



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	25 May 2023
Location	Crowne Plaza Hotel, Glasgow
Title of Paper	SPA Chair's Report
Presented By	Martyn Evans
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair since the March 2023 Authority meeting.

1 HMICS Assurance Review of Forensic Toxicology Provision

- 1.1 On 25 April, HMICS published its Assurance Review of Forensic Toxicology provision. This review was undertaken at my request and at speed when it became apparent that some drug driving cases were not able to proceed to prosecution due to delays with toxicology testing and analysis. I am grateful to HMICS for this final report.
- 1.2 The introduction of new drug driving legislation in October 2019 was a significant programme of change for Forensic Services. It was clear from the outset that demand for testing had been severely underestimated by all stakeholders. The staff and scientists in toxicology have worked hard to try and manage this demand. HMICS's findings and recommendations recognise the need for a long-term strategy and multi-agency approach to address both prevention and prosecution of drug driving cases.
- 1.3 The Authority has already taken a number of steps to strengthen our oversight and scrutiny of Forensic Services and we will review the terms of reference and functionality of our Forensic Services Committee in the coming months. We continue to work closely with Forensic Services, Police Scotland, the COPFS and Scottish Government to address the constructive recommendations made in this review and drive further improvement in drug driving prosecutions. The Authority will have an opportunity to consider the report and its recommendations in more detail at our June meeting which HMICS will also attend.

2 Scottish Biometrics Commissioner – Assurance Reviews

- 2.1 The Authority has been working with the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner to review the provisions and policies in place when biometric data is taken from children and vulnerable adults in police custody. [The Assurance review reports were laid in the Scottish Parliament on 28 March 2023 and published on the Authority and the Biometrics Commissioner's website](#). The first review relates to biometrics and vulnerable adults who require the support of an appropriate adult. The second relates to biometrics and children. Both reports commend Police Scotland's overall approach to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and identified a number of recommendations to further strengthen the approach to capturing their biometric data.
- 2.2 I want to thank Dr Brian Plastow and the Authority's corporate staff for their work on these reports. Both reports will be considered in

more detail by our Policing Performance Committee on 15 June 2023 and I am grateful to Dr Plastow who will also attend this session.

3 Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs

- 3.1 I held my first meeting with Angela Constance, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs in April shortly after her appointment. Among a range of topics, we discussed the policing budget, the priorities and challenges for the year ahead and the use of technology in policing.
- 3.2 Regular engagement with the Cabinet Secretary is an important element of an effective relationship with the Scottish Government. I look forward to continuing this constructive dialogue with the new Cabinet Secretary in the weeks and months ahead.

4 Strategic Partnership Agreement – COSLA/SPA/PS

- 4.1 On 17 April 2023, the COSLA, the Authority and Police Scotland published the details of a recently signed [Strategic Partnership Agreement](#). This agreement is an important step in our joint efforts to reinforce a focus on localism within policing. The agreement describes our shared commitment to working together on our collective purpose of serving, protecting and enhancing local communities. The agreement also describes our shared commitments to local scrutiny and accountability; prevention and early intervention; health and wellbeing; and resource and investment.

5 COSLA Police Scrutiny Conveners Forum

- 5.1. I attended the COSLA Police Scrutiny Conveners Forum on 9 May 2023 along with senior colleagues from Police Scotland. We discussed many areas of shared challenge and focus which bring to life our recently signed [Strategic Partnership Agreement](#).

6 Local Policing Regional Meetings

- 6.1. Over the last month I have attended and contributed to the most recent round of Local Policing Regional Meetings alongside Police Scotland and covering the East (3 April); West (11 April) and North (24 April) of the country. These sessions are a good opportunity to discuss issues of local, regional and national importance with Elected Members, and provide further detail on the national and specialist provision which supports delivery of local policing.

7. Scottish Police Federation Conference

- 7.1 On 29 March I spoke at the Scottish Police Federation (SPF) annual conference about our shared common purpose in promoting policing and the great work of our police officers. This shared common purpose builds trust, confidence and satisfaction in policing and it's importance is not to be underestimated.
- 7.2 This was the first conference for David Kennedy, as General Secretary and David Threadgold, as Chair, since taking over in February 2023. I look forward to building a strong and constructive relationship with the SPF in the months and years ahead.
- 7.3 As I said at the conference - the SPF play an important role providing the Authority with insights and assurance on the wellbeing of officers and the efficiency of policing. SPF attendance and input along with other workforce representatives at our People Committee is essential; as are their insights through both formal and informal engagement.

8. Members' Custody Visit

- 8.1 At the end of March, a number of members took the opportunity to visit Police Scotland's custody suite at London Road to explore in more detail the custody arrangements and procedures. I want to thank Chief Superintendent Gordon McCreddie and his team for organising and facilitating this informative session which members found valuable and worthwhile.
- 8.2 Over the last year members have also visited the leadership teams and officers and staff working across Forensic Services and in the C3 contact centres. In the coming year we expect to focus a number of our visits on meeting officers and staff working in local policing, corporate and specialist services.

9. Engagement with Staff and Diversity Associations

- 9.1 My engagement with the statutory staff associations, trade unions and diversity associations continues. Since our last Board meeting in March, I have met with the Scottish Women's Development Forum; the Christian Police Association; the Association of Police Superintendents (ASPS) and Scottish Chief Police Officers Association (SCPOSA) to discuss current issues and priorities and to hear their views. I am grateful for their continued efforts and constructive dialogue.

10. Board Objectives for 2023/24

10.1 Since the end of March, I have undertaken end of year conversations with all Board members and leaders (Chief Executive, Chief Constable and Director of Forensic Services). These end of year reviews are a good opportunity to discuss the focus for the year ahead as well as look back at the learning gained.

10.2 Following conversations with all Board members, two key objectives have been agreed for all Board Members in the year ahead:

- Maintaining a balanced budget for policing
- Ensuring a sustainable police and forensic service

10.3 In order to meet these objectives we have discussed a focus for Board and Committee support and scrutiny on three specific areas:

- Capacity
- Capability
- Culture

10.4 I will work with members in the weeks ahead to finalise the Board Objectives for 2023/24. We will publish these on the Authority's website once they have been agreed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.