and two in London, with support from the Metropolitan Police. The eight men, aged between 21 and 41, were charged in connection with various drug and immigration offences and appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court on Wednesday, 6 September.

In a separate intelligence led operation on Wednesday 6 September, officers executed a search warrant at an address in Glasgow, resulting in a 28-year-old man being arrested and charged in connection with the possession of drugs worth an estimated street value of £413,000. During the search, significant quantities of heroin, cocaine, amphetamine, and cannabis were recovered.

On Tuesday 12 September 2023, in an intelligence led operation into the manufacture and distribution of drugs in Mid and East Lothian, a pill press was recovered at the target address along with evidence of a sophisticated manufacturing process. The pill press was capable of producing 200,000 pills per hour. During the search, 900,000 Valium pills worth an estimated street value of £900,000 were recovered alongside a large quantity of powder which tested positive for cocaine. A number of assets were seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002, and two men, aged 62 and 42 were arrested and charged in connection with drug supply offences.

Police Scotland will continue to work with local, national, and international partners to disrupt the activities of serious and organised criminals who operate in Scotland and make the country a hostile environment for those who cause most harm to our communities.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Naloxone

Police Scotland's national rollout of Naloxone began on International Overdose Awareness Day in August 2022 following successful pilots in Caithness, Dundee, Falkirk, Glasgow and Stirling in 2021. That roll out is now complete and around 12,500 officers up to the rank of Inspector, are now trained and equipped to carry Naloxone as part of standard issue equipment.

Naloxone is an emergency, first aid response to an opioid/opiate-related drug overdose. It reverses the respiratory suppression caused by opioids, re-stimulating the casualty's breathing and can buy critical time for ambulance clinicians to arrive and provide advanced medical care.

Police Scotland officers have now used Naloxone on at least 352 occasions and across all 13 geographical policing divisions. While the overwhelming majority of cases had positive outcomes, sadly, on eight occasions, the casualty was beyond medical assistance and did not survive.

Road Safety - Drug Driving Campaign

Following our Summer Drink and Drug Driving Campaign in July, Police Scotland conducted a further Drug Driving Campaign between 21 and 27 August. The campaign focused on education and awareness raising via social media, alongside enforcement activity across Scotland. A total of 147 drink and drug impairment offences were detected.

Through focused enforcement activity, Police Scotland will continue to target those who selfishly put others at risk by driving after taking drugs, while working with partners to raise awareness of the dangers associated with such reckless behaviour and make our roads safer.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Police Scotland is committed to ensuring perpetrators of sexual and physical crimes are brought to account for their actions. A thorough investigation will always be conducted, irrespective of how long ago the incidents occurred.

We recognise the bravery and courage of women reporting these despicable and debilitating crimes and we will continue to work with our partners in justice and third sector organisations to support victims.

Significant Convictions

On 31 August 2023, Gareth Hutchison, aged 41, was sentenced at Aberdeen High Court to 13 years (10 custodial and 3 extended sentence) having been found guilty of 14 violent and sexual offences against 4 women over a 16-year period between 2004 and 2020.

These crimes had a profound impact on the lives of those involved, and this conviction sends a clear message that any type of violent or sexual abuse will not be tolerated and Police Scotland will use every investigative tool to bring perpetrators of such crimes to justice.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – INTERNAL REVIEW OF PROCESS

Police Scotland has recently undertaken a review of responses released under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2022. The service's Information Disclosure team respond to around 1,800 requests every year and often provide relevant statistical information in spreadsheets.

To ensure openness and transparency, all FOI responses are published on a Disclosure Log on the Police Scotland website. This log currently holds responses from 1 January 2022 to August 2023. The Disclosure Log was taken offline whilst the review was carried out.

This work is complete, and following review of the 2,054 responses analysed, there have been no data breaches in contravention of the Data Protection Act 2018.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

PARLIAMENTARY EVIDENCE – CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

On Wednesday 13 September, Deputy Chief Officer David Page, Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors LVO QPM, Chief Financial Officer James Gray and SPA Chief Executive Lynn Brown OBE, provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee as part of their pre-budget scrutiny. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service was also represented at the session.

In written submission and during oral evidence, we reiterated the hard choices that are being taken to maintain effective policing within available funding, including a pause on police staff recruitment other than for critical or externally funded posts. Consequently, some of the things policing does will be done differently or take longer. The level of service in relation to some police work will reduce and our performance reporting is beginning to reflect those pressures.

COSLA LEADERS FORUM

On Friday 8 September, Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham KPM attended the COSLA Leaders Forum alongside ACC Steve Johnson, ACC Emma Bond MBE, ACC David Duncan, and SPA Head of Strategy and Performance Amanda Coulthard. This was a Police Scotland/COSLA/SOLACE Engagement session for which DC Malcolm Graham is co-chair.

The session provided an opportunity to discuss several areas of shared interest including the importance of local engagement and collaboration, work ongoing through Policing Together, and the draft COSLA / Police Scotland, SPA Partnership Delivery Plan.

LEADERSHIP IN COUNTER TERRORISM

Between Thursday 14 and Saturday 16 September Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham KPM attended the Leadership in Counter Terrorism (LinCT) Programme Global 2, in Washington DC.

Police Scotland has been instrumental in leading this collaborative learning and development programme over many years, cultivating effective operational and strategic relationships in countering terrorism. This is reflective of the status and benefits of Police Scotland's ambition as a global policing citizen in an increasingly international context.

This programme included Embassy visits, academic lectures, and leadership reflection sessions, and culminated with the LinCT Board of Governors meeting where chair for the Board of Governors was formally handed to DCC Graham.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Since the last Board Meeting, Scotland has hosted two significant football fixtures that have attracted high levels of media interest and garnered sell out attendance.

On 3 September, Rangers Football Club played Celtic Football Club at Ibrox with no away fans, and on 12 September Scotland played England in a friendly match at Hampden National Stadium.

An appropriate and proportionate policing response was in place for both fixtures, ensuring the safety of those attending and within the wider communities impacted by the fixtures.

OPERATION SUMMER CITY

Operation Summer City, which is the policing operation and response to the Edinburgh Festival and associated Fringe Festival events, concluded on Monday 28 August.

A significant number of visitors attended in the Capital during the four weeks of the festival. A proportionate high visibility police operation was in place to support and deliver a safe and secure Festival and provide public reassurance. Positive feedback has been received from event organisers, venue management and local authority partners.

THE SCOTTISH INTERNATIONAL AIRSHOW

The Scottish International Airshow and Festival of took place on Ayr seafront between 8 and 10 September.

This is the largest air show in Scotland and one of the largest across the UK. This year's event was the first to take place in Ayr since 2018 and over the weekend, attracted a crowd of approximately 170,000 attendees.

A policing operation involving conventional and specialist officers was in place across the event, and officers received positive feedback from partner agencies, the event organisers and the public.

6. OUR PEOPLE

POLICE PAY AWARD

An increase to pay and allowances has been agreed for all police officers in Scotland.

The agreement recognises the valuable contribution police officers make in keeping people and communities across Scotland safe. It is also cognisant of the current economic climate and seeks to recognise the fact that officers are unable to take industrial action. The agreement ensures police officer pay since 1 April 2022 mirrors wage growth for the fire service and teachers.

The agreement includes a commitment to commission an independent review to look at police officer pay and benefits, recognising the unique role of police officers in society as well as looking at potential approaches to ensure appropriate wage growth within policing from 2025/26.

I am extremely grateful to our officers for their professionalism, commitment to keeping people safe and the goodwill they demonstrate every day. Recognising and rewarding the hard work of officers is vital and I thank everyone who has contributed to reaching this agreement.

A formal offer has been made by the Scottish Police Authority to all SPA and Police Scotland staff through our Trade Unions; Unison and Unite. Both unions are undertaking consultative ballots to determine if their members are in favour of accepting the offer. I am grateful to union colleagues for their engagement and constructive discussions to get to this point.

POLICE MEMORIAL SERVICE

On 6 September, the annual Scottish Police Memorial Trust Service of Remembrance was held at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan.

I represented Police Scotland at the service, attending alongside the families and friends of officers who have died on duty in Scotland, Christine Fulton MBE the trust co-founder, Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs Angela Constance and Mary Pitcaithly OBE, Scottish Police Authority.

On 24 September along with colleagues from the wider policing family across the United Kingdom, I attended the National Police Memorial Day Service of Remembrance in Cardiff.

Both memorial services were significant and poignant events and provided an opportunity to honour and respect those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while carrying out their public duty.

PROMOTIONS

At the August Promotion Parade, 156 officers were promoted, and recognition paid to five staff members.

I congratulate all officers and staff on their promotion and wish them all the best in their new roles.

RECRUITMENT

Our latest probationer intake took place on 18 September 2023. I had the pleasure of welcoming the 197 recruits at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan.

The intake, made up of 74 per cent male recruits (totaling 146 officers) and 26 per cent female recruits (numbering 51 officers), ranges in age from 18 to 52. It comprises 3 per cent (5 officers) of Black Minority Ethnic heritage and 5 per cent (10 officers) of White Minority Ethnic heritage.

Six of the recruits were previously serving Special Constables with Police Scotland, four were members of police staff, and 25 of the new constables have previous military service.

I conducted the Oath of Office ceremony on Wednesday 20 September where the recruits made the Police Constable declaration to faithfully discharge their duties with fairness, integrity, diligence, and impartiality, and to uphold fundamental human rights.

The probationers will complete 12 weeks of initial training before being deployed to serve our communities across Scotland. I thanked each of them for their commitment to public service and reinforced their crucial role in serving and protecting the people of Scotland.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the information contained in this report.