

SPA Policing Performance Committee

Rolling Action Log

Action No	Action	Action Owner	Status	Expected Date of Completion	Update/Comments
MEETING HELD 19 MARCH 2025					
PPC-20250319-001	Quarterly Policing Performance Report – Q3 2024/25: Police Scotland to provide detail regarding the shift from fixed penalty notices to recorded police warnings.	Jane Connors, DCC Operational Policing	OPEN	10 June 2025	<p>10/04/2025: This shift is primarily due to the restricted number of offences which are available and embedded in statute legislation. This legislation governs the use and flexibility of antisocial behaviour fixed penalty notices, as opposed to just the Lord Advocates Guidelines alone. At present, Sect 38 Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act (Threatening and abusive behaviour) is not currently detailed in this legislation and prevents officers from issuing ASB FPN for this offence. The Sect 38 offence is one of the most widely used offences in Police Scotland and at present, officers can only utilise a recorded police warning as a direct measure disposal. Work is ongoing with Scottish Government and COPFS with a view of having this offence passed into legislation to make ASB FPN a secondary option for disposal.</p> <p>PROPOSE TO CLOSE</p>

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PPC-20250319-002	Deep Dive Analysis of Rape & Sexual Crime: Police Scotland to check sexual crime data regarding abuse of power dynamics in hospital and care settings and share findings with PPC Members.	Steve Johnson, ACC Major Crime, Public Protection & Local Crime	OPEN	10 June 2025	<p>09/06/2025: Police Scotland's crime recording system is not able to extract this information and a manual trawl, which is too resource intensive, would have to be taken to view each crime report to ascertain if abuse of position. However, when this was previously looked at, in the year 2024/2025, the VAWG dashboard which relates to female victims only, returned 39 sexual assaults and 12 rapes at hospital loci, the majority of reports were patients abusing nurses. It is not unreasonable to surmise that abuse of power is low.</p> <p>PROPOSE TO CLOSE</p>
PPC-20250319-003	Deep Dive Analysis of Rape & Sexual Crime: Police Scotland to ascertain if there is representation from Education, NHS and Social Care on the Victim Task Force.	Steve Johnson, ACC Major Crime, Public Protection & Local Crime	OPEN	10 June 2025	<p>09/06/2025: There is representation from Education, Social Services & Health.</p> <p>PROPOSE TO CLOSE</p>
PPC-20250319-004	Deep Dive Analysis of Rape & Sexual Crime: Victim Centred Approach to Justice Report to be shared with PPC Members.	Steve Johnson, ACC Major Crime, Public Protection & Local Crime	OPEN	10 June 2025	<p>09/06/2025: Amanda Coulthard emailed the link to this paper on behalf of ACC Johnson during the meeting on 19 March 2025.</p> <p>PROPOSE TO CLOSE</p>
PPC-20250319-005	Public Polling Insights: SPA Officials to link in with DCC Operational Policing regarding the communication of Local Policing Plans to the public.	Amanda Coulthard, Head of Strategy & Performance	OPEN	10 June 2025	<p>03/06/2025: Work is progressing between Authority Staff and the Strategy and Analysis Directorate on the approach to Local Police Planning, including support comms and cascade.</p> <p>PROPOSE TO CLOSE</p>

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MEETING HELD 10 DECEMBER 2024					
PPC 20241210 -005	Live Facial Recognition: LFR Evidence Report to come to PPC prior to the production of a policy.	DCS Gordon McCreadie, Head of Local Crime and Specialist Crime Support	OPEN	10 June 2025	09/06/2025: Paper provided at Item 3.1. PROPOSE TO CLOSE
MEETING HELD 11 JUNE 2024					
PPC 20240611 -004	Air Support Plan: Police Scotland to return to the PPC with an update on the implementation of the Air Support Plan.	Alan Waddell, ACC Operational Support	OPEN	19 March 2025 10 June 2025	08/11/2024: Plan is progressing in line with initial timeline. Current priority is delivery of drone programme across all three command areas and supporting procurement colleagues to prepare procurement documents for the next contract for helicopter assets. Subsequent updates will be progressed via Quarterly Air Support Monitoring Group. Template for reporting has been agreed with SPA colleagues. 13/06/2024: Added to workplan. 09/06/2025: Briefing paper appended to action log. PROPOSE TO CLOSE

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BRIEFING PAPER FOR INFORMATION OF SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY

FOR INFORMATION	
For Publication	Yes
Date Created	20 May 2025
Author / Approved by	CI COLIN CONVERY
Attachments: Yes	

UPDATE ON POLICE SCOTLAND AIR SUPPORT STRATEGIC PLAN (Action PPC 20240611-004)

PURPOSE

To provide members of SPA PPC with an update on the implementation of the 2024-2034 Air Support Strategic Plan

BACKGROUND

The Police Scotland Air Support Strategic Plan was approved in 2024 and covers the next 10 years.

Police Scotland has been asked to provide updates on the progression of the strategic plan.

This is the second progress update.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Appendix A contains a detailed progress report against each of the agreed outcomes detailed in the strategic plan.

The summary in Appendix A provides the detail against each of the 14 outcomes. We are on track with most, with key work identified in the coming quarter to bring the progress back in line with the strategic plan preferred timelines. No aspect, which is currently behind schedule, presents a significant risk to the organisation or our ASU operations.

Some points of note are as follows:

Outcome 1

Develop and expand our Air Support Services to meet the needs of the public, communities and policing across Scotland.

Demand analysis demonstrates all aircraft, helicopter and drone assets, are now being used across Police Scotland's local policing divisions.

Substantial progress has been made in East and North Command areas where the capability of the helicopter has been enhanced while also promoting the roll out of the two geographical drone hubs. The ongoing programme of awareness raising will continue for local policing divisions who have not typically relied on air support services.

Governance around the tasking of the right air asset to the service request ensures the proportionate justifiable use of our aircraft. A number of significant successes, including tracing missing people, criminal suspects etc. have been secured by the drone hub teams deploying in response to ongoing incidents.

The West drone hub will commence responsive operations from beginning June 2025 (previously pre planned events).

Outcome 3

Review current helicopter contract.

Data has been gathered and assessed to understand the organisational need for air support services.

A SLWG of ASU, Finance, Procurement and Strategy & Innovation colleagues has helped drive the development of the next phase of procurement. A draft specification will be presented to Police Scotland's Air Support Monitoring Group in August 2025 which will support procurement for the next helicopter contract, which is due to commence in October 2026.

It should be noted that a procurement programme for drones is also being developed – replacing the projected capital investment to provide the most up to date equipment, probably on a lease basis.

Outcome 4

Establish divisional RPAS hubs across Scotland.

Hubs are now in place across all three command areas. Priority is being put to further developing the west hub to deliver a responsive service, where previously relied upon pre- planned operations. Additional capacity is supporting this, including the training of air observers as drone pilots which is driving multi disciplines within the air support team where transferable skills are at a premium.

Outcome 6

Develop and explore future air capabilities.

We continue to be integrated in NPCC structures, alongside academia, which supports an ongoing understanding of future capabilities in the service.

It is projected that the capability of drone technology will continue to move at pace, and this is a key focus for the ASU. Furthermore, our strategic working relationships with industry providers provide an opportunity to ensure Police Scotland remains at the forefront of the sector, especially within UK policing.

The forthcoming procurement programme will provide an opportunity to ensure the helicopter asset provides the very latest in technology and opportunities for enhanced service. This will include the camera technology, radio communications and flight range.

Furthermore, our current provider, Babcock, are finalising the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel to support the Police Scotland helicopter operation – making PS one of the first police forces in world to use this latest technological development. This will present a significant positive media message which we are looking to exploit, in conjunction with Corporate Communications colleagues.

The Police Scotland drone pilot training programme has now successfully trained 13 pilots who operate across the country. The programme is developing a positive reputation, and opportunities will present themselves in the coming months to open up the programme to other stakeholders and provide income generation.

Finally, by moving the drone assets to a lease-based contract, it is anticipated that PS will be better placed to secure up to date and current technology as the market continues to grow, develop and innovate.

Outcome 11

Be open to Scrutiny from internal and external regulators

We continue to benefit from positive working relationships with our colleagues in CAA. At this time, we are reviewing our operating safety case and our training programme authorities in the next quarter. Both are annual reviews and will be subject to significant scrutiny by CAA.

Outcome 12

Embed the data ethics framework and rights-based pathway to support any future consideration regarding the adoption of new or emerging technology

We have engaged with Strategy & Innovation colleagues over the last quarter and a programme of consultation has been drafted to look at our future use of technology through established engagement processes as well as engaging with PS ethics panels.

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It is anticipated this will provide vital insight into public opinions around the use of technology, in particular drone asset capability. Subject to approval at the June Air Support Monitoring Group, this programme will be delivered over the next 6 months.

Outcome 13

Deliver best value to the public and support environmental sustainability.

Babcock are now about to introduce the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel in the helicopter asset and project that this will make PS one of the first police services in the world to use this latest technology.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing is offered by way of an update against the strategic plan which while it remains in its infancy, is showing substantial progress against key outcomes.

It may be prudent and beneficial to offer the SPA PPC members an opportunity to visit the Air Support Unit to meet the team see the technology at first hand.

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Air Support Strategy Progress Report

For period to 20 May 2025

Update 2

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Contents

- Summary Status of Actions – Air Support Strategy
- Update on actions including progress indicator summary – Air Support Strategy

ASU Outcome 1: Enabling Policing	We will deliver an accessible and agile air support service which meets the needs of the organisation, serve communities across Scotland and keeps people safe.
ASU Outcome 2: Supporting Our People	We will meet the needs of local divisions and effectively support out people during incidents and events. Officers and staff will be equipped with the skills and knowledge to ensure out air support service is efficient and effective.
ASU Outcome 3: A Sustainable Model	We will build a sustainable model to support the future operation of our Air Support Unit, a service which embraces technology within a robust ethical framework and reduces our environmental impact.

Key

Used throughout document in summary tables and updates.



Action is not progressing. The reasons for lack of progress should be included in the update indicating if due to resource, budget or other constraints.



Action is underway but not on track for completion in timescales given. The reasons for delayed completion should be included in the update indicating if due to resource, budget or other constraints



Action is underway and on track for completion in timescales given/completion for the cycle of this strategy.



Action is complete and now undertaken as business as usual.

Air Support Strategy Outcome 1: Enabling Policing

Commitment No.	Commitments	RPAG Status and Reporting Due					
		Year 1 (2024/25)				Year 2-5 (2025/29)	Year 5-10 (2030/34)
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
1	Expand our Air Support Unit	✓			✓		
2	Undertake extensive demand analysis to identify hidden / un-met demand	✓			✓	✓	✓
3	Review current helicopter contract	✓			✓	✓	
4	Establish divisional RPAS hubs across Scotland	✓			✓		
5	Improve tasking and coordination process of appropriate air asset	✓		✓			

Air Support Strategy Outcome 2: Supporting Our People

Action No.	Actions	RPAG Status and Reporting Due					
		Year 1 (2024/25)				Year 2-5 (2025/29)	Year 5-10 (2030/34)
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
6	Develop and explore future air capabilities	✓			✓		
7	Work with CAA and partners to explore and develop new technologies and approaches to support BVLOS RPAS usage	✓			✓		
8	Explore and develop a fit for purpose learning and development programme including comprehensive CPD.	✓		✓			
9	Seek learning and best practice from international partners.	✓	✓	✓	✓		
10	Develop air support champions scheme	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Air Support Strategy Outcome 3: A Sustainable Model

Action No.	Actions	RPAG Status and Reporting Due					
		Year 1 (2024/25)				Year 2-5 (2025/29)	Year 5-10 (2030/34)
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
11	Be open to Scrutiny from internal and external regulators	✓			✓		
12	Embed the data ethics framework and rights based pathway to support any future consideration regarding the adoption of new or emerging technology'	✓	✓	✓	✓		
13	Deliver best value to the public and support environmental sustainability	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Strategic Priority 4: Enhancing Partnerships

Action No.	Actions	RPAG Status and Reporting Due					
		Year 1 (2024/25)				Year 2-5 (2025/29)	Year 5-10 (2030/34)
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
14	Work with emergency and public sector bodies to establish an Air Support cross-sector group	✓	✓	✓	✓		

Update on commitments including progress indicator summary –

Air Support Strategy

Air Support Strategy Outcome 1: Enabling Policing

Strategic Priority: Understanding Demand

Commitment 1	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Develop and expand our Air Support Services to meet the needs of the public, communities and policing across Scotland.	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<p><i>May 2025 Update</i></p> <p>Demand analysis demonstrates all aircraft, helicopter and drone assets, are now being used across Police Scotland’s local policing divisions.</p> <p>Substantial progress has been made in East and North Command areas where the capability of the helicopter has been enhanced while also promoting the roll out of the two geographical drone hubs. The ongoing programme of awareness raising will continue for local policing divisions who have not typically relied on air support services.</p> <p>Governance around the tasking of the right air asset to the service request ensures the proportionate justifiable use of our aircraft. A number of significant successes, including tracing missing people, criminal suspects etc have been secured by the drone hub teams deploying in response to ongoing incidents.</p> <p>The West drone hub will commence responsive operations from beginning June 2025 (previously pre planned events).</p> <p><i>March 2025 Update</i></p>			

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Significant progress has been made in this regard with the helicopter asset being promoted for use across Police Scotland local policing divisions with demand analysis confirming the geographic spread served is wider and more inclusive of some of our more remote localities we serve.

Drone hubs are now in existence in all three Command areas.

We continue to work with our contract service provider – Babcock – to develop a wider infrastructure which supports national accessibility. This is particularly relevant to fuel station access across the country

Commitment 2	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Undertake analysis to identify and address hidden / unmet demand.	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<i>May 2025 Update</i> This work remains ongoing with our colleagues from Corporate Services - Analytical Support			
<i>March 2025 Update</i> Analytical reports demonstrate the geographic spread of demand is wider.			
Feedback from Helicopter service survey has identified some opportunities for enhancing the service.			
The reasons for declining service requests are documented on all occasions and provide data to support decision making.			
Further work is required in relation to formally identifying hidden demand			

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Commitment 3	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Review current helicopter contract.	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<p><i>May 2025 Update</i></p> <p>Data has been gathered and assessed to understand the organisational need for air support services.</p> <p>A SLWG of ASU, Finance, Procurement and Strategy & Innovation colleagues has helped drive the development of the next phase of procurement. A draft specification will be presented to Police Scotland’s Air Support Monitoring Group in August 2025 which will support procurement for the next helicopter contract, which is due to commence in October 2026.</p> <p>It should be noted that a procurement programme for drones is also being developed – replacing the projected capital investment to provide the most up to date equipment, probably on a lease basis.</p> <p><i>March 2025 Update</i></p> <p>This is ongoing and on track for completion to support the development of the next helicopter contract procurement</p> <p>The current helicopter contract will be compared against the survey findings to identify shortcomings in demand v supply</p>			

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Commitment 4	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
		Previous	Current
Establish divisional RPAS hubs across Scotland.	CI Colin Convery		
Update			
<p><i>May 2025 Update</i></p> <p>Hubs are now in place across all three command areas. Priority is being put to further developing the west hub to deliver a responsive service, where previously relied upon pre planned operations. Additional capacity is supporting this, including the training of air observers as drone pilots which is driving multi disciplines within the air support team where transferable skills are at a premium.</p> <p><i>March 2025 Update</i></p> <p>RPAS Hubs are now in place across all three command areas. The North hub is located in Dundee and is regarded as being an initial deployment with a view to establishing further hubs in the north to serve demand.</p> <p>The next training programme will create additional capacity for West Command, which will allow a model to be deployed which supports serving planned operations as well as providing a proactive response to ongoing incidents.</p>			

Commitment 5	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
		Previous	Current
Improve tasking and coordination process of appropriate air asset.	CI Colin Convery		

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Update
<i>May 2025 Update</i> Remains imbedded in daily process and governance and subject to ongoing review as the drone hubs continue to expand.
<i>March 2025 Update</i> Tasking and co-ordination process is now embedded in daily operations and is subject to daily reporting and scrutiny.

Strategic Priority: Supporting Our People

Commitment 6	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Develop and explore future air capabilities	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<i>May 2025 Update</i> We continue to be integrated in NPCC structures, alongside academia, which supports an ongoing understanding of future capabilities in the service. It is projected that the capability of drone technology will continue to move at pace and this is a key focus for the ASU. Furthermore, our strategic working relationships with industry providers provide an opportunity to insure Police Scotland remains at the forefront of the sector, especially within UK policing. The forthcoming procurement programme will provide an opportunity insure the helicopter asset provides the very latest in technology and opportunities for enhanced service. This will include the camera technology, radio communications and flight range.			

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Furthermore, our current provider, Babcock, are finalising the adoption of Sustainable Aviation Fuel to support the Police Scotland helicopter operation – making PS one of the first police forces in world to use this latest technological development. This will present a significant positive media message which we are looking to exploit, in conjunction with Corporate Communications colleagues.

The Police Scotland drone pilot training programme has now successfully trained 13 pilots who operate across the country. The programme is developing a positive reputation and opportunities will present themselves in the coming months to open up the programme to other stakeholders and provide income generation.

Finally, by moving the drone assets to a lease based contract, it is anticipated that PS will be better placed to secure up to date and current technology as the market continues to grow, develop and innovate.

March 2025 Update

Police Scotland are integrated within NPCC structures in relation to Air Support.

We also benefit from being closely aligned to key academic projects which look at global advancement and opportunities. This includes Glasgow University.

Commitment 7	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Work with CAA and partners to explore and develop new technologies and approaches to support BVLOS RPAS usage		Previous	Current
Update			
May 2025 Update			
Ongoing			
March 2025 Update			

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We have established professional relationships with CAA colleagues who remain supportive of our approach and have recently approved the up to date Safety Case for Drone operations by Police Scotland.

We are aware of BVLOS pilot projects running elsewhere in the UK and await the assessment of these projects.

Consultation with our communities is considered a requirement prior to moving into this space and recommended that this is progressed in short term.

BTP colleagues are considering the advancement of BVLOS in Scotland as an extension to tactical options deployed elsewhere in UK.

Strategic Priority: Upskilling our People

Commitment 8	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Explore and develop a fit for purpose learning and development programme including comprehensive CPD.	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<i>May 2025 Update</i> All air support personnel are subject to an ongoing programme of CPD and development. This has been extended to include Air Observers (from the helicopter support cadre) being exposed to enhanced training in an air simulator which tests responses to all major incidents. It is anticipated that in the forthcoming months similar opportunities will be exploited within the drone cadre. <i>March 2025 Update</i> All pilots meet regularly and share experiences. A formal CPD requirement is part of the CAA Safety Case and is subject to ongoing delivery			

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Commitment 9	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Seek learning and best practice from international partners.	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
May 2025 Update			
This remains ongoing as per March update.			
March 2025 Update			
Work will commence with International Development Unit colleagues to reach out to international partners to understand the use of air assets by international policing partners.			
This will be supported by our work with academic partners			

Commitment 10	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Develop air support champions scheme	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
May 2025 Update			

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As the drone programme continues to grow, gather momentum and build a positive reputation in local policing divisions, we will look to exploit this in the Autumn of 2025 by developing champions scheme to promote the services and capabilities further.

March 2025 Update

This has been commenced with RPAS pilots promoting Air Support services in general as part of their awareness raising programme of inputs to local policing partners.

Air Support Operational leads have explored opportunities to promote the assets to local policing divisions, especially in localities where demand has been typically low and unmet.

In the next quarter we will focus on developing the champions scheme with local policing divisions.

Strategic Priority: Enhancing Partnerships

Commitment 11	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
		Previous	Current
Be open to Scrutiny from internal and external regulators	CI Colin Convery		
Update			
<i>May 2025</i>			
We continue to benefit from positive working relationships with our colleagues in CAA. At this time we are reviewing our operating safety case and our training programme authorities in the next quarter. Both are annual reviews and will be subject to significant scrutiny by CAA.			

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March 2025

Police Scotland are subject to regular audit and review by CAA – this is both planned and can be unannounced. An initial audit proved very positive with very minor learning points identified and which have now been implemented.

A further audit is anticipated in the next quarter

Reporting has commenced to Scottish Police Authority on progress being made with Air Support Strategic Plan.

Air Support Monitoring Group provides quarterly review opportunities.

Commitment 12	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Embed the data ethics framework and rights based pathway to support any future consideration regarding the adoption of new or emerging technology'	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<p><i>May 2025 Update</i></p> <p>We have engaged with Strategy & Innovation colleagues over the last quarter and a programme of consultation has been drafted to look at our future use of technology through established engagement processes as well as engaging with PS ethics panels. It is anticipated this will provide vital insight into public opinions around the use of technology, in particular drone asset capability. Subject to approval at the June Air Support Monitoring Group, this programme will be delivered over the next 6 months.</p> <p><i>March 2025 update</i></p> <p>Ongoing and subject to scrutiny.</p> <p>Features on Specialist Services risk register.</p>			

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Significant work has been done to overcome technological barriers which have inhibited the quality of service provided by drones due to the demand on telecoms networks at major events, or alternatively poor service in remote locations. This has seen the ASU identify Starlink technology as the preferred option for maximising the quality of images which are directed to clients including C3 Event Rooms.

Strategic Priority: Sustainability

Commitment 13	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
		Previous	Current
Deliver best value to the public and support environmental sustainability	CI Colin Convery		
Update			
<i>May 2025 Update</i> As above, and as per March 2025 update, Babcock are now about to introduce the use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel in the helicopter asset. The continued increase in use of drones supports environmental sustainability <i>March 2025 Update</i> The increased use of drone assets has contributed to environmental sustainability and delivers on Police Scotland environmental strategy. Babcock are currently exploring opportunities to introduce Environmentally Sustainable Fuel which would put Police Scotland air services at the forefront of advancements in policing services.			

Strategic Priority: Enhancing Partnerships

Commitment 14	Tactical Owner	RPAG Status	
Work with emergency and public sector bodies to establish an Air Support cross-sector group	CI Colin Convery	Previous	Current
Update			
<p><i>May 2025 Update</i></p> <p>Approaches to other emergency service providers will be formalised in the next quarter. It is anticipated that an approach will be made to the Tri-Services group, via Policing Together colleagues, to engage SFRS and SAS colleagues. A separate approach will be made to HM Coastguard colleagues.</p> <p>It is anticipated that some of the work will be limited in the short term due to partner agencies current contract commitments. This will be explored, fully understood and reported on in future updates.</p> <p><i>March 2025 Update</i></p> <p>Police Scotland are subject to regular audit and review by CAA – this is both planned and can be unannounced. An initial audit proved very positive with very minor learning points identified and which have now been implemented.</p> <p>A further audit is anticipated in the next quarter</p> <p>Reporting has commenced to Scottish Police Authority on progress being made with Air Support Strategic Plan.</p>			