



Authority Meeting

22 May 2025

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 27 March 2025 at COSLA, Edinburgh

Board Members present:	Fiona McQueen (Interim Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Katharina Kasper Mary Pitcaithly Grant Macrae Catriona Stewart Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Tom Halpin Angela Leitch
In attendance:	<p>Scottish Police Authority Chris Brown, Deputy Chief Executive – Resources Amanda Coulthard, Head of Strategy and Performance (Items 8-9) Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer</p> <p>Police Scotland Chief Constable Jo Farrell Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Patrick Brown, Temporary Director of Strategy and Analysis (Item 9)</p>

	Forensic Services Fiona Douglas, Director
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1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1.1 INTERIM CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

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

1.2 APOLOGIES

The Authority noted Member apologies from Tom Halpin and Angela Leitch. The Interim Chair advised Deputy Chief Executive Chris Brown (CBrown) was representing the SPA Chief Executive.

1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONNECTIONS

A declaration of interest was raised by one Member. Regarding a question he had on road safety at Item 5, Grant Macrae advised he was a member of the Institute of Advanced Motorists.

1.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Authority Members raised no other business.

CBrown advised that Scottish Government had announced the appointment of Fiona McQueen as Authority Chair on 27 March 2025. On behalf of SPA and Police Scotland, CBrown and Chief Constable Jo Farrell (CCFarrell) congratulated her on the appointment.

1.5 DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE (ITEMS 10-11)

Members agreed that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Authority would consider items 10-11 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 MINUTE FROM MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2025 FOR APPROVAL

Members approved the minute from the meeting held 20 February 2025.

2.2 ROLLING ACTION LOG

Members agreed to close the action on the log.

2.3 DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

Members noted no decisions had been made via correspondence since the last public Authority meeting.

3. SPA INTERIM CHAIR'S REPORT

The Interim Chair took her report as read and congratulated Police Scotland on the launch of Body Worn Vide (BWV) in Dundee on 26 March 2025.

Referring to the community confidence action research report, comment was sought on the how findings will be progressed. CBrown responded that insights from the project were fed into the discovery phase of the Local Policing Service Delivery Review and further proposals will be presented to the Resources Committee. Authority staff continue to work with Police Scotland and other partners to understand public views on visibility and there is a commitment to follow up with groups who have contributed.

Members noted the report.

4. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on business progressed through Committees and Oversight Groups since the last Authority Meeting. Committee and Oversight Group Chair summarised their reports which covered:

- People Committee
- Complaints and Conduct Committee
- Commonwealth Games Oversight Group
- Legal Committee
- Policing Together Oversight Group
- Resources Committee
- Policing Performance Committee

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- In response to the People Committee update, Members noted that workforce planning will also require future reporting to the Resources Committee.
- In response to the Complaints and Conduct Committee update, DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) commented that prioritising complaints in terms of criminality will continue, and he highlighted the expectation that BWV will support and reduce the number of complaints with immediate effect.

- Catriona Stewart complemented the work being undertaken within the Policing Together area.
- In addition to the Resources Committee update, the Committee Chair commended the work of the finance team for the close monitoring of finances throughout the year.

Members noted the report and approved the amendments to the Commonwealth Games Oversight Group Terms of Reference.

5. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which provided detail relating to the Police Service, policing, and the state of crime. CCFarrell provided an overview of the points noted within the executive summary of her report. In addition to the report, the following points were also raised:

- CCFarrell attended the Scottish Police Federation Conference to listen to perspectives and underline her gratitude for the work to drive efficiency and support officer welfare. She welcomed the opportunity to take part in a question-and-answer session, and thanked officers, staff and volunteers for their work and commitment in challenging circumstances.
- CCFarrell referenced the BWV roll out in Dundee, noting it can help de-escalate incidents, improve public trust in policing, reduce complaints, support officer and staff safety, and improve the quality of evidence presented in court. She thanked the Chief Digital Information Officer, the change team and the staff in Tayside Division, and confirmed almost 200 pieces of evidence had been uploaded in the first 24 hours.
- CCFarrell commented on the joint statement released between herself and the family of Sheko Bayou. She confirmed she had met with the family to express condolences and underline her commitment to engage in the public enquiry. A settlement was agreed without admission of liability by Police Scotland. To protect the privacy of his family, details of the agreement will remain confidential and neither party will comment further.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought further information on the impact and nature of referrals through the mental health pathway and the mental health index. CCFarrell commented that the area is building momentum, but challenges remain as officers are not yet feeling the full impact. DCCSpeirs added there were approximately 400 monthly incidents compared to 150-170 monthly incidents initially, and each incident deferred to another service equates to half an officer's shift. Whilst it was positive that individuals are getting the right level of service and progress is being made, demand indicates more work can be done and partner support is essential. DCCSpeirs assured Members

that leadership in the area is senior enough with robust governance in place.

- Referring to criminal justice efficiencies, Members questioned how public benefits are measured to which CCFarrell agreed to provide data. Members were informed partnership work continues to drive efficiencies, with CCFarrell referencing recent agreement on a summary case management programme.
- Members sought information on the cost, impact and reporting of the Rider Refiner Course. DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) responded that the scheme is being rolled out nationally in 2025, costing £40 per person and includes focus on wider safety. Early evaluation has taken place, and positive feedback has been received. Members heard Police Scotland focus was on behavioural change and various speed awareness and driver awareness courses were available from supporting charities.
- Members questioned whether Police Scotland intend to provide management training to officers and staff before they reach management level. CCFarrell responded that the Your Leadership Matters scheme focusses on value-based leadership and behaviours. DCCSpeirs cited the People Development Management Programme, explaining that phase 1 was being rolled out which focusses on 1st line managers. There are plans to roll out phase 2 which focuses on Inspector level and then the next phase which focuses on Superintendent level. Members heard it was a two-day programme and had been well evaluated.
- Member sought comment on the policing of the recent Celtic versus Rangers football match. DCCConnors commented that public safety is always the priority and 58,000 attended where the vast majority of fans behaved. A Section 60, an intelligence led power, was put in place before the game and was well publicised. Members were told two groups gathered and both were engaged with. One group agreed to be searched while one group did not agree. The group who refused were not allowed to progress to the match. DCCConnors advised the policing response was proportionate.
- Members sought progress on the live facial recognition national conversation. DCC Bex Smith (DCCSmith) advised work to identify cases and to understand how live facial recognition might benefit people was complete and a finalised draft will be discussed internally and with partners during April. During May a national conversation chaired by an independent person will take place and a final report will come to the Policing Performance Committee in June.
- Members questioned what outcomes were being sought in response to the retail crime taskforce and strategy. CCFarrell advised that an

additional £3million of funding had been allocated by the Scottish Government to make progress in this area and explained the 4P approach and its strong prevention and diversion elements. CCFarrell highlighted that detection figures have been maintained despite the rise in retail crime.

Members noted the report and agreed the following action:

20250327-BM-001 – CCFarrell to provide information on how public benefits are measured relating to criminal justice reform efficiencies.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

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

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Whilst noting the Policing Performance Committee receive regular updates on the Police Scotland sex and gender review, comment was made that it was a complex legal environment and writing to EHRC was welcomed. Citing Professor Alison Sullivan's review into data capture, Police Scotland were encouraged to identify policies that could have legal, reputational or operational risks. CBrown responded that all sources of information are important, and it should not be the sole responsibility of individual bodies to interpret the law, hence the dual work of the Police Scotland review and raising with EHRC. DCCSpeirs confirmed Police Scotland were committed to closely review the Scottish and UK landscapes, including ongoing tribunals and Professor Sullivan's report.
- CBrown confirmed the budget allocation is adequate to deliver the Authority's Annual Delivery Plan 2025-26.
- Referring to the audit and inspections update within the Scottish Railways Policing Committee summary report, Committee Member Mary Pitcaithly confirmed that the Committee were seeking to ensure outstanding recommendations are being prioritised.

Members noted the report.

7. SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY BUDGET 2025-26

Members considered the report which presented the proposed 2025-26 budgets for revenue, capital and reform. James Gray (JGray) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- CBrown commended the finance team for delivering a balanced budget through a challenging process. He confirmed it supported the annual police plan, and he summarised the internal governance routes where the budget was discussed. On behalf of the Accountable Officer, CBrown confirmed he was content to recommend the budget for approval.
- CCFarrell, CBrown and Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) all confirmed the budget would provide sufficient resource to keep the Scottish public safe and to adequately fund Scotland's Forensic Service and the Authority's corporate function.
- Members asked what impact an expected officer number drop to 16,500 would have on capacity. CCFarrell responded that workforce mix was key, and the organisation intended to look at what areas of business could be delivered by non-warranted officers. DCCSmith added that Police Scotland want to bring in appropriate skills to fill resource gaps to allow officers to be utilised better. Members were also told digital technology like BWV and DESC will help increase capacity.
- Member sought information on how prioritising the frontline can be monitored and the public impact. CCFarrell commented that work is ongoing to bring resources into pressured areas, and response times in periods of high demand would be looked at to identify improvements. Public confidence and satisfaction levels from the public would also be a key indicator, as well as feedback from staff surveys.
- Members sought assurance that a balanced budget is achievable, and questioned how it will be monitored. JGray advised that there would be monthly monitoring with an early focus on capital. During 25/26, there will be an increased profile in capital spend with proposals to look at multi-year capital planning in line with transformation work.
- Members sought comment on the impact on workforce wellbeing as a result of the budget. CCFarrell commented that she recognised there was pressure on the frontline so a number of measures will be taken including trying to improve work/life balance. Members were

informed of the force mobilisation approach where officers that have a predominantly day shift role are asked to work a certain number of weekends/specific days a year to help those on shift and ensure a sufficient emergency response to spontaneous emergency events.

- Noting some savings are made on non-recurring basis, Members asked what the approach will be for savings on a recurring basis. JGray responded that there are approximately £10million worth of non-recurring costs and the primarily focus will be looking at staff workforce and modernisation of the police estate.
- Members questioned whether the allocation would meet demand for drug driving toxicology services. FDouglas explained that the budget assumes that demand in the area will remain at the level set out in the MOU. The MOU also sets out areas of focus should demand increase and management continually look at resourcing to ascertain whether resources can be moved from areas with less demand.

Members approved the SPA budget for 2025/26 and the schedule of rates for events and other services for 2025-26.

8. JOINT EQUALITY OUTCOMES FOR POLICING

Members considered the report which presented the new SPA and Police Scotland Joint Equality Outcomes for Policing 2025-2029 and the Joint Mainstreaming and Equality Outcomes Progress Report 2025, due to be published by 30 April 2025. Amanda Coulthard (ACoulthard) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper. DCCSpeirs added that outcomes are derived from developing previous ones and are aligned with the Policing Together and People strategies. Four outcomes are linked to work in local communities, and some are linked to internal work. DCCSpeirs advised the Policing Together Oversight Group will receive bi-annual updates including dashboards which will help quantify progress.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members recognised the progress being made, the joint endeavour and the work done in terms of neurodiversity.
- Members sought further information on the relationship between workforce outcomes and service delivery outcomes. ACoulthard responded that during discussions it was felt that if progress can be driven in terms of workforce, then this can change service delivery outcomes. Members heard there was focus on developing both activities and milestones that describe the dependencies between them. DCCSpeirs added that the alignment is captured within the vision and performance measurements will include a dashboard that focuses on all four vision elements.

- Members sought comment on the approach taken to prioritisation. ACoulthard responded that the evidence review was the first stage which looked at outcome differences in the past four years. Stakeholder feedback was also helpful and whilst work across all characteristics was required, priority was given on where there is an opportunity to make the biggest difference.
- Members sought detail on how progress will be measured. DCCSpeirs responded that the refreshed Policing Strategy and the introduction of the Advisory Council will help drive progress, especially with an independent element. Confidence and satisfaction levels from both staff and the public will help inform as well developing a culture dashboard. ACoulthard highlighted the visual within Appendix A which detailed the strategies and plans that supported the outcomes.
- Members were assured there was specific disability training for new recruits with various areas included such as trauma informed and diversity.
- Members heard that improving diversity is a key element of inclusivity planning work within Forensic Services. A key strand of this is apprenticeships and Forensic Services are in final discussions with Trade Union colleagues.
- Members were told recent recruitment within SPA has seen large numbers of applications which indicated a lot of interest in working within the policing family.

Members approved the Joint Equality Outcomes as noted within appendix A and B of the report.

9. ANNUAL POLICE PLAN

Members considered the report which presented the Annual Police Plan 2025/26 and accompanying Delivery Plan. Patrick Brown (PBrown) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought comment on what the interdependencies and risks are to delivery. PBrown advised that the largest interdependency is continued partnerships as well as increased understanding of diverse communities. Members also heard funding and growth in capital settlements allows more efficiencies in the digital area.
- Members asked how objectives under less crime and staff officer welfare will be pursued. DCCConnors responded that strengthening the frontline is a priority by improving workforce mix and having an effective resource deployment model.
- Further comment was sought on a reward framework to which DCCSpeirs responded it is an aim to have a reward package that is fit for purpose. Previously, focus has been on pay so there is a

commitment to look at other reward provisions and active discussions with trade unions and partners are underway to understand what a good reward package would look like.

- Members heard a refreshed performance accountability framework will come to the Policing Performance Committee in June which is aligned to vision and priorities.

Members noted the report.

The Interim Chair paid tribute to Caroline Stuart, Catriona Stewart and Grant Macrae, thanking them for their contributions, challenge and commitment to policing.

The remaining items were taken in private.