



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	16 September 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Live Facial Recognition
Presented By	ACC Steve Johnson, Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

This paper intends to update Scottish Police Authority Policing Performance Committee on Police Scotland's consideration of Live Facial Recognition (LFR).

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 10 June 2025, an update to the work conducted as part of the Police Scotland, Scottish Police Authority and Scottish Biometrics Commissioner's National Conversation on Live Facial Recognition was presented to SPA Policing Performance Committee. At that time, options in respect of LFR were still being considered.

2. DECISION

- 2.1 On 21 August 2025 DCC Connors addressed the SPA Board and echoed the Chief Constable's comments that Police Scotland are passionate about our positive duty to use new technology for law enforcement, to keep people safe from harm, protect the vulnerable, and bring criminals to justice.
- 2.2 Following careful consideration of National Conversation outcomes, and in recognition of the clear public safety benefits, Police Scotland will continue to engage with stakeholders and the public, while considering business cases, policy, operating procedures, and finances, as we move ahead with Live Facial Recognition.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 The priority is to ensure that the Police Scotland LFR Communications Strategy is updated to reflect the decision taken, and formal notification is provided to stakeholders to conclude the National Conversation.
- 3.2 Police Scotland will identify a strategic operational lead to take ownership of LFR, who will develop the associated LFR governance and operational policy.
- 3.3 ACC Johnson as Biometric Data Owner, will oversee work to ensure robust governance in relation to custody images ahead of any use as part of LFR Watchlist.
- 3.4 Public consultation and key stakeholder engagement will remain a fundamental component of policy development and delivery, ensuring transparency, accountability, and alignment with our core ethical principles, and in line with our Rights Based Pathway.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications will be identified as part of the work to be led by Digital Division.

5. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is no legislation within Scotland, or the wider United Kingdom re use of custody images for LFR purposes, nor in respect of facial matching technologies.

7. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 It is likely Police Scotland will see increased scrutiny and reporting in the media and by various rights-based organisations, etc. in response to the decision taken.

8. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no social implications in this report.

9. COMMUNITY IMPACT

9.1 It is likely a Community Impact Assessment will be necessary as part of the Rights Based Pathway and implementation governance arrangements.

10. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

10.1 It is likely an Equalities and Human Rights Assessment will be necessary as part of the Rights Based Pathway and implementation governance arrangements.

11. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the Chief Constable's decision to progress with Live Facial Recognition as an additional tool for Police Scotland to keep people safe in the community and reduce crime.