



Authority Meeting

30 November 2023

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 28 September 2023
at Merchant's House, Glasgow

Board Members present:	Martyn Evans (Chair) Jane Ryder (Vice Chair) Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Katharina Kasper Fiona McQueen Grant Macrae Michelle Miller Catriona Stewart Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Mary Pitcaithly
In attendance:	<u>Scottish Police Authority (SPA)</u> Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer <u>Police Scotland</u> Deputy Chief Constable Designate Fiona Taylor Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Temporary Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs Deputy Chief Officer David Page <u>Forensic Services</u> Fiona Douglas, Director

	National Crime Agency Graeme Biggar, Director General
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1. WELCOME AND STANDING ITEMS

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

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** apologies from Mary Pitcaithly,
- **NOTE** no declarations of interest or connections,
- **NOTE** no other business,
- **AGREE** that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Board would consider items 9 and 10 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.
 - Item 9 – 24 August Minute,
 - Item 10 – Draft Annual Report and Accounts 2022/23

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **ADOPT** the minute of the 24 August 2023,
- **AGREE** the action log,
- **NOTE** one decision was taken via correspondence since the last full Authority meeting in August 2023. This was to make an approval in relation to the staff pay award.

3. SPA CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair confirmed the Chief Executive had been informed that the outcome of the Trade Union ballot on the staff pay offer had been accepted. The Chair congratulated all involved in the negotiation process. The Chief Executive Lynn Brown (LBrown) also congratulated those involved.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

4. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on business progressed since the last Authority meeting through the:

- Complaints and Conduct Committee
- Exceptional Circumstances Committee
- People Committee
- Policing Performance Committee
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
- Resources Committee

In addition to the written reports, comment was provided on a number of other areas:

- Resources Committee Chair, Grant Macrae (GMacrae), provided a summary of budget monitoring reporting to the Committee since its approval in March 2023. At the latest Committee on 22 September, it was reported that mitigating actions had been agreed by Police Scotland's Executive Team, however, the management accounts to the end of July 2023 showed the projected overspend had increased to £19.2m, therefore further steps were under consideration. The Resources Committee were informed the operational impact of the proposed £19.2m savings was still being studied, therefore Police Scotland's Executive Team could not provide assurance it could be delivered within the next six months. As such, GMacrae confirmed the Resources Committee do not have confidence in the delivery of the plan to bring the budget back to a break-even position by 31 March 2024. The Committee acknowledged £19.2m is 1.5% of the expenditure forecast so agree it should be achievable with strong management and tracking. The Committee have requested monthly meetings with the Police Scotland Executive Team and Finance Team to monitor, with outcomes reported to the Authority.
- The People Committee Chair asked when it was likely the budget would be balanced. GMacrae responded that work on mitigating steps and the impact of them would be reported in October to provide a clearer picture.
- Policing Performance Committee, Alasdair Hay, commented that there was a connection between resource outputs and desired outcomes. The Committee were concerned that detection rates and response times were falling in several areas, which Police Scotland stated was caused by a reduction in resources. The Committee recognised that Police Scotland will prioritise high threat, risk and

harm areas, but the Committee required further information to better understand what areas will be prioritised.

- People Committee Chair, Fiona McQueen, confirmed the Strategic Workforce Plan and People Strategy would be brought to the next Committee, and thereafter to the Authority in November 2023.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

5. DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE DESIGNATE'S REPORT

DCCDTaylor provided a detailed summary of her report, specifically drawing attention to the following areas:

- Serious violence including homicide.
- Serious organised crime
- Naloxone
- Pay Awards for Officers and Staff
- Recruitment

In addition to the written report, DCCDTaylor provided comment on a number of other areas:

- DCCDTaylor commented on the increasingly complex demand and noted sexual offending and cyber enabled crime had increased from pre-pandemic levels. Recent and upcoming legislative changes have also brought significant implications in terms of training, implementation and enforcement, and pressure across public services has led to an increase in public contacts with Police Scotland.
- DCCDTaylor stated that the revenue budget represented real terms cut which has not allowed policing to maintain the workforce and make pay awards. Therefore, officer numbers have reduced, and police staff costs are being reduced proportionately. Several ways savings are being made were outlined, such as pausing staff recruitment (except business-critical areas), managing overtime spend, and reviewing Senior Officer command structures and support services.
- DCCDTaylor confirmed the Northeast Policing Pilot will be fully evaluated, with feedback welcomed from communities and partners.
- DCCDTaylor confirmed proposals to accelerate disposals of 30 police buildings were presented to the Resources Committee and detailed plans for that work are now developing. DCCDTaylor highlighted

that consolidating the estate has led to over 60 co-locations with partners which is more sustainable.

- DCCDTaylor confirmed Police Scotland are determined to deliver a balanced budget in 2023-24 and are focused on driving organisational efficiency in order to protect service delivery. However, levels of service provided to the public relating to some issues will reduce as a result.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair congratulated Police Scotland for their achievements in the use of Naloxone, noting it was a good example of how new technology is introduced.
- The Chair requested a future discussion on recorded police warnings and asked that consideration be given to a joint publication and joint seminar to discuss public policy issues.
- Noting Police Scotland were represented at the Terrorism Conference in Washington, DCC Malcolm Graham (DCCGraham) referenced the work of the International Development and Innovation Unit which is funded through the Commonwealth Office and the Scottish Government. DCCGraham commented how international work was an important part of the force's responsibility, which brought the opportunity to develop leadership and relationship building.
- In response to current issues face by firearm officers in the MET, Members questioned how morale was within Police Scotland's firearms team. DCCDTaylor commended those who volunteer to take on firearm responsibilities and risk, highlighting they are highly trained and are supported by senior leaders in Police Scotland. DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) advised that morale is good but there is ongoing concern of the situation within the MET. Members were advised Police Scotland are fully sighted on the issue within the MET as there is representation on all MET gold groups. Mutual aid is being supplied by forces throughout the UK, but more so by forces nearer London.
- Members raised concern on the lack of articulation of prioritisation, and questioned why the current narrative was there are insufficient funds when it was agreed the budget could be managed in March 2023. DCCDTaylor complimented the Chief Financial Officer's portfolio for being robust and challenging in the financial circumstances, and informed Members work to drive efficiencies

within corporate support will begin imminently under the Policing our Communities programme. Some areas of transformational change will also be accelerated. Recognising there was an increased demand on policing, the organisation is looking to respond in a more efficient way and work continues to ascertain how prioritisation will look. DCC Malcom Graham (DCCGraham) added that he understood the importance of bringing the budget back in line and why there is an appetite to see prioritisation. DCCGraham noted that the risks flagged when the budget was agreed have now materialised which has changed the environment. Members were informed officer numbers were below 17k when the budget was announced which has tightened timescales for decision making. DCCGraham stated that organisation will be in a better position for looking at scenarios for next year. Changes to Road Policing, preserving 999 service performance, and the Northeast Policing Pilot are measures which demonstrate strategic intent on focusing on high-risk areas. Greater detail will come through higher level strategic work, but some detail will not be specific due to the complexity of service. Members heard more detail can be provided once prioritisation decisions have been.

- Members raised concern that savings made in the next six months would not be long term. DCCDTaylor responded that most of the strategic activity will drive long term benefits, but short-term responses would be around overtime reduction and reevaluating fixed term contracts in areas that sit out with prioritisation areas. DCO David Page (DCOPage) added that if decisions made do not have the required effect, short term contributions will be required. DCOPage stated that reviews of the non-pay budget and reform budget have been taken and provided examples of changes to both. Members heard a review of the transformation programme will also be undertaken but received assurance that Body Worn Video, DESC and other core programmes would be protected.
- Members observed that the impact of budget constraints should be communicated to partners as soon as possible as in many areas there is a joined-up approach.
- Members were assured it was Police Scotland's intention to balance the budget by the end of the financial year.
- Members sought information on what steps are being taken to maintain detection rates and understand demand. DCCDTaylor

responded that officer number reductions have had an impact on detection rates. Working with partner organisations and making reasonable asks has reduced demand however Police Scotland will continue to respond to mental health and wellbeing calls. DCCConnors commented that increased complexity of demand requires a proportionate response, which the Northeast Policing Pilot is aiming towards.

- Members sought and received assurance that lessons learned from the Northeast Policing Pilot will be incorporated into the pilot evaluation. DCCDTaylor stated that engagement with local communities will also be included in the evaluation and all feedback will contribute to the decision of whether to roll it out further.
- Members were provided examples of some of the preventative work ongoing such as road safety awareness. Work is ongoing on the strategic approach to community well-being to help inform and decrease demand in the area.
- The Chair noted that when the budget was set, both the Authority and the Police Scotland Executive Team acknowledged that service prioritisation would be inevitable. At the same time Police Scotland's Executive Team committed that the budget would be balance whilst continuing to police safely and effectively. The Chair reiterated the recent reporting to the Resources Committee and emphasised that the Authority has been clear that urgent and effective action is required to balance the budget. The Chair noted the Authority were disappointed with the speed so far to manage the budget and introduce mitigations, therefore clear metrics for decisions and increased reporting on planned mitigations were required.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.
- **AGREE** the below action:

Joint publication and joint seminar to be arranged to discuss public policy issues relating to recorded police warnings.

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6. NATIONAL CRIME AGENCY IN SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chair welcomed Director General Graeme Biggar (GBiggar) to the meeting, who provided an overview of the main responsibilities of the

NCA: leading the UK response to serious and organised crime, investigating the highest harm offenders, and to provide specialist capabilities to law enforcement organisations.

GBiggar detailed how the threat level is assessed and advised that the National Strategic Assessment 2022 showed serious organised crime was increasing due to geo-political position, technology advances, and the impact of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis.

Members heard the emerging trends are: the evolution of cyber-crime, increase in synthetic opioids and increase in 3D printed firearms. The NCA's response is through the National Control Strategy and associated strategic action plan. The National Strategic Tasking meeting includes Police Scotland and analyses progress and sets targets.

GBiggar summarised the disruption statistics detailed within the paper, highlighting the focus is on significant disruptions. Members heard the impact in Scotland is not restricted to disruptions within Scotland but nationally and internationally. GBiggar provided examples of international disruptions relating to drugs intent for the UK.

GBiggar told Members the NCA assessed that the number of people thought to hold a sexual risk to children was 680,000 - 830,000. Whilst geographical locations are unknown, a pro-rata estimate for Scotland was 70,000-87,000. Members heard online use had exacerbated the problem, increasing the threat.

GBiggar praised Police Scotland on their use of Naloxone, noting their experience and lessons learned was being used to encourage further roll out in England and Wales. GBiggar concluded by stating the Police Scotland are one of NCA's most important partners and he hoped the NCA played a part in decreasing demand.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair requested the NCA report annually to the Authority and twice yearly to the Policing Performance Committee. The Chair noted the Authority want to hold the NCA to account in a transparent and proportionate way, to understand it's added value and impact, whilst receiving third party assurance of Police Scotland's work.
- Members sought comment on the NCA's work on corruption and heard examples of NCA's work internationally. GBiggar stated that domestically, the biggest focus of corruption was at the border, and advised Members that work into corruption within Local Government

and planning authorities was led by the National Investigation Service.

- Members sought comment on what added value the NCA brings to Scotland's capability to deal with fraud. GBiggar responded that online fraud grew during the pandemic and whilst it has decreased slightly, it is still high. Statistics and reports into action fraud have shown numbers have stabilised, in part due to the NCA Strategic Action Plan which joins public sector and private sector organisations to tackle fraud. The work is pro-active, and intelligence led, and the NCA can contribute resource to help investigate complex crimes.
- Members questioned whether there any barriers to establishing close collaboration between law enforcement and private sector organisations. GBiggar confirmed relationships with the financial sector and telecommunication companies are strong. Effective fraud responses from financial organisations have meant techniques have moved into social media, so collaborative work with the technology sector is growing.
- Members heard organisational learning between NCA and Police Scotland is two way and provides shared benefits.
- Members questioned how the NCA can keep ahead of fraud and heard the NCA have specialist experts whose role is to disrupt. GBiggar acknowledged support from technology companies can be challenging but work continues to improve.
- DCCConnors detailed the positive impact from the NCA working within the Scottish Crime Campus, which centred around fast time discussion and sharing of capabilities. DCCConnors informed Members of the City of London Police Peer Review on fraud crime and how work to address recommendations was ongoing, as well as progress with the Abertay University Professional Reference Group. Members received assurance that intelligence from NCA and joint collaborative working contributes to Police Scotland's detection work against fraud and child abuse.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

7. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. LBrown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper and informed Members that there are two key assurances missing from two external audits relating to pensions. Audit Scotland have advised these assurances are delayed due to effects of Covid-19 recovery and are due mid-October. Members were advised the consequences of this was a final audit opinion cannot be given which will delay laying the Accounts in parliament. LBrown emphasised that SPA, Police Scotland and Forensic Services staff agreed in 2020 they would meet original deadlines set for the Annual Report and Account deadlines, which they accomplished in each of the last three years. LBrown advised Members she would write to the Auditor General to convey their disappointment.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

8. FORENSIC SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed recent activities within Forensic Services. Fiona Douglas highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were informed the Crown Office were expected to sign the MOU within the coming days.
- Members sought an update on progress following the transfer of Post Mortem toxicology and heard detailed work has been undertaken by Forensic Services and estates, as well as work to validate processes. Forensic Services are on track to deliver the implementation of service levels agreed with Crown Office by the end of October 2023. Caseload has also reduced by 24%.
- Members sought comment on the balance between demand and capacity and heard up until 2022/23 there had been a misalignment. Previously, demand had outstripped capacity in areas with large volume crime, but this has been rectified in part by the new operating model and performance is improved. Members were told more work is still required around strategic workforce planning to better forecast demand. FDouglas stated that now demand and

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capacity was better aligned, work was progressing to increase the speed in which intelligence for volume crime can be provided to partners.

- Members were assured that Forensic Services are working within their approved budget, and heard planning is underway to identify long term efficiencies. FDouglas reiterated the desire to have improved demand forecasts to ensure the service is better equipped to respond to partners, and to provide a clear indication of what is required in the current economic climate. FDouglas stated the organisation was still going through transformational change but was starting to see the benefits.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

End.