



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	22 May 2025
Location	Clayton Hotel, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Committee and Oversight Group Reports
Presented By	Committee and Oversight Group Chairs/Members
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To provide the Authority with an update on business progressed through the following meetings which have met since the last Authority Meeting:

- Forensic Services Committee
- Legal Committee
- Policing Together Oversight Group

OFFICIAL

Committee	Chair/Member	Meeting Date	Page
Forensic Services Committee	Paul Edie	8.5.25	3
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Policing Together Oversight Group	Tom Halpin	16.5.25	9

Summary report from Forensic Services Committee

8 May 2025

Paul Edie, Committee Chair

The formal minute of the public items of business will be available at the meeting scheduled for 7 August 2025. This will also be published on the SPA's website. A full recording of the public items of business taken at this meeting can be accessed at [Forensic Services Committee – 8th May 2025](#)

MAIN ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- Forensic Services Directors Report
- Forensic Services performance Report Q4
- Drug Driving
- Forensic Services Financial Monitoring Q4
- HMICS Assurance Review of Forensic Toxicology Provision – Improvement Plan and Timeline for Delivery
- Forensic Services Change Programme
- Refresh of Forensic Services Strategy
- Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan
- Staff Survey – Short Life Working Group
- Joint Assurance Review of the acquisition, retention, use and destruction of DNA for criminal justice and police purposes in Scotland
- Strategic Risk

KEY ISSUES RAISED

Forensic Services Directors Report

Members welcomed and paid tribute to the team for the progress made in relation to the final phase of implementation of the Operating Model. Members were also updated on a visit by Forensic Alliance Wales to Gartcosh to understand the learning from Scotland in relation our model of delivery for Forensic Science. Members were advised that this was an opportunity to share learning in terms of leadership and culture. Members were assured that the Drug Driving Full Business Case was now being prioritised with productive discussions taking place with Police Scotland colleagues.

Forensic Services Performance Report Q4

Members welcomed a positive Forensic Services Performance Report for Q4 2024/25, particularly in relation to firearms. Members sought assurance around urgent case work targets not being met for postmortem toxicology and were advised that there have been some issues in relation to instrumentation and staff absence, however, it is hoped that improvements will be shown within the upcoming months. Members noted concerns around overdue timescales in relation to laboratory delivery and were assured that there are no risks to cases being time barred, with ongoing dialogue with partners taking place in relation to this area.

Drug Driving

Members were advised that whilst demand had increased by 18% it is currently balanced with a combination of internal output and outsourcing support. Performance remains strong both for Section 5A and Section 4 cases, resulting in good compliance to MoU targets and no cases at risk of being time barred. During discussions around the MoU, Police Scotland advised that although they are committed to the MoU, when offences are encountered there is a need to deal with them and bring people to justice. Forensic Services assured members that they share the ambition of Police Scotland to roll out roadside testing further, however, in the absence of a Long-Term Sustainable Model (LTSM), there is a need for further discussions around the medium-term plan and what can be done to manage that whilst dealing with costs in relation to additional outsourcing. Members were advised that although there have been no risks raised by the outsourcing organisation, there is also no potential at this stage to work with other providers due to their non-compliance with GDPR and lack of capacity. Members sought clarity around the communications plan in relation to Drug Driving and Police Scotland have committed to providing a written update on what is being done in terms of communications and partners in this area. Members continued to ask if there was any opportunity to reduce timescales for the LTSM and have been advised that with a project team now established and it is hoped that timescales will become clearer. Members noted concerns around prioritisation in this area and were assured that conversations have progressed this month with the project teams Terms of Reference is now in place.

Financial Monitoring Report Q4

Members welcomed a report detailing the financial position of Forensic Services for Period 11 (28 February 2025) of the financial year 2024/25. Members welcomed the £0.5m underspend on revenue, however, noted concerns around the 50% underspend on capital. It was noted a need for lessons learned in this area and how capital spend is being managed across FS.

HMICS Assurance Review of Forensic Toxicology Provision – Improvement Plan and Timeline for Delivery

Members welcomed a positive update on progress on the HMICS Assurance Review of Forensic Toxicology provision and timeline for delivery. Members were advised that 12 of the 25 recommendations had now been closed with progress being made on the remaining outstanding recommendations.

Forensic Services Change Programme Update

Members welcomed an update on progress against the Forensic Services Change Programme Plan. Members spoke about the Forensic Services Core Operating System (FS COS) and sought clarity on the thinking around data storage (cloud based or server-based solution). Members were assured that there had been detailed discussions with digital and procurement colleagues at PS with FS committed to getting the best solutions for data storage. Members were further assured that the voice of stakeholders and learning from DESC has been taken into consideration, however, FS remain openminded to ensure that the system agreed on is fit for purpose.

Refresh of Forensic Services Refresh

Members were provided with the Forensic Strategy 2025-2030 and have recommended it to the Authority Meeting for approval with the caveat that it is updated to include the Policing Plan, which supports the FS Strategy.

Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan Update

Members welcomed an update on work to develop a strategic workforce plan for Forensic Services which is on track to deliver in September 2025. The committee look forward to receiving sight of the full plan to the October 2025 committee.

Staff Survey – Short Life Working Group Update

Members welcomed an update on the progress of the Staff Survey Short Life Working Group and will welcome a further update to the committee in August 2025.

Joint Assurance Review of the acquisition, retention, use and destruction of DNA for criminal justice and police purposes in Scotland

Members were joined by Brian Plastow, Scottish Biometrics Commissioner, who provided an overview of this joint review that was laid before parliament in February 2025, and the recommendations contained. Brian Plastow advised that the strategic conclusion is that DNA is being used lawfully, effectively and ethically, however, there is a need for Police Scotland to strengthen some of the governance around this area. It was agreed that the reporting of the recommendations would be considered by SPA officers.

Strategic Risk

Members were provided with the opportunity to review FS Strategic Risks.

CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS REACHED

- Police Scotland to provide a written update on what is being done in terms of a communications plan in relation to Drug Driving and what is being done with partners in this area.
- Forensic Services Strategy to be updated to include reference to the Policing Plan which supports the Strategy.
- SPA Officers to confirm where the progress of recommendations noted within the Joint Assurance Review of the acquisition, retention, use and destruction of DNA for criminal justice and police purposes in Scotland should be reported.

Summary report from Legal Committee

13 May 2025

Chris Creegan, Chair

The formal minute of the public items of business will be available at the meeting scheduled for 12 August 2025. This will also be published on the SPA's website. A full recording of the public items of business taken at this meeting can be accessed at [Legal Committee – 13 May 2025](#)

MAIN ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- Legal Services Claims Handling - Quarterly Statistical Information Report - Trends & Analysis in litigation
- Litigation Overview
- Litigation – Finance Update
- Operation Tarn – Finance Update
- Police Appeals Tribunals

KEY ISSUES RAISED

Legal Services Claims Handling - Quarterly Statistical Information Report - Trends & Analysis in litigation

Members were provided with overview on settlement figures arising from claims raised against Police Scotland. Following recent requests from members in terms of report detail and work currently being undertaken by Police Scotland Legal Services, the report presented had and will continue to be developed from previous iterations. Members were assured that the increase in motor liabilities is a financial increase due to supply chain issues resulting in longer car rentals in place, increases in parts and labour along with energy payments now being added as sub charges. Members were assured that the number of settlements in this area had reduced.

Members have asked that future end of year reports summarise key learning themes being captured and taken forward by Police Scotland and

other organisations involved. In addition, the committee discussed that although learning can be a focus for high value claims, there is a need to consider learning from lower value claims. Police Scotland have agreed to progress discussions in this area with the look to potentially capturing learning within future reports.

Litigation Overview

Members were provided with a report which detailed significant ongoing litigation involving the SPA and Police Scotland.

Litigation – Finance Update

Members welcomed a high-level overview of legal liabilities and legal costs for the current financial year and have been clear on the need to understand what measures are being taken in terms of best value around litigation costs.

Operation Tarn – Finance Update

Members welcomed a report providing an overview on the expenditure for Operation Tarn providing an understanding of all legal expenses and liabilities for Police Scotland. In addition to Operation Tarn, members have requested a fuller public inquiries report for the next Legal Committee.

Police Appeals Tribunals

Members were provided with an update on the current position in relation to various appeals to Police Appeals Tribunals which are presently ongoing.

CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS REACHED

- Members **AGREED** that future end of year reports summarise key learning themes being captured and taken forward by Police Scotland and other organisations involved.
- Members **AGREED** the need to understand how the reduction in relation to motor claims has been achieved and how that can be built on.
- Members **AGREED** the need to understand how the learning from lower-level claims can be captured and presented within future reports.

Summary report from Policing Together Oversight Group

16 May 2025

Tom Halpin, Chair

MAIN ITEMS OF BUSINESS

- Policing Together Progress Report
- Update on Review & Inspection Recommendations
- Policing Together Oversight Group Annual Report

KEY ISSUES RAISED

Members of the Oversight Group considered an update from ACC Paton on the Policing Together programme. Members were encouraged by an assurance that understanding and evidencing impact of activity is a key focus for Police Scotland.

The programme has been further strengthened with the addition of 2 new pillars of activity: Learning and Communities. The Learning pillar builds on the IRG recommendations and includes two training packages addressing both senior leaders and the wider organisation. The Communities pillar continues to develop the new Independent Advisory Council, consolidating legacy reference and review groups, in addition to building out and diversifying the cohort of Community Advisors.

It was explained that the cultural dashboard has moved from testing to now being used by relevant colleagues in the Policing Together, People & Development and Analytics teams. This holistic overview will enable oversight and understanding of how our people are feeling using data and insights. Members heard that the dashboard will be used not only to identify priority areas for improvement and measure impacts of activity but will support evaluation of impact.

The Authority will be represented, along with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders, at an upcoming event on 29 May at which Policing Together colleagues will provide information regarding the review of policies in relation to sex and gender. Details will be provided on the scope of the review and the recommendations which are currently being considered. There will be an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss these recommendations and to ask questions of Police Scotland colleagues.

The Group welcomed assurance that the effort made to simplify, manage and identify themes across the multiple cultural and EDI recommendations, identified across multiple audits and inspections, has now resulted in Police Scotland having appropriate mechanisms in place to deliver on these recommendations.

The Group considered a detailed Annual Report of the work of the Oversight Group. Prepared by the Authority's Head of Workforce Governance. The significant progress made was recognised and commended by members of the Group and Members share Police Scotland's desire to build on the good work that has been delivered. The following is a summary of areas of good progress made by the Oversight Group – covering achievements to date, work currently underway and developing work - along with next steps/look ahead for the coming year.

- Reiteration of commitment to being an inclusive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation
- Refresh of Policing Together Strategy to include service-delivery focus
- Development of revised joint Equality Outcomes, aligned with Policing Together Strategy
- Work to develop a single, prioritised delivery plan
- Work to develop a 'culture dashboard'
- Development of a 'maturity continuum on becoming an anti-racist organisation'
- Plan to establish a single Independent Policing Advisory Council
- Introduction of training focussed on institutional discrimination and what it means to be anti-discriminatory
- Process in place to ensure policies are free of unconscious bias or discriminatory language in design and implementation
- Introduction of a non-residential probationer course, widening access to a policing career
- Commissioning of independent research on approaches by policing bodies to embed a culture of anti-racism

Look Ahead

- Introduce formal reporting against Policing Together delivery plan
- Improve data and insight to enable greater understanding of need, inform targeted action and enable improved measurement of impact
- Ensure meaningful, consistent use of Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessments (EqHRIAs)

CONCLUSIONS/ACTIONS REACHED

- Members continue to recognise and commend Police Scotland's commitment to being an inclusive, anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation and recognise the continued effort to achieve this.