SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
ÙGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Authority Meeting

25 September 2025

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 21 August 2025 at the Clayton Hotel, Glasgow

Board Members present:	Fiona McQueen (Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Katharina Kasper Angela Leitch Mary Pitcaithly
Board Member apologies:	None
In attendance:	**Scottish Police Authority** Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer **Police Scotland** Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Katy Miller, Director of People and Development **Forensic Services** Fiona Douglas, Director

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1.1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

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

1.2 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies from Members. The Chair noted that the Chief Constable had submitted her apologies due to a long-standing personal engagement.

1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONNECTIONS

No declarations of interest or connections were raised by Authority Members.

1.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Authority Members raised no other business.

1.5 DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE (ITEMS 10-12)

The Chair noted that Item 11 had been withdrawn. Work to develop the budget for 2026/27 continues with Authority input provided at the Budget Development Group and formal governance anticipated by the Resources Committee and/or full Board in due course.

The Chair proposed to take Item 12 in public given recent communications and the Chief Executive's update.

Members agreed that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Authority would consider item 10 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda and take Item 12 in public.

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 MINUTE FROM MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2025 FOR APPROVAL

Members approved the minute from the meeting held 28 June 2025.

2.2 DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

Members noted one decision had been taken by correspondence since the last full Authority meeting. The Authority approved an offer to be made to the Trade Unions in relation to the staff pay claim.

3. SPA CHAIR'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities carried out by the Chair since the last Authority Meeting. The Chair highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Further comment was sought on COSLA engagement. The Chair highlighted that COSLA hosted a roundtable discussion to discuss rising levels of abuse and intimidation experienced by elected officials, particularly via social media and misinformation. DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) emphasised that it was unacceptable that Elected Officials are subject to abuse. She explained that Operation Ford focused on allowing Local Councilors to raise concerns with dedicated officers and provided the opportunity to receive enhanced physical and online safety and advice. Police Scotland work with COSLA to provide briefings to Councilors and carry out regular joint engagement.
- The Chair was asked to comment on the progress of criminal justice efficiencies. She responded that she met with Crown Agent John Logue for a discussion which was strategic in nature, but it was clear both the Authority and the Crown Office want tangible outcomes and efficiencies. DCC Bex Smith (DCCSmith) confirmed Police Scotland were a key stakeholder of COPFS and summarised some of work being progressed including the summary case management system, reduction of citations and adornments, and an increase in remote witness provision. DCCSmith advised that Police Scotland were keen to progress digital transformation and co-location at pace.
- Regarding the update on live facial recognition (LFR), clarity was sought on Police Scotland's position. The Chair highlighted that the Biometrics Commissioner supports the use of live facial recognition for police purposes, and she had discussed with him the outcome of the recent National Conversation. DCCConnors confirmed that Police Scotland are moving ahead with LFR, but the force understood that people wanted assurances on how it will be used and in what circumstances. As such, engagement has, and will continue, to take place, and work continues to establish policies and effective governance procedures. DCCSmith added that results from the national conversation survey indicated that most respondents were comfortable with Police Scotland using LFR and work also continues to ensure there is robust evaluation of the technology and to understand how reporting would look against primary legislation and oversight.
- Further comment was sought on young people in custody. The Chair commented that custody was not an appropriate place of safety for children or young people and alternative provisions are the main

challenge. DCCConnors acknowledged the significant impact on children and noted there were clear processes incorporated into custody training and the estates masterplan to ensure the care of children in police custody. Noting that HMICS had highlighted few cases where children were kept in custody for a long time, DCCConnors agreed there were challenges around alternative estate. Police Scotland are working with local authorities to help respond and the number of children being brought into custody has reduced. Work continues to develop multi-agency alternative pathways and alternative care provisions instead of creating bespoke custody areas for children.

Members noted the report.

4. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORTS

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 Chairs highlighted the main points raised at their meetings:

- Commonwealth Games Oversight Group: planning assumptions, wellbeing arrangements, finance and risk updates were all discussed. Since the meeting, planning costs have been formally signed off, and one risk outside tolerance relating to vetting and accreditation has reduced from very high to high.
- Forensic Services Committee: the drug driving pilot in Shetland had highlighted the extent of the drug driving issue. Proposals were made to introduce 3 further pilots in future and the roll out and unintended consequences were discussed. The Crown Office assured the Committee they could cope with increased demand. It was noted any requested would come through the Resources Committee.
- Legal Committee: The Committee welcomed reporting improvements on statistics relating to legal claims handling. Discussion had focused on organisational learning and risk management relating to employment tribunal cases.
- Resources Committee: Associated efficiencies and benefits of the COS Phase 2 was discussed, and the Enhanced Communities Policing FBC was approved, with Members noting the interdependencies between workforce and digital developments and the estates masterplan. An update had been requested on how capacity challenges around transformation would be addressed.
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee: Two Internal Audit reports on Health and Safety, and management of recommendations were

discussed. The Police Scotland Executive team had provided assurance on the valued place on health and safety and that priority would be given to reducing the number of open recommendations. Members were keen to understand the process to distinguish the significant number of concerns under whistleblowing and those that are protected disclosures. The draft Annual Report and Accounts was also considered.

Members noted the report.

5. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which provided detail relating to the Police Service, policing, and the state of crime. Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Assurance was sought that there are adequate provisions for transgender employees. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) explained the estate audit work was complete and the interim guidance was a consequence of the audit. He stated the guidance was clear in terms of single sex, mixed sex and single occupancy and at the heart of it was the dignity and respect for all staff. DCCSpeirs referred to engagement with diversity associations and confirmed relationships were positive. With regards to the wider review, Members were told much of the work was in an advance state and some further statements from Human Rights were expected which would inform the work further.
- Members asked for information on how learning from the retail crime taskforce is being applied across Scotland. DCCConnors advised that the taskforce have dedicated officers who work with the retail industry in cities and rural areas. In Edinburgh, most shoplifting is carried out by a small number of people and intelligence has been key, with CCTV helping to ensure crimes are quickly and effectively reported. Learning from the experiences in Edinburgh indicated intelligence is an essential part as well as linking with local teams. Members were told partnership working was also key as shoplifting can be linked to addiction and homelessness.
- Members asked how Body Worn Video (BWV) impacted the level of violence against officers. DCCConnors highlighted that any attacks on officers are unacceptable. BWV is rolling out across the north and there is anecdotal evidence that when the cameras are on, behaviors de-escalate. DCCSpeirs added that Your Safety Matters is the forum where circumstances around officer assaults and injuries are looked at and lessons learned identified are fed into relevant training reviews.

- Assurance was sought that business as usual for policing communities remains, despite the continued policing of events and protests. DCCConnors acknowledged there had been an increase in challenging protests and whilst business as usual is being managed, it has been a challenge. In relation to football, an increase in European games and new risk groups associated with teams has required an increased policing response. DCCConnors advised that policing plans are reviewed to ensure proportionate resources and partnership working and engagement with multi-agency groups assists. DCCConnors explained that a large proportion of resource for policing football events is not seen by the public. DCCSpeirs explained that TOIL buy back requests in relation to various events in July have cost half a million pounds. He highlighted that there were governance arrangements in place to manage the budget and contingency for overtime has been built in. The TOIL trend is significant, and this will be required to be looked at further.
- Referring to recent protests in Falkirk, Members sought comment on the local community impact. DCCConnors paid tribute to the Officers who policed the protests and stated that people have the right to peaceful protest. She explained there had been several previous protests there, but the dynamic had changed as some protesters had moved from one protest to a particular one in Falkirk. DCCConnors assured Members that Police Scotland were able to move resources to respond, and local tension will be monitored with local community officers. DCCConnors warned that increased protests could mean that Officers are not able to respond as quickly as they would like to other concerns or provide updates to victims in a timely manner.
- DCCConnors was asked to comment on the proscription of Palestine Action. She advised proscription of an organisation is a decision for the UK Government. DCCConnors explained Police Scotland's approach to policing protests, reiterating that people have the right to protest and any policing interference must be necessary, proportionate and in accordance with law. DCCConnors described the range of criminal offences that may relate to the membership of a proscribed organisation, and confirmed guidance is issued to all Officers. The guidance lists criminal offences but is clear that it remains lawful to express support for Palestine. Paul Edie expressed disappointment that a justification for the proscription was not provided. DCCConnors confirmed that proscription decisions are made by the UK Government and Police Scotland act in accordance with the law. The Chair noted the comments made and agreed to discuss further at a future opportunity.
- Members sought information on how recent periods of protests and other events could impact performance. DCCConnors responded that staff had felt pressure, and it looked like recent protest

behaviours will continue. Members heard performance was monitored regularly and detection rates would help indicate themes and any potential impact. Members were assured that Q1 data showed effective performance was still being maintained but were cautioned that Q2 data may show pressures. Katy Miller (KMiller) added that colleague engagement results, monitoring absence rates and reason also assist in helping to mitigate and manage performance.

- More information was sought on the Crimestoppers police integrity line. DCCSpeirs advised there were a number of mechanisms to raise concerns, but the integrity line gave the opportunity for members of the public to raise Officer behaviour on and off duty. As it has already been introduced in England and Wales, any lessons learned would be evaluated for continuous improvements and progress will be reported through the Policing Performance Committee.
- Members sought further comment on planned policing responses and communication relating to human trafficking. DCCConnors acknowledged it was important area, with considerable impact and advised that local level policing would assist in responding to high end threats. Members heard that focus going forward would be to increase citizen awareness. DCCSmith added that it was a difficult crime to police as victims are hidden but Police Scotland work with NCA to understand international links.

Members noted the report and agreed the following action:

20250821-BM-001: Following discussions on policing protests, further information to be shared with Members to explain how organisations are proscribed.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. Lynn Brown (LBrown) highlighted that the Police Officer pay award had been agreed and thanked all those involved in negotiations. She advised the staff pay award was currently being balloted by Trade Unions.

No questions were raised.

Members noted the report.

7. FORENSIC SERVICES DIRETOR'S REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on recent key activities across Forensic Services. Fiona Douglas highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were told Operation Portaledge had put a strain on the service which would likely be reflected in the next performance report. Forensic Services Committee Chair, Paul Edie, reported that the recent Development Day was useful in discussing strategic issues. Members agreed Forensic Services provided a high service and it was important to maintain that and protect its strong reputation.
- Members were assured changes implemented from the new operating model was helping to add value to responding to inquisitive crime.

Members noted the report.

8. QUARTERLY FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on the financial position of the SPA and Police Scotland for quarter one of the financial year 2025-26. James Gray (JGray) referred to the paper and highlighted that a detailed analysis of overtime spend and TOIL buy back during summer months would be a focus of the next report. Whilst there is some contingency for overtime, revenue spend needs to be managed carefully. Capital is currently showing an amber delivery and is slightly behind profile however Period 4 figures show an uptick in spend. Capital spend without fleet is double what is was last year, due to estates. Whilst it needs monitored carefully JGray stated there was confidence that the full capital will be spent.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members heard the Resources Committee requested further assurance on progress to address the amber capital issue and discussed the need to ensure that implementation of savings happened on a recurring basis. DCCSmith advised that to remain at Officer number targets, work was ongoing to ensure staff are recruited with the right capabilities. Members heard an Efficiencies and Benefits plan will be presented to the Budget Development Group which would detail progress made and future plans.
- Referencing the capital planning taskforce and dependencies on estates for capital, Members sought assurance on the allocation of resources against each project. JGray responded that the transition year for estates allowed the organisation to identify what needed to be maintained, and estates in most need were identified jointly by officers and the estates team. As such, 11 buildings will see interior upgrades. Members heard the Assets Management plan has identified that estates in the west are most in need. DCCSmith advised that estates were included in the change and

transformation plan, and operational leads and the estates chief officer will jointly support the next phase of planning. Members were assured plans and progress would be reported to the Authority.

- In response to a question on timelines and estates alignment for community hubs, DCCConnors advised that the community model of policing pilot in Clackmannanshire will go live in September 2025 with a full concept expected within the next 4 or 5 months. Members were assured this would be fitted into the estate's masterplan.
- Noting capital issues within Forensic Services and Police Scotland, the Chair questioned how resourcing issues can be resolved. JGray advised it had been a challenge to deliver year on year capital growth as the allocation timing only provides a 12-week lead up time meaning resourcing models are not in place with enough time. JGray stated that a multi-year allocation would be more helpful for resource planning and DCCSmith added that the annualised nature of budget setting led to continual reprioritisation which is not an effective way of working.
- Members were informed information relating to cash releasing efficiency savings would be provided to the Budget Development Group.

Members noted the report.

9. HMICS ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the HMICS Annual Report. Craig Naylor (CNaylor) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper and paid credit to LBrown and JGray for their contribution to SPA and Police Scotland.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought further comment on CNaylor's suggestion that change programmes need to be prioritised or realigned. He responded that since in year budgeting for capital is challenging but the 2030 strategy shows real ambition, any change programme work that is not legislative requirement or will make meaningful change should be stopped.
- Members supported the proposal to assess the policing cost of new legislation and discussed the importance of understanding the impacts. CNaylor commented that new legislation such as the PECCS bill and drug driving are expensive but are the right thing to do.

- Further comment was sought on learning and scrutiny from partnership working to help drive public sector reform. CNaylor advised he was part of the Scottish Strategic Scrutiny Forum who would be providing some output on appropriate levels of policing scrutiny and how it can add value. He advised another ambition would be to try to influence Scottish Government on wider system reform.
- Regarding the Proceeds of Crime Act, CNaylor confirmed he would be supportive of some funds from forfeiture and seizure coming back into policing and prosecution service as long as it could be done without impacting the cash back from communities receive. DCCConnors added if this happened, the funds would be used to enhance forensic accountancy and analytical support and increase financial investigator capacity.
- DCCConnors thanked HMICS for their constructive scrutiny and recognition of the challenges and progress made. She confirmed the organisation are committed to continuing to reform to keep Scottish communities safe.

Members noted the report.

12. PAY AND REWARD UPDATE

KMiller advised that pay claims were received from the staff side and Trade Unions in April. Negotiations began and offers were made for 4% for 2025/26 and 3.5% for 2026/27. The staff side have accepted on behalf of Officers, and this will be backdated and provided in the September pay. Unison and Unite are currently balloting and the outcome is expected around 11th/12th September. If accepted, it will be backdated and provided in the October pay. KMiller noted that a multi-year deal gives comfort to the workforce, helps with budget planning and provides an opportunity to look at total reward strategy. KMiller thanked the staff side and PNBS for their contribution to negotiation and constructive dialogue.

PNBS Official Side Chair, Pauline Howie, agreed that the discussions were constructive and also shared her thanks to those involved.

Members noted the update.

The Chair, DCC Jane Connors and Lynn Brown all paid tribute to James Gray and thanked him for his contribution to policing. James Gray thanked Authority Members, the Police Scotland Executive Team, and the wider finance team for their support.

The following items were taken in private.

10. MINUTE OF ITEMS TAKEN IN PRIVATE

10.1 MINUTE OF ITEMS TAKEN IN PRIVATE FROM MEETING HELD ON 28 JUNE 2025 FOR APPROVAL

Members approved the minute from the meeting held 28 June 2025.

11. 2026/27 BUDGET UPDATE

Paper withdrawn.

Meeting end.

DRAFT