



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	23 March 2023
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
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 the February 2023 Authority meeting.

1 2023-24 Policing Budget

- 1.1. A budget for 2023-24 is proposed for consideration and approval by the Authority at item 7 on the agenda. This year's budget represents an improved funding position from the indications set out in last year's Resource Spending Review. I recognise and welcome the Scottish Government's support for policing at a time when public spending is facing considerable constraint.
- 1.2. The Authority has been engaged in detailed budget development discussions with Police Scotland and Forensic Services in recent months, to understand and prioritise spending in the year ahead based on the settlement. Policing is not immune from the difficult choices being felt across the public sector and this settlement does have implications for our workforce and policing prioritisation. During discussions, the Authority has been clear that we expect an ongoing focus on delivering against our [5 strategic outcomes](#) as well as the Scottish Government's strategic police priorities.
- 1.3. The Authority set the key priorities and tests for developing the budget. These guided the budget drafting process:
 - A balanced budget with no operating deficit;
 - Zero-basing non-pay budgets and prioritising them to address areas of the greatest risk;
 - Prioritising the policing response to the most vulnerable individuals and communities where the greatest threats and harms exist;
 - Maintaining a timely response to 999 calls for service;
 - Embedding a cost reduction capability and mind-set across policing to maintain the programme of transformation and modernisation (as far as possible within the funding envelope).
- 1.4. I want to put on record my thanks to both Police Scotland and Forensic Services for their engagement and contribution on budget development over the last few months.

2. Visit to Ayrshire Division

- 2.1 On Thursday 2 March, I was joined by Jane Ryder, Vice Chair and Lynn Brown, Chief Executive on a visit to the Ayrshire divisional headquarters in Kilmarnock where we spent some time with the Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Farouque Hussain and his team.

- 2.2 This was a valuable and informative visit where we discussed a number of issues related to policing across north, east and south Ayrshire. The impact of the 2023-24 budget on the division and the level of demand stemming from mental health and vulnerability across Ayrshire communities was a key area of interest on our visit. I am grateful to the Divisional Commander and his team for taking the time to develop our understanding and insights into policing across Ayrshire.

3. Independent Advisory Group on New and Emerging Technologies in Policing

- 3.1 The [final report of the Independent advisory group on new and emerging technologies in policing](#) was published on 22 February 2023. The Authority welcomes publication of the report which supports our own commitment to the proportionate and evidenced use of technology to help policing fight crime and protect the public.
- 3.2 The report recognises that there has been a great deal of progress to establish robust decision making and oversight processes, and in 2021 Police Scotland and the Authority published a [Joint Memorandum of Understanding](#) which takes steps to enhance transparent discussion, engagement and communication and informed decision making.
- 3.3 The report and its recommendations will be considered by the Policing Performance Committee (PPC) in June 2023. The PPC will continue to monitor implementation of the recommendations by Police Scotland and Authority where appropriate.

4. Women in Policing Conference

- 4.1 I was delighted to attend the 2023 Women in Policing conference, hosted by Police Scotland in Edinburgh between Wednesday 8 and Friday 10 March 2023.
- 4.2 The conference brought together established and aspiring leaders from across UK policing and beyond to shine a light on the benefits of a gender balanced workforce and to focus on the themes of life, leadership and legacy.
- 4.3 Workforce diversity can support stronger relationships between the services and communities, improve communication and

understanding and build on the clear ambitions to improve safety and wellbeing and contribute to a fairer Scotland.

- 4.4 Policing across the UK has come on significantly in terms of female representation compared to a few decades ago. There is no doubt that policing is better because of this, but there is still some way to go.
- 4.5 In Scotland, female representation within policing is currently sitting at 33% which is the same across England and Wales. If recruitment and leaver rates continue to reflect rates for 2021/22 then it is projected that our female representation will be 35% by 2024 and 40% by 2029.
- 4.6 In the UK, women represent more than 50% of the population. If the police service is to be truly representative of the communities it serves then this needs to be represented in the policing workforce too. To achieve this, we must be ambitious in identifying and removing all barriers that prevent policing from reflecting wider society.
- 4.7 Of course, recruiting and retaining women to policing is one thing, but there also must be a focus on ensuring attractive and accessible career pathways that support and retain females at all levels within policing. Gender representation in all ranks has increased year-on-year, but females remain more prominently represented at constable level. However, we are seeing positive trends with representation at the rank of Sergeant increasing from 25% in 2019 to 30% now. Representation at the most senior ranks is improving too. Two of the three Deputy Chief Constables are women and the number of women at ACC rank is growing.
- 4.8 Offering flexibility and opportunities to support the balancing of careers with parenting or caring responsibilities is a priority. As is developing a culture where flexibility is promoted to all and not presumed as something sought by women only.
- 4.9 Events like the Women in Policing conference play a crucial role in highlighting the value, benefits and opportunities that female representation brings to society and policing. I congratulate all those involved in organising and contributing to the event.

5. A Decade of Police Reform

- 5.1 The 1 April 2023 will mark a decade since the establishment of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority. This milestone is an important juncture to reflect on how far we have come.
- 5.2 Crime, threat and harm has changed dramatically over the last decade. Crime in the public space has reduced while cyber enabled crime and fraud is growing quickly and policing is moving more and more into a digital space. Policing is having to adapt and change to keep up.
- 5.3 The model of policing that has emerged over the last decade has placed confidence and trust in divisional commanders to deliver a police service in their area overseen by local scrutiny arrangements. However, all services are delivered within a context of demanding national standards and five national strategic outcomes set jointly by the Authority and Police Scotland. The Authority has strengthened connections immeasurably with COSLA and local authorities. Equally importantly, there has been a critical transformation in access to expert and highly specialist policing services available for all these local communities.
- 5.4 A new Strategic Partnership Agreement (2023) between the Authority, Police Scotland and COSLA marks an important milestone in the reform journey. The agreement describes our shared commitment to working together to serve, protect and enhance local communities. It sets out shared commitments to local scrutiny and accountability; prevention and early intervention; health and wellbeing; and resource and investment.
- 5.5 Policing in Scotland is subject to the most robust scrutiny arrangements with a national political, civic and media spotlight like never before. Accountable to the Authority, the Scottish Parliament, Local Authorities, inspectors, regulators and importantly the public.
- 5.6 Of course, reform has not been an easy journey. It has been extended, complex and at times disruptive. Financial constraints have impacted on the pace of transformation in particular.
- 5.7 Despite this, we can look back on the last decade with conviction knowing that the efforts and challenges have delivered a service that is better than anything that preceded it. It provides a solid foundation for reform and improvement to continue.

- 5.8 None of the last decade’s achievements would have been possible without the contribution and commitment of the officers and staff who have worked tirelessly to deliver a highly trusted public service– I want to pay tribute to them especially. The very first line of assurance for the Scottish Police Authority is the quality and values of our police officers and staff. I have always been deeply impressed by the commitment and resilience of all those I have met in the service.
- 5.9 The undoubted challenges over the next decade are in good hands and I look forward to future and further developments in Scottish policing that continue to promote human rights, improve wellbeing and keep us safe from existing and emerging threats and harms.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.