

Meeting	SPA Board Meeting
Date	24 September 2019
Location	FTH Theatre, Falkirk
Title of Paper	Chair's Report
Presented By	Susan Deacon, Chair
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached:	No

PURPOSE

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair and to offer comment on significant areas of development since the previous Board meeting on 21 August 2019.

STRATEGIC ISSUES - POLICING

As both myself and the Chief Constable reported to the last SPA Board meeting in August, there are considerable operational and financial challenges facing policing in the period to come. Work therefore continues to ensure that the SPA and Police Scotland work together to build an evidence based case for additional investment. In addition, through various levels of SPA governance and a range of interactions with Police Scotland, we remain actively engaged in addressing how change, improvement and efficiencies within the service can be maintained and developed against this backdrop.

In addition to the SPA's own consideration and reporting of these matters, the Scottish Parliament's Justice Sub-Committee on Policing recently held an evidence session on the SPA budget, with a focus on the capital spend allocation, as part of their pre-budget scrutiny.

The [SPA and Police Scotland made a joint written submission to the Committee](#) which was followed up with Elaine Wilkinson, Chair of the SPA's Resources Committee; James Gray, Chief Financial Officer; and David Page, Deputy Chief Officer of Police Scotland giving oral evidence to the Committee which is [recorded in the Scottish Parliament's Official Report for 12 September](#).

The Scottish Parliament also held a debate on 12 September on the Justice Committee's Post-legislative scrutiny report on the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 which considered a range of issues about policing, the SPA and the wider leadership and governance of the post-police reform arrangements.

STRATEGIC ISSUES - FORENSIC SERVICES

It is important to note that there are also operational and financial challenges facing SPA Forensic Services, as well as a programme of change being taken forward within the organisation. Myself, Tom Halpin, Chair of the SPA's Forensic Services Committee and the other committee members met recently with Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services, and his senior management team. We had a wide ranging discussion about the work which is currently underway to develop the service and I anticipate that further reports will be forthcoming both to the Committee and to the Board on these issues which will be an important focus for us in the period to come.

In addition, the first meeting of the Digital Forensics Short Life Working Group took place on 13 September. The Group is chaired by SPA Board Member Bob Hayes and is expected to produce an interim report on its

considerations by 31 October 2019 with a final report expected by 31 March 2020.

JOINT FORUM ON RESEARCH AND EVIDENCE

The SPA and Police Scotland have established a Joint Forum on Research and Evidence. The purpose of the Forum is to enable the SPA and Police Scotland to jointly engage with key partners to discuss and promote the value, benefits and impact of evidence on policing policy and practice and the contribution policing data can make to support the improvement of the wider public sector and to commission activities that shape future policy on policing. The Forum will discuss the SPA/Police Scotland strategic priorities for evidence and research and oversee activities to take forward that agenda. The Forum is co-chaired by DCC Taylor and SPA Board member Martyn Evans, who is leading on this work on behalf of the Authority. The first meeting took place on 16 August and was also attended by representatives of the Scottish Government and the Scottish Institute for Policing Research (SIPR).

The first activities to be sponsored by the Forum will be roundtable discussions to be held with a number of stakeholders in November 2019 and February 2020. These discussions will explore how we bridge the gap between academic research and policing and the use of police data and statistics in public discourse and understanding of modern policing.

SPA STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

As I have reported regularly in previous Chair's reports, there is much work to be done to design, build and develop the Authority, and to ensure that our capacity, capability, culture, systems and practices, align with our core role and purpose so that we can perform effectively as a publicly accountable national public body.

As I have said before, organisational change takes time and is not without challenge. I am pleased, however, that many of the strands of this work which have been highlighted in previous reports – including staff engagement, system thinking/development and strategic governance issues and improvements - have all been moving forward.

As this work continues, we will also be reflecting on a range of audit and inspection reports which will help inform our plans for the future design and development of the SPA. I know I speak for all Members in saying that we welcome independent, professional and evidence-based assessment of our work as well as constructively critical feedback and proportionate scrutiny. Our focus at all times will remain on driving improvement so that we add

value to policing and work to build a shared understanding of the role and purpose of the Authority.

An important part of this work involves considering the roles, relationships and boundaries with Scottish Government, and I would record my own and colleagues' appreciation of the constructive engagement of Scottish Government officials in contributing to this development work and also their support in addressing capacity issues.

We expect the Scottish Government to initiate the next round of SPA Member appointments in the near future. I am therefore working with the Vice Chair to consider the skills, experience and knowledge that we will require at this stage in the Authority's development so that we can inform that process. All Members are of course Ministerial appointments but I expect, as before, to be closely involved in this process.

The Board has invested significant time recently in actively addressing a number of issues regarding the management of our corporate support function. As was announced in early September 2019 Hugh Grover stepped down from his position as Chief Executive on 10 September following an extended period of absence. The Authority has moved quickly to put in place temporary arrangements and appoint an Interim Chief Executive who will take up post shortly.

I am acutely aware that the recent focus on a number of internal issues has had a displacement effect on my own and other Members' time and that this has been at the expense of addressing some of the major strategic challenges policing faces. Rebalancing that effort in the period to come will be important.

SCOTTISH POLICE MEMORIAL SERVICE

On 4 September 2019, I had the honour of representing the SPA at the Scottish Police Memorial Trust's Annual Memorial Service where I met with some of the families who have lost loved ones while they were on duty with the police service. The Chief Constable and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice also attended the event, together with a wide range of policing and other organisations from Scotland, the UK and internationally.

It was a very moving occasion and a salutary reminder of the risks which our police officers take in order to keep the public safe. On behalf of the Authority, I would like to acknowledge the vital work done by Christine Fulton and other Trust members for organising the event and for their vital work and support to families which they provide throughout the year.

The National Police Memorial Day Remembrance Service, which brings together police forces, families and others to honour police officers from across the UK who have been killed or died on duty, will be held in Glasgow on 29 September and myself and other SPA members will be in attendance.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

A meeting of the Partnership Forum took place on 29 August 2019. This group meets on a quarterly basis and provides an opportunity for the leadership of the SPA, Police Scotland and the Staff Associations and Trades Unions to engage in wide ranging informal dialogue. Myself and the Vice Chair attended on behalf of the SPA and the next meeting is scheduled for November.

I was pleased to meet recently with Malcolm Burr, Chief Executive of Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar, who co-authored a previous review of the SPA Executive function. Although there have been a number of significant developments since this work was undertaken, it was very helpful to hear Mr Burr's reflections and he has expressed a willingness to engage further with us in the next stage of our development. We have also agreed that I will visit the Western Isles later in the year and will attend a meeting of the Council's Housing and Communities Committee which deals with local policing matters.

I was privileged to be involved in the judging and presentation of awards at the recent Scottish Women's Development Forum (SWDF) Awards ceremony and to celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of a wide range of officers and staff across the service. On behalf of the Authority, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to all those who won awards or were nominated and also record our appreciation for the excellent work done by SWDF throughout the service, and throughout the year.

I also met recently with Michelle McLeod, who took up post last month as the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (PIRC). It was an informative discussion and we also reflected on how the SPA and the PIRC could work effectively together to take forward improvements as envisaged by the recent Independent Review carried out by Dame Elish Angiolini.

As part of the SPA's regular interactions with local government, I was pleased to meet recently with Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn, Leader of Falkirk Council and Kenneth Lawrie, Chief Executive. I appreciated them sharing their reflections with me about the delivery of policing within their area and also engaging in a wide ranging discussion about the SPA and its current and future relationships with local government.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

- Discuss and note the information contained within it.