



Meeting	Forensic Services Committee
Date	8th May 2025
Location	Webex
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Director's report
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on the recent key activities across Forensic Services.

1. Updates

Budget for 2025-26

- 1.1 Following the Authority meeting on 27th March 2025 the revenue budget for Forensic Services for 2025/26 was confirmed as £47.4M. This budget will allow Forensic Services to continue to provide scientific support services to Police Scotland, COPFS and PIRC for the year ahead and support the continued implementation of the new operating model and wider organisational change.
- 1.2 The capital budget provided (£2.7M) also allows for the first stage of the DNA robotic replacement at an estimated cost of £1.5M. This will ensure that DNA processing within the service continues to deliver efficiently and effectively and keep the organisation at the cutting edge of DNA technology.
- 1.3 The period 11 finance report is presented to the Forensic Services Committee today with the end of financial year reports being finalised. It is anticipated that Forensic Services has delivered a balanced budget for the full financial year 2024/25 against several challenging pressures.

Revised Forensic Strategy

- 1.4 Forensic Services presents the final draft version of the refreshed Forensic Strategy to the Forensic Services Committee today. The strategy has been developed with input from a wide range of stakeholders, and I would like to thank everyone for their input.
- 1.5 In particular, many of the staff within Forensic Services have taken the opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas on the strategic direction of the organisation and this has helped to shape the strategic objectives and outcomes identified.
- 1.6 *Forensic Strategy 2025-2030* supersedes the Forensic Strategy September 2021, which was approved by the Authority Board on 29th September 2021 and is [published on the SPA website](#). *Forensic Strategy 2025-2030* reflects the vital contribution forensic science makes to the delivery of justice throughout Scotland.

Drug Driving Full Business Case

- 1.4 Following approval of the Initial Business Case at the Resources Committee in December 2024 progress has been made to begin the development of the Full Business Case for the Long-Term

Sustainable Model for Criminal Toxicology. This includes building sufficient analytical capacity to support Police Scotland to roll out roadside testing to further across the country, and is based on forecasted increases in demand over a ten year period.

- 1.5 The newly established project board held the first meeting on 31st March 2025 with representation from Forensic Services and colleagues in Police Scotland Estates, Procurement, Digital Division and Transformation. The priority of this work across each area is still to be finalised, once this is complete an updated timeline and risk profile will be provided.
- 1.6 The current demand for Drug Driving toxicology analysis remains a concern as it continues to run above the agreed level set out in the Memorandum of Understanding by around 18%. This additional demand is being met through additional outsourcing. The budget for outsourcing will be monitored closely through the year and discussions will continue with Police Scotland to manage this further.
- 1.7 A medium-term position that could allow Police Scotland to access additional testing capacity is in discussion with colleagues in Police Scotland, Forensic Services and with our outsource provider. This requires a phased roll out plan to be developed with associated costs identified in Police Scotland and Forensic Services to enable any expansion of testing. Once this is further developed a request for further investment can be considered.

Final Phase of Implementation of the Operating Model

- 1.8 The fourth and final phase of implementation of the revised Operating Model for Forensic Services has been confirmed by the Senior Management Team in March. This phase contains several workstreams which will allow the remaining elements of the model to be implemented and optimised. Work continues to report on the realisation of the benefits of this significant change programme, which has delivered a more flexible organisational design which will allow Forensic Services to respond to the changing needs of Police Scotland, COPFS and PIRC.
- 1.9 The Core Operating System project is progressing well towards completion of the Full Business Case, user requirements will be finalised in the next few months, and it is anticipated that the procurement process will be initiated in the Summer. This is a complex project that is critical to the efficient running of the service

for the years ahead and delivery of the outcomes set out in the revised Forensic Strategy.

Strategic Workforce Planning

- 1.10 An update is provided to the Forensic Services Committee today in relation to the development of the strategic workforce plan for Forensic Services. Following a procurement process Skills for Justice have been appointed to support the development of the plan. The Strategic Workforce plan will support Forensic Services to deliver our strategic outcomes as set out in our refreshed *Forensic Strategy 2025-2030*.
- 1.11 Strategic workforce planning is a systematic process to ensure that an organisation has the employees, skills, and knowledge needed to meet current and future demand. The primary objective of strategic workforce planning is to ensure that the right people with the right skills are in the right roles at the right time.

Forensic Alliance Wales Visit to Gartcosh

- 1.12 In March three members of the Forensic Alliance Wales project visited the Scottish Crime Campus in Gartcosh to understand the learning from Scotland in relation our model of delivery for Forensic Science.
- 1.13 The team are considering how greater collaboration of police delivered forensic science can be delivered across some of the Police Forces in Wales and were keen to discuss our learning from a range of strategic and technical changes that Forensic Services in Scotland have experienced over the past decade and beyond.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONSs

4.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

5. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

6. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no social implications in this report.

7. COMMUNITY IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the information contained within this report.