

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	19 August 2020
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM
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 ORGANISED CRIME

Operation VENETIC – Targeted Enforcement Activity

Operation VENETIC is one of the most significant operations targeting serious and organised crime in the United Kingdom. The operation involves Police Scotland, the National Crime Agency, Border Force and other police forces from across the UK.

Following months of extensive work, including a day of action on Monday 15 June 2020, Police Scotland officers executed over 50 warrants at locations across the country and arrested 59 people. During the operation in Scotland, intelligence led enforcement activity resulted in the seizure of controlled drugs including cocaine, heroin, cannabis and etizolam tablets, with an estimated street value of over £25 million. In addition, over £7 million in cash was seized, along with firearms, ammunition, explosives and a number of industrial pill presses. Seven stolen vehicles were also recovered.

The operation included work by an international law enforcement team which culminated in the takedown of 'Encrochat', an encrypted global communication service used by criminals, which offered a secure mobile phone instant messaging service.

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

Operation SUBTERFUGE – Motor Vehicle Theft Arrests

On Thursday 2 July, officers from the Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Serious and Organised Crime Team, assisted by officers from neighbouring local policing divisions, executed a number of search warrants at properties in Glasgow, Renfrew, Johnstone, Paisley and Ayrshire. This was the culmination of a lengthy investigation into keyless thefts of motor vehicles by an Organised Crime Group network operating

across the West of Scotland.

During the operation, three males aged 34, 37 and 38 were arrested and charged in respect of motor vehicle theft and involvement in serious and organised crime. Investigations remain ongoing and three further arrests were made in subsequent weeks.

ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

Road Safety Campaigns

As the volume of traffic throughout Scotland begins to return to normal levels, Police Scotland Road Policing officers continue to proactively patrol across the road network to influence driver behaviour, target those who drive irresponsibly and enhance road safety across Scotland.

A two week Summer Drink and Drug Drive Campaign concluded on Friday 10 July. During the campaign, officers across the country engaged with over 7,000 motorists, with 264 drivers reported for drink or drug driving offences. Of those reported, 27 were found to be over the drink drive limit in the morning after the consumption of alcohol. A further 122 drivers failed the roadside drug test, with enquiries ongoing pending the results of forensic tests. Positive public support for the campaign was expressed across a number of social media platforms.

Following an increase in cyclist activity during the period of COVID-19 restrictions, Road Policing officers increased delivery of Operation 'Close Pass' throughout Scotland. 'Close Pass' is an initiative involving plain clothes officers on pedal cycles with bike mounted cameras, who report unsafe driver behaviour where overtaking manoeuvres are carried out without leaving a safe distance. Drivers are then stopped and offered safety advice or, where appropriate, enforcement action taken. The initiative aligns with the 'Give Me Cycle Space' campaign, launched by Cycling Scotland on Monday 6 July and supported by Police Scotland.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Support for Disabled People

Concerns have been raised by partners about some disabled people being unfairly challenged, and on occasion, abused in their communities over issues linked to social distancing and face covering requirements in respect of COVID-19. Following these concerns, on Monday 27 July,

Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie issued a public reassurance message. The message emphasised Police Scotland's support for disabled people and encouraged the public to consider the implications of coronavirus guidelines on disabled people, urging everyone to continue to work together to ensure no person or group in Scotland feels marginalised or isolated. In addition, to enhance understanding across the organisation, Police Scotland worked with partners to develop additional guidance for officers in respect of the impact of COVID-19 on disabled communities and the exemptions which may apply.

Police Scotland does not tolerate the targeting of individuals or communities, or any form of hate crime. We encourage anyone who experiences or witnesses such an incident to report it.

Summer Safety Campaign

Police Scotland's Summer Safety Campaign launched on Monday 22 June and is scheduled to conclude at the end of August. In conjunction with partner organisations including Scottish Water, Royal National Lifeboat Institution, HM Coastguard and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, safety messages are being communicated over social media platforms using the hashtag #SafeSummer. These messages encourage people to be responsible and offer simple safety advice relating to four key themes of anti-social behaviour; alcohol safety and related violence; home security; and staying safe outdoors.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

CHIEF CONSTABLES' COUNCIL

On Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 July, along with other members of the senior leadership team, I participated in videoconference sessions during a virtual meeting of the NPCC Chief Constables' Council. The sessions provided an opportunity to discuss matters of critical importance for policing with senior colleagues from across the UK. Discussion topics included Lessons Learned from COVID-19; Inclusion and Race Equality in Policing; and Serious Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism.

STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES BOARD

On Friday 24 July, I attended a virtual meeting of the Home Office Strategic Capabilities Board, chaired by Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft. This forum provided a valuable opportunity to engage with colleagues from policing and other agencies, and consider matters of strategic importance to the UK. Areas under consideration included

Digital Data and Technology, and the College of Policing Report on the Future Operating Environment for Policing in England and Wales.

CREST WORKSHOP

On Friday 7 August, members of the Police Scotland senior leadership team took part in a workshop at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan. The workshop, hosted by Crest Advisory, a UK consultancy focused on crime and justice, stimulated consideration of the key strategic questions that have arisen for Police Scotland in response to COVID-19, and the implications for our future strategic planning.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS

POLICING RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – OPERATION TALLA

Police Scotland’s contingency planning and response measures continue to address the evolving circumstances and impact of COVID-19. We have introduced measures to support the continued operation of the criminal justice system and adapted to changing demand associated with the gradual easing of lockdown restrictions, including the introduction of quarantine regulations in respect of foreign travel, the mandatory wearing of face coverings in certain environments, and local outbreaks of coronavirus.

While recognising the need for flexibility, our overall policing style and tone remains consistent, engaging with people in our communities and adopting a common sense approach. In the period from the introduction of legislation until Wednesday 5 August, police officers across Scotland engaged with individuals in respect of the new legislation on more than 62,000 occasions. In approximately 94% of these interactions, no enforcement action was required.

Although still lower than in previous years, incident volume and reported crime is beginning to return to more traditional levels, and it is anticipated that policing demand will continue to normalise as schools reopen and more people transition back to the workplace. Despite this increase in more traditional demand, we remain focused on addressing the public health emergency, and will continue to support local and national partners, and communities in Scotland, in the event of localised outbreaks, or future changes to legislation or guidance. Police Scotland is trained and equipped to meet these unpredictable challenges, whenever or wherever in the country they may emerge.

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP26)

Following confirmation of the revised date in November 2021, the organiser of the COP26 conference has confirmed that in the week prior to conference, a number of pre-sessional meetings will take place at the venue. The attendance of a substantial number of delegates for these meetings will be incorporated into the planning arrangements for the policing operation in respect of the conference.

On Wednesday 5 August, accompanied by Assistant Chief Constable Bernard Higgins, I attended a strategic meeting at the Glasgow Science Centre to discuss ongoing preparations for COP26. The meeting was chaired by the Leader of Glasgow City Council, Susan Aitken, and attended by key stakeholders, including the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Mr Alok Sharma MP, who holds the role of COP26 President. During the meeting, Assistant Chief Constable Higgins and I provided an overview of the extensive operational planning which continues to be undertaken to deliver a safe and secure conference.

EU EXIT PLANNING

Police Scotland continues to monitor the progress of EU Exit negotiations between the UK Government and the EU. Our planning activity, including the completion of a revised Police Scotland Risk Assessment, is designed to mitigate identified risks and discharge our duty under the Civil Contingencies Act to co-ordinate the multi-agency response. To help inform preparations for the end of the transition period, we recently participated in a 'Four Nations' meeting, involving police colleagues and other representatives from the devolved administrations.

The Police Scotland Brexit Delivery Team, in conjunction with our International Bureau and other key partners, continues to prepare for the loss of access to Justice and Home Affairs measures. A number of sub groups exist to manage the information flow from negotiations, and support the creation and development of specific contingency plans and processes, to ensure the operational readiness of the Force post EU Exit.

ADVERSE WEATHER INCIDENTS

Between Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 August, severe weather conditions caused significant disruption in various parts of Scotland. Flooding and landslips resulted in a number of evacuations and numerous road closures, and a major incident was declared in Fife. Police Scotland officers and staff across the country supported the multi-agency response, working closely with partners through well-established

resilience arrangements, to minimise disruption and support community safety.

Flooding also caused a significant telecommunications outage which impacted on 153 sites across the Police Scotland estate. Local business continuity plan arrangements were instigated and service to the public was maintained.

TRAIN DERAILMENT

On Wednesday 12 August, a train derailment occurred near to Stonehaven in Aberdeenshire, tragically resulting in the deaths of three people and injuries to six others. As part of a co-ordinated multi-agency response, Police Scotland and British Transport Police personnel attended the challenging scene, along with other emergency services and partner agencies.

Following direction by the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, a joint investigation is ongoing, led by officers from Police Scotland's Major Investigation Team and closely supported by British Transport Police and other rail investigation agencies.

6. OUR PEOPLE

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S COMMITMENTS

On Wednesday 22 July, I announced six personal commitments to officers and staff for 2020-21. These commitments outline improvements I will introduce around officer and staff safety and wellbeing, promotion processes, smarter working, and service to the public.

I also reported on progress on my 2019-20 commitments, which included details of new communication and engagement activity, enhanced probationer training, better quality uniforms and discretionary funding for divisions.

ASSAULT PLEDGE

On Thursday 6 August, I launched the Police Scotland Assault Pledge, underlining that violence against police officers and staff is not simply part of the job, and outlining my commitment to provide appropriate support where it does occur.

The Assault Pledge and underpinning guidance were developed by the Your Safety Matters group, the membership of which includes staff

associations, unions and experts from across Police Scotland. It will help leaders to provide appropriate support in response to the physical and psychological harm caused by violence and abusive behaviour towards officers and staff. Lord Advocate James Wolffe QC, and Cabinet Secretary for Justice Humza Yousaf MSP, supported the launch, as we begin a campaign to tackle the increasing number of assaults on our people.

NATIONAL PROMOTION SELECTION PROCESS

The development of a revised National Promotion Selection process within Police Scotland continues to evolve. Following the successful pilot of a new assessment centre format, the first Sergeant to Inspector promotion process adopting this approach is currently open for application. Assessor training continues to be rolled out on a virtual basis, with six promotion centres identified at various locations across Scotland. The enhanced process for Sergeants and Inspectors, tests operational knowledge and competence, and is designed to recognise day to day performance.

SPRINGBOARD DEVELOPMENT PLUS PROGRAMME

Police Scotland has a long standing relationship with Springboard, an external company which has provided entry-level development programmes for women in policing through the Scottish Women's Development Forum (SWDF) over a number of years.

In July, Police Scotland invited applications for the Development Plus Programme (DPP). This is an innovative and specialised executive-level programme, aimed at female senior leaders who aspire to board level leadership. The DPP offers personal and professional development, assisting participants to overcome barriers which may prevent them from rising to senior positions. Participants on the DPP will be joined by a number of colleagues from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, which will offer cross mentoring opportunities.

Following evaluation of the DPP, consideration will be given to wider roll out as part of Police Scotland's Talent Management Programme.

FORCE EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO REVIEW

Between April and July, review work was undertaken across the Police Scotland senior leadership team to consider alignment of the Force Executive portfolio structure and potential implications as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. On conclusion of this work, and following the appointment to Police Scotland of two new Assistant Chief Constables in July, I implemented the proposed revisions to the executive portfolio

structure and associated responsibilities.

Substantive change as a result of the review is the creation of a Criminal Justice portfolio, led by Assistant Chief Constable Kenny MacDonald, with disestablishment of the Operational Change and Resilience portfolio. Information about the portfolio responsibilities of the senior leadership team is provided on the Police Scotland website.

PROBATIONER PASS OUT PARADE

On Friday 14 August, 186 probationary officers took part in a virtual pass out parade at the Scottish Police College, Tulliallan, having successfully completed their initial training course. The officers joined Police Scotland on Monday 23 March and following a two week period of training, were deployed in communities across Scotland to support the operational response to COVID-19. In June, the officers returned to Tulliallan and successfully completed the remainder of their training.

I wish each and every officer success as they embark on the next stage of their career with Police Scotland, and thank them for their commitment and professionalism during these unprecedented times.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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