



Partnership Agreement

1. Purpose

COSLA, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (the 'organisations') are committed to working together to drive forward our collective purpose of serving, protecting and enhancing our local communities.

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 provides the foundation for partnership working between Police Scotland, SPA and local authorities, including setting out a framework for local scrutiny of policing by local authorities. The agreement seeks to complement these statutory duties, building on existing collaboration and engagement to further strengthen local accountability in policing.

Through this partnership agreement, the organisations commit to strengthening collaboration on a range of agreed strategic priorities as well as to promote and support our overall partnership working.

2. About our Organisations

Police Scotland

Police Scotland's purpose is to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland. This focuses on keeping people safe in line with our values of integrity, fairness, respect and human rights.

Police Scotland is responsible for policing services and supporting the public and communities across the whole of Scotland; 28,168 square miles, covering a third of the United Kingdom's landmass with a unique range of urban, rural, island and remote communities.

Police Scotland's strategic direction is set through the strategic policing priorities and the statutory Strategic Police Plan. The service sets out an [annual police plan](#) based on our strategic outcomes and [32 local police plans](#), agreed by local authority partners, providing an overview of our commitment to high quality policing services across Scotland.

Local policing delivery is at the heart of our service and, Police Scotland is committed to providing the best of local policing supported by the strength of the national service. Our approach is collaborative and focused on partnership working.

SPA

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 created the [Authority](#) and set out five core functions which demonstrate the integrated responsibilities of an oversight, review and supporting role. The key areas set out in the Act are to:

- maintain the Police Service;
- promote the policing principles set out in the 2012 Act;
- promote and support continuous improvement in the policing of Scotland;
- keep under review the policing of Scotland; and
- hold the Chief Constable to account for the policing of Scotland.

The SPA and Police Scotland, through the [Strategic Police Plan](#), detail five shared strategic outcomes for policing:

- threats to public safety and wellbeing are resolved by a proactive and responsive police service
- the needs of local communities are addressed through effective service delivery
- the public, communities and partners are engaged, involved and have confidence in policing
- our people are supported through a positive working environment, enabling them to serve the public
- Police Scotland is sustainable, adaptable and prepared for future challenges

COSLA

[COSLA](#) is a councillor-led, cross-party organisation which champions local government's vital work to secure the resources and powers they need. COSLA works on councils' behalf to focus on the challenges and opportunities they face, and to engage positively with governments and others on policy, funding, and legislation. The COSLA Blueprint for Local Government sets out COSLA's priorities:

- Strengthening Local Democracy
- Funding Services and Communities
- Wellbeing – including Health and Social Care
- Education and Children and Young People
- Economy and the Environment
- Supporting Vulnerable Communities.

The [COSLA Plan 2022 - 2027](#) sets out COSLA's vision and high-level ambition for Local Government in the current electoral term. It focuses on 6 key priority areas that ensure Local Government will build on its record of being a leader of transformational change across public services in a way that meets the needs of all those living in our communities.

Local authority role in policing

Local authorities have a statutory role in the governance and scrutiny of policing at a local level, which is outlined in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.

The key functions of local authorities in policing are to:

- be consulted by the Chief Constable before local commanders are designated;
- be involved by the local commander 'in the setting of priorities and objectives for the policing of the local area';
- approve the local police plan;
- monitor and provide feedback to the local commander on the policing of the local area, including any recommendations for improvement, and
- seek reports and other information from the local commander on the policing of the local area.

Local authorities must also be consulted by Scottish Ministers when they set or revise the Strategic Police Priorities.

3. Our Shared Commitments (2022-2027)

Each organisation has set a clear strategic direction and priorities, however, some key areas of focus are shared. To enable strong collaborative working, strategic engagement and strengthened partnership working the following key areas are agreed for focus during this period.

- Local Scrutiny and Accountability:** Policing services are delivered by a national service, delivered locally and it is key that our services continue to evidence our focus on local priorities. Open and transparent local public and community engagement and effective scrutiny of policing by elected members both play an important role in the setting of priorities and measuring the impacts of local policing. We will therefore work to strengthen local scrutiny and accountability of policing, guided by the recommendations of the 2022 Tripartite Review of Local Police Planning.
- Prevention and early intervention:** we will work collaboratively to identify key areas where a greater emphasis on prevention and early intervention within both national and local systems will benefit community wellbeing, focused on supporting vulnerable communities.
- Health and wellbeing:** guided by our joint commitment to health and wellbeing, we will consider the lessons of Covid-19 as well as how our joint activity can improve and protect community wellbeing, aligned with public health priorities and approaches to service delivery. The proposed creation of a National Care Service and its implications for our respective organisations will also be considered.
- Resource and investment:** given constraints on resources and increasingly complex demands on services, we will focus on best value, promoting and

enabling effective collaboration, co-design and shared services, and partnership working at both national and local levels to make best use of our available resources, assets and investments.

4. How we will work in partnership

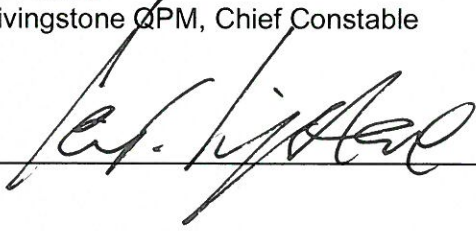
We will:

- Review our agreement on a regular basis;
- Develop a Partnership Delivery Plan to set out how we will drive forward progress on our agreed priorities setting out ownership and key milestones;
- We will meet every six months formally to review, consider and report on our shared progress;
- Engage on the development and delivery of key strategic areas of our business to identify and progress shared priorities and opportunities;
- Engage and collaborate regularly through joint meetings at both political and officer level, including but not restricted to:
 - National political meetings including COSLA Leaders, COSLA Community Wellbeing Board and COSLA's Scrutiny Conveners Forum, with a specific focus on key strategic policing issues, which will also be of relevance to local scrutiny arrangements;
 - Regular regional and local level meetings with scrutiny conveners and other elected members led by SPA and Police Scotland, to which COSLA will be invited; and
 - At officer level, the Deputy Chief Constable(s) or nominated representative, COSLA and SPA officers will meet regularly to oversee and support delivery of the shared strategic priorities. Other key stakeholders will be involved in this activity as required. Regular bimonthly meetings between COSLA, Police Scotland, SPA and SOLACE officials will also offer an opportunity to discuss progress of specific areas in the Delivery Plan.
- We also commit to fully utilising the established mechanisms and structures above to engage timeously on any potentially contentious or high-risk areas of shared interest. This will include matters that may have significant service or resource implications for public sector partners, and before any significant decisions are made which may have an impact on partner strategies, budgets and the communities they serve.

Signed by

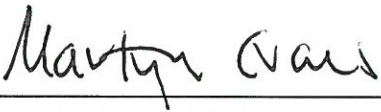
Police Scotland

Sir Iain Livingstone QPM, Chief Constable



Scottish Police Authority

Martyn Evans, Chair




COSLA

Cllr Shona Morrison, President



Cllr Maureen Chalmers, Community
Wellbeing Spokesperson



Date 23 MARCH 2023