



Authority Meeting

21 March 2024

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 22 February 2024 at Merchants House, Glasgow

Board Members present:	Martyn Evans (Chair) Paul Edie Alasdair Hay Katharina Kasper Fiona McQueen Grant Macrae Mary Pitcaithly Catriona Stewart Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Jane Ryder (Vice Chair) Tom Halpin Michelle Miller
In attendance:	Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer Police Scotland Chief Constable Jo Farrell Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Katy Miller, Director of People and Development Forensic Services Fiona Douglas, Director

	PIRC Michelle Maclead, Commissioner (Items 1-8)
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1. WELCOME AND STANDING ITEMS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all Authority Members and representatives from Police Scotland's senior leadership team.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** apologies from Tom Halpin, Michelle Miller, and Jane Ryder.
- **NOTE** no declarations of interest or connections.
- **NOTE** no other business.
- **AGREE** that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Board would consider items 11 and 12 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.
 - Item 11 – Draft Minutes from 30 November 2023 and 29 January 2024.
 - Item 12 – SPA Strategic Risk Review

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **ADOPT** the minute of the 30 November 2023.
- **AGREE** the action log.
- **NOTE** no decisions were taken via correspondence since the last full Authority meeting in November 2023.

3. SPA CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair referred to his written report and highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper. Whilst not in the written report, the Chair confirmed he was also seeking approval for Mary Pitcaithly to be a Member of the Revised Model of Policing of Scotland Oversight Group.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Chief Constable Jo Farrell (CCFarrell) commented that the new policing model will meet the needs of policing and thanked the Authority for their support. She confirmed she agreed with the Terms of Reference proposed.

- Catriona Stewart thanked the Disability and Carers Association for their invitation to join activities during Disability History Month 2023.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **AGREE** the appointment of Fiona McQueen to the position of Vice Chair and a member of the Exceptional Circumstances Committee from 1 April 2024.
- **AGREE** the appointment of Caroline Stuart as Chair of the Legal Committee from 1 April 2024.
- **AGREE** the appointment of Tom Halpin as member of the Legal Committee from 1 April 2024.
- **AGREE** the appointment of Catriona Stewart to the Policing Together Oversight Group from 23 February 2024.
- **AGREE** the Terms of Reference for the Revised Model for the Policing of Scotland Oversight Group.
- **AGREE** the appointment of the following members to the Revised Model of Policing of Scotland Oversight Group from 23 February 2024: Martyn Evans (as Chair), Alasdair Hay, Mary Pitcaithly, Grant Macrae and Fiona McQueen.

4. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on business progressed since the last Authority meeting through the:

- People Committee
- Policing Together Oversight Group
- Policing Performance Committee
- Resources Committee
- Forensic Services
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

In addition to the written reports provided, Resources Committee Chair Grant Macrae (GMacrae) commented on the meeting which took place on 20 February, highlighting:

- The Committee were assured by the evidence that mitigations put in place to contain the overspend were having the desired impacts, and confidence was high that savings would be delivered.
- Assurance was provided that delivery of planned savings from VR/VER releases and the additional funding should mean a balanced budget can be set.

- The Committee recognised the effort by Police Scotland and SPA to reduce the overspend figure from the original £18.9m projection. However, the Committee requested lessons learned are captured and reported to a future meeting.
- Members did not take assurance from the data within the Q3 Transformational Benefits Report, as it did not demonstrate the link between benefits delivery and the impacts on delivery of operational policing. SPA and Police Scotland colleagues will collaborate to develop a new reporting format to provide future assurances.
- The Committee considered the Full Business Case and associated contract award for Body Worn Video and recommended it to Scottish Government for approval. Members asked that a 3-year review be built into the project timeline to give the Authority an opportunity to seek assurance that the project has progressed as expected.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

5. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

CCFarrell provided a detailed summary of her report, specifically drawing attention to the following areas:

- Funding for 2024-25 onwards
- Criminal justice reform
- Mental health demand
- Technology to support frontline policing
- Homicides, major investigations, and convictions
- Drug enforcement
- Drink and drug driving enforcement

In addition to the written report, CCFarrell provided comment on a number of other areas:

- DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) will lead the programme of change, focused on delivering service transformation, prioritising the frontline, removing back-office duplication, and creating capacity. Some local policing support areas, and other functions, have never been reformed so there is inefficiency, duplication, and repetition that can be removed. The change programme will inform how the workforce will be shaped, trained, enabled, equipped, and deployed to best meet the needs and complexities of diverse communities. Which roles can and should be done by police staff will be examined, enabling a wider range of people access to a policing career and allowing more officers to return to operational

roles. Cyber skills and resilience will be embedded into the organisation, providing training to enhance the investigation of online crime, while complementing existing skillsets. Police Scotland seek the support and engagement of the Authority in building a national conversation focused on how the strongest possible service for the public is achieved.

- The delay in recruiting officers to balance the year's budget has meant headcount will be at its lowest level. More clarity on the funding allocation has allowed officer recruitment to restart, with 200 new officers due to begin initial training in March, with more new recruits being trained monthly during 2024/25. Targeted recruitment in rural areas is taking place and whilst staff recruitment remains paused, recruitment in priority areas such as C3 continues.
- Police Scotland are committed to returning officers to operational policing through redesign or resetting relationships. The organisation has roughly 150 officers assigned to duties at court buildings, at a cost of around £7m a year. From March, a trial in Edinburgh begins to release a small number of those officers back to frontline policing.
- Performance reporting will be enhanced by using data effectively and being clear on KPIs. This will allow positive monitoring and reporting to support decision making around where resource is focussed. The completed roll-out of the national crime system allows for automated productions of performance dash boards, which will be a feature of internal and external discussions.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair noted that the new model of policing was the second phase of policing reform and the Authority accept the proposal that it will take 3-5 years. DCCConnors echoed CCFarrells comments that reform has not previously focussed on local policing or support functions which has resulted in efficiencies and duplication. Members heard the change programme will involve a review and redesign to look at services within local policing, to return officers to the frontline. The review will focus on creating capacity in several key areas such as mental health, missing people, and criminal justice reform work, whilst maximising the opportunities from new technologies. DCCConnors acknowledged it would be challenging and required to be done at a controlled pace. Members were also assured key partners would be consulted throughout.
- Regarding the pilot for the proportionate response to crime in the northeast, the Chair requested an update on when an evaluation would be reported to the Authority. CCFarrell responded that the pilot is part of the contact, engagement, and resolution project and seeks to look at alternative approaches to how crime is investigated and managed, with focus on victim experience plus efficiencies.

CCFarrell emphasised it was not a policy of non-investigation. DCC Malcolm Graham (DCCGraham) added that every crime report will be assessed, and expectations would be managed if there were no lines of enquiry. An evaluation will be brought to an Authority Committee at a future date, which will detail any learning that can inform future changes. Early indications show that less than 5% of reported crime will result in being filed with no lines of enquiry, and perceptions and experiences of those involved have been positive. The Chair commented that the Authority were keen to hear detail on data, external assurances on decision making, and victim response.

- Members praised the new layout and format of the report, noting the overview provides an understanding of the backdrop to policing and what is on the horizon. Members appreciated the inclusion of neighbourhood policing examples, and extended congratulations in achieving the core operations solutions project.
- Members sought comment on the assurance and learning taken from the historic data wash. CCFarrell explained it was an integrity screening project undertaken UK wide to ensure that there was no information on the Police National Database relating to employees offending or suspected offending that was unknown to their force. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) confirmed there were nine matters that required attention with nearly all due to notifiable associations (family or friend conflicts). Members heard there are policies and procedures in place to safeguard employees and make the force aware of any conflicts, and these would be highlighted throughout the organisation. Members were informed the data wash complements Police Scotland's work on vetting and work continues to look at professional practice, adopting a UK policy and following UK standard. DCCSpeirs stated the outcome of the data wash was positive for Police Scotland. CCFarrell informed Members that 100% assurance could not be given that there is one individual who would challenge the force's integrity, but Members could be assured that the correct processes are in place to drive positive culture.
- Members sought further information on the progress of the current VR-VER scheme. Katy Miller (KMiller) confirmed the organisation was seeking to reduce headcount by 189-220, however, actual reduction depended on profile and associated costs. 756 notes of interest from eligible staff had been received. KMiller described the ways management would assess suitability which included analysing: current vacancies, design principles of role profiles, spans of control, and operational layers. KMiller also advised of other areas required to be considered, such as: ability to reduce demand, policy decisions which tie into the policing model, risk impacts and equality impacts. Members were assured there was a

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comprehensive framework and time was being taken to analyse and undertake assessments. Robust governance was in place including a People Committee deep dive and reporting to the Resources Committee. Members heard the organisation was still working to a deadline of 1 April 2024 to confirm releases.

- Members sought Police Scotland's view on the role of Special Constables, in the context of the new model of policing. CCFarrell confirmed the force was committed to their volunteers, and whilst numbers have reduced, work continues to drive recruitment and training. Improvements are being made in making volunteer work more accessible to encourage people from rural and urban areas to join. Consideration was also being given to expanding into specialist areas, but recruitment would need to be tailored to attract those skills. Members welcomed this approach.
- Caroline Stewart (CStewart) provided an overview of the Cyber Programme Reference Group which she co-chairs with DCCConnors. Members heard that discussion at the last meeting focussed on the threats and policing response to cyber fraud, Police Scotland's roll out of digital forensic triage vans, the introduction of digital evidence detection dogs, and the work ongoing to obtain ISO17025 accreditation. CStewart congratulated Police Scotland on winning financial fraud team of the year at the recent Scottish Cyber Awards and sought comment on the nature of cybercrime currently being reported. DCCConnors responded the force was seeing an increase in reports of online fraud affecting a broad range of ages. Romance fraud was one area and DCCConnors encouraged those affected to report it.
- Members questioned how Police Scotland would give courage to frontline Sergeants and Inspectors to step away from mental health incidents, and how that additional capacity would be used. CCFarrell confirmed that Police Scotland will never walk away from vulnerable people, but they are having to step into areas where other services should be. Members heard courage would be given by providing officers with the right level of professional advice and improved risk assessments to enable them to make decisions that will stand up to external scrutiny. Members were informed the capacity created would move into the preventative space and allow the impact on officer wellbeing to be managed better.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. LBrown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

LBrown was asked how many Police Appeals Tribunals there were. She confirmed there had been 14 since 2013, 7 had been upheld and 7 not upheld. Whilst not significant in number, LBrown wanted to ensure it was known they were held in public.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

7. FORENSIC SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed recent activities within Forensic Services. Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought further comment on the long-term substantiable model. FDouglas responded that there was a stable provision of insource and outsource drug driving capability, providing a strong position in the short term. As Police Scotland's long-term ambition is to increase the roll out of roadside testing, a long-term sustainable model is required to grow capacity to meet demand increase and to help understand the prevalence of drug driving. Options are being developed along with ongoing work to understand demand, all considering HMICS recommendations.
- Members asked for more detail on the new operating model. FDouglas replied that it was transformative as instead of Forensic Services being structured around disciplines, the responsibilities and flexibility of the organisation will be maximised. The new model would provide efficiencies and speed up responses to meet local policing demands. Members sought assurance that the risk of transformation activity impacting business as usual was being mitigated and heard the new operating model had impacted all staff and risks have been identified in relation to service delivery against transformation. FDouglas assured Members the key focus of the organisation is to manage business as usual, and identified risks are being mitigated through the Programme Management function and

phased implementation. FDouglas acknowledged pace is slower than set out in the Full Business Case which was due to investment not being fully available.

- Members sought comment on Forensic Services compliance with the Biometrics Code of Practice. FDouglas confirmed the Code of Practice was welcomed, and the Commissioner's confidence in Forensic Service's compliance was positive. Members were assured work was ongoing to ensure biometric data was managed correctly, and to proceduralise certain aspects of forensic work.
- The Chair sought comment on the capital programme and any technology which might transform the service. FDouglas confirmed technology roadmaps were being produced to help ascertain how technology can enhance forensic work. Members were assured Forensic Services try to follow pace of technology change, however there was a nervousness of AI within science, due to regulations and accreditation. With regards to investment, FDouglas emphasised there is expensive equipment within Forensic Services, so investment is needed in the right things and in a joined-up approach.
- Members were informed work continues to consider apprenticeships and other alternative ways of training.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

8. PIRC Annual Plan

Michelle MacLead (MMacLeod) highlighted a number of key points as detailed within the PIRC Annual Report, specifically around performance and year on year increases in referrals and investigations.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair questioned whether the number of discharged Tasers was proportionate or higher than expected. MMacLeod advised that PIRC look at guidance and SOPs to determine whether taser use was proportionate and accountable. Further analysis showed most circumstances involved mental health issues and tasers had been used in some instances to prevent self-harm. DCCConnors confirmed Police Scotland capture data against other UK forces and Police Scotland was broadly like Greater Manchester Police and

West Midlands. MMacLeod confirmed all presentations and discharges of firearms including tasers go through an initial assessment phase with some going through a full investigation. DCCSpeirs confirmed the Professional Standards Department also investigate every presentation and evidence showed presentation was a policing asset as it can de-escalate a situation. Members were assured additional training was undertaken for taser use and a Taser Oversight Group oversee all aspects.

- Members questioned whether there is continued learning for further improvement, and heard complaints not handled to a reasonable standard were usually related to guidance or SOPs. Therefore, it is those areas that are the main source of driving through improvements.
- Member sought comment on the increasing number of investigations into deaths following police contact within the context of CCFarrells statements regarding mental health. MMacLeod confirmed PIRC have 90 days to investigate all deaths following police contact and these investigations are increasing and a large proportion of PIRC's workload. MMacLeod stated that the introduction of Body Worn Video would help with the assessment stage to ascertain the behaviours and welfare of those involved. Whilst PIRC can only report on policing interactions, they acknowledged that other partners were involved in mental health incidents. The Chair noted that Lady Angiolini and HMICS had both called for a whole system review to responses to mental health, and it was hoped work undertaken will move towards a share responsibility.
- Katharina Kasper, Complaints and Conduct Committee Chair, confirmed statistics are reported to the Committee quarterly and thanked PIRC for their input. She questioned whether the increase in complaints reasonably handled was the result of improved processes to which MMacLeod agreed, citing increased interactions between PIRC and the Professional Standards Department identifying common themes. DCCSpeirs added changes to the complaint handling model and consistency in application was reflective in the statistics. DCCSpeirs confirmed Police Scotland were committed to complying to recommendations and learning points from PIRC.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

9. PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS REVIEW

Members considered the report which sought approval to changes to the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts. James Gray (JGray) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

GMacrae, Resources Committee Chair, confirmed the Committee recommended the report for approval.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **APPROVE** the proposed change to the approval route for Review, Suspend, Vary and Revoke the Standing Orders Relating to Contracts.

10. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE QUARTERLY REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on the financial position of the SPA and Police Scotland for quarter three of the financial year 2023/24. JGray highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- GMacrae, Resources Committee Chair, advised that the Committee welcomed the collaborative work to mitigate actions.
- LBrown confirmed she wrote to Scottish Government and sought approval for the overspend. LBrown commented that she felt Scottish Government should be encouraged by the work of Police Scotland but are likely expecting the overspend to be reduced further.
- CCFarrell commended the work undertaken to regain control of the budget and bring in mitigations. The Chair echoed CCFarrells comments and noted the Authority were optimistic a balanced budget could be met. The Chair emphasised that if there is no financial credibility, the Authority have no advocacy credibility.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.