



Legal Committee

13 May 2025

Minutes of the Legal Committee held on Tuesday 11 March 2025 via Webex

Authority Members present	Caroline Stuart (Committee Chair) Grant Macrae Tom Halpin Pauline Howie Chris Creegan
Authority Member apologies	
In attendance	Police Scotland Chief Superintendent Helen Harrison James Douglas, Legal Services Manager Clairelouse Ritchie, Senior Finance Business Partner Insp David Bellingham, SECU Gillian Douds, SECU SPA Robin Johnston, Head of Legal Eric Leggat, Solicitor Colette Craig, Governance Support Officer

1. Introduction and Welcome

1.1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed Members and attendees to the meeting.

1.2 Apologies

DCC Alan Speirs, Deputy Chief Constable
Duncan Campbell
Susan Montgomery

1.3 Declarations of Interest and Connections

There were no declarations of interests or connections.

1.4 Decisions taken since last meeting

The Committee took decisions in private under section 20 of the standing orders, on the 23rd December 2024 and 21st February 2025.

1.5 Decision on taking business in private (Item 6-11)

In accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Committee agreed to consider items 6-11 on the agenda in private.

The Chair advised that during a recent audit of members attendance and expenses it was highlighted that Committee Member Tom Halpin had been omitted from the Legal Committee minute from 19th July 2024. The Chair asked members to approve that this minute is updated to include Tom Halpin's attendance.

Members **AGREED** to update the minute from 19th July 2024 to reflect the attendance of Tom Halpin.

20251203-LC-001: Colette Craig to update the minute from 19th July 2024 to reflect the attendance of Tom Halpin.

2. Minute and Actions from previous meeting:

2.1 Minute from meeting held on 7 November 2024 for approval

Members **AGREED** the Minute from the Legal Committee on 7 November 2024 was an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Rolling Action Log and Matters Arising

James Douglas (JDouglas) provided members with a visual overview of additional information (number and nature of files opened by Police Scotland Legal Services) that could be included within the quarterly statistical report at the next committee meeting onwards.

Members welcomed the detail provided and asked that it was joined up with the financial information to inform members on what cases are live and what has been settled since the previous quarter.

Members asked that the number of claims open against claims settled would be helpful and how that compared over time with narrative around significant variances. Chris Creegan and Pauline Howie offered to assist Police Scotland Legal Services on how this could be presented within charts.

Members **AGREED** based on the updates provided, to close action 20240808-LC-001, 20241107-LC-002 and 20241107-LC-001 on the basis of a new action being created and discharge at the next committee meeting in May 2025.

3. Legal Services Claims Handling - Quarterly Statistical Information Report - Trends & Analysis in litigation – James Douglas

JDouglas provided an overview on settlement figures arising from claims raised against Police Scotland. During discussions the following matters were raised;

- Members asked for future reports to split employer liability claims and accident at work claims. JDouglas confirmed that this information will be available as the data is now captured in that way within the claims register.

Following the closure of actions 20240808-LC-001, 20241107-LC-002 and 20241107-LC-001, JDouglas to update the Claims Handling – Statistical Report. The improvements should include:

- narrative explaining the content of tables/run charts and any themes or trends e.g. comparisons between current year statistics and figures for previous years
- a breakdown of the different types of claims in the employer liability and public liability categories, so that e.g. employer liability claims are clearly divided into Employment Tribunal claims and “accidents at work” claims
- tables/charts to allow members to understand any trends
- details of any learning from settled cases.

Members **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** the following action;

20251203-LC-002: James Douglas to ensure future Claims Handling – Statistical Reports include the following:

- **narrative explaining the content of tables/run charts and any themes or trends e.g. comparisons between current year statistics and figures for previous years**
- **a breakdown of the different types of claims in the employer liability and public liability categories, so that e.g. employer liability claims are clearly divided into Employment Tribunal claims and “accidents at work” claims**
- **tables/charts to allow members to understand any trends**
- **details of any learning from settled cases.**

4. Committee Effectiveness – Vanessa Ewing-Blair

Members were provided with a report which noted the findings of a recent survey conducted with Board Members and stakeholders, seeking their feedback on the overall effectiveness of the committee. The report was for Members consideration and sought to inform overall evaluation of the committee’s effectiveness during 2024/25, and subsequent assurance report to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee in May 2025. During discussions the following matters were raised;

Members welcomed the report and noted that the committee is keen to have a better understanding on the work carried out by Police Scotland Legal to understand the volume and flow through, rather than just focusing on settlements. Vanessa Ewing-Blair (VEBlair) advised there is learning around impact and pace of change and how lessons learned are coming through. This and other themes have come through other committees and will be looked by SPA corporate to understand how best to articulate that.

Members **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** that the committee chair, will sign the Committee Assurance Certificate. This confirms that the committee have fulfilled its obligations.

5. Committee Work Plan – Committee Chair

Members agreed that finance updates and legal data updates should be reflected on the work plan to assist with committee preparation and agenda planning.

20251203-LC-003: Colette Craig to ensure a finance update and legal data update are reflected on the work plan to assist with committee preparation and agenda planning.