

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	29 September 2021
Location	Video-conference
Title of Paper	SPA Chair's Report
Presented By	Martyn Evans
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached:	NO

Purpose

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair since August's Authority meeting.

M9 Judgement

Tuesday 7 September saw the conclusion of the Crown Office investigation into Police Scotland's handling of the M9 incident in July 2015. As I said in my [statement](#) on behalf of the Authority – our sincere sympathies and condolences remain with the families of Lamara Bell and John Yuill following their tragic deaths in 2015. The severity and significance of the charges and fine underline serious failings in Police Scotland's response to the incident in 2015. It is important to reinforce that the way Police Scotland handles calls from the public has improved considerably since 2015 and very significant effort has been made to mitigate a similar incident from ever happening again.

Authority oversight of call handling

Police Scotland's performance in relation to 101 call handling has been the subject of discussion at the last two Authority meetings with members raising concerns regarding the numbers of abandoned calls. The Policing Performance Committee met at the start of September to consider in more detail a report on this issue. The Committee Chair's report from that session outlines members' considerations and Police Scotland's activity underway to address issues. The next important phase of call handling change and improvement is underway with a focus on enhancing the options available to the public to engage with policing and report incidents.

Demands on Policing Seminar

On 21 September, the Authority and Police Scotland co-hosted a facilitated discussion between our respective leadership teams on policing demand. Police Scotland has been rightly praised by HMICS on their developing future demand data and analysis. This seminar was an opportunity to take that work forward, discussing the analysis of current and growing future demands on policing, the prioritising processes/steps being considered as options to meet the demand and also the possible technologies and associated funding required to deliver even more intense demand data and forecasting analyses.

Engagement with COSLA

The Chief Constable and I had the opportunity to attend and contribute to a meeting of COSLA's Leaders Forum on Friday 27 August. The meeting is attended by the leaders or deputies and Chief Executives of all 32 councils. I used the opportunity to reinforce the Authority's

commitment to strengthening engagement with Local Authorities and highlight some of the work already underway including a tripartite Review of Local Police Plans. It was a positive and constructive session and we received a number of supportive comments about improved engagement and liaison between the Authority, Police Scotland and local authorities.

As part of the Authority's efforts to strengthen our engagement and relations with local government, a dedicated Local Authority Engagement Plan was developed which COSLA's Community Wellbeing Board reviewed and confirmed its broad support for. Further engagement is now planned with COSLA's Scrutiny Conveners Forum.

Confidence and Deprivation Project Group

The Authority has initiated work with Police Scotland that aims to develop a deeper understanding of the link between lower levels of confidence in policing in areas of deprivation. The first meeting of the delivery steering group taking forward participative action based research on this subject met in early September. The project will work in a number of small geographical communities to understand, and where possible, take action to overcome barriers to participation and involvement which may improve experience and perception of, and confidence in, policing. The work is in the development stage at present and will be delivered over the 2022-24 period.

Police Scotland Briefing Session: Public order training

I was joined by the Cabinet Secretary, a number of other Authority members and civil society stakeholders including politicians at Police Scotland's public order briefing session held on 30 August. The purpose of the session was to offer insight into Police Scotland's approach and the tactics used by officers to effectively manage large crowds. It was helpful for stakeholders to see the tactics demonstrated first hand and develop a better understanding the requirements and professionalism required of officers having to police large public order events. The main purpose was promote Police Scotland's approach and preparedness to policing protests ahead of COP26.

Police Foundation: Seminar Two: 'Police governance in Scotland'

On 2 September, I contributed to the second of six seminars being organised by the Police Foundation, SIPR and CGI Scotland to discuss the future of policing in Scotland and inform the work of the Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales. The Strategic Review is an

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independent assessment of policing south of the border being chaired by Sir Michael Barber and hosted by the Police Foundation. The aim of the seminars is both to provide a Scottish perspective to feed into the work of the Review prior to its conclusion and then later to share and discuss the Review's findings with policing stakeholders in Scotland. I spoke about the governance landscape in Scotland, where and how the Authority led on police service accountability and took part in a panel discussion covering issues like the relationship between the various stakeholders and politicians. HMCIC Gill Imery and Graham Houston, Vice President of COSLA also attended and spoke at the event.

RECOMMENDATION

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair since August's Authority meeting.