



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2023</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>MS Teams</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Community Confidence Action Research Project</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Martin Smith, Strategy and Research Lead</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this paper is to provide the Committee with further detail relating to the ongoing Community Confidence Action Research Project, a project jointly sponsored by the Authority and Police Scotland.

The Project is nearing the conclusion of its second year and is expected to be delivered by the end of 2023-24.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. In 2021-22 the Authority and Police Scotland initiated a three-year research project aimed at understanding levels of public confidence and trust in policing in areas of socio-economic deprivation, and developing 'tests of change' that may help to improve trust and confidence.
- 1.2. Year one of the project involved setting up the project's governance arrangements, bringing relevant partners on board to shape the research design, and developing selection criteria.
- 1.3. Year two of the project has seen fieldwork commence in three locations in Scotland, namely Letham in Perth, Fullarton in Irvine, North Ayrshire and Levenmouth in Fife.
- 1.4. This paper provides the Committee with further detail relating to the project and outlines the next steps planned for 2023-24 as the project approaches its conclusion.

## 2 RESEARCH PROJECT DESIGN AND GOVERNANCE

- 2.1. The research project was initiated in 2021 at the request of the Authority's Chair and the Deputy Chief Constable for Local Policing and is being delivered as a joint project by the SPA's Strategy and Performance team and Police Scotland's Prevention, Partnership and Community Wellbeing Division. One of the first steps was to set up a Project Steering Group, consisting of representation from the third sector, academia, Scottish Government, the College of Policing, as well as Police Scotland and the Authority. The Steering Group was established in September 2021 and oversaw the development of the research design and selection criteria for localities across Scotland.
- 2.2. A primary aim of the [Project](#) is to gain additional insight into the relationship between deprivation and levels of trust and confidence in policing. Intersectional research carried out by the University of Edinburgh on Scottish Crime and Justice Survey data (and presented to the Policing Performance Committee in [May 2020](#)) identified that socio-economic deprivation was a critical factor in influencing levels of trust and confidence.
- 2.3. In addition to developing our understanding of trust and confidence in policing, the project also aims to work with communities to identify small-scale and replicable 'tests of change' that may help to positively affect local trust and confidence levels. 'Tests of change' may be completely innovative in nature or have been tried elsewhere. Whether successful 'tests of change' are identified through the research, or not, a positive outcome from the project

will be to strengthen the relationship locally between communities and local policing as a result of having conversations together, framed by the principles of co-design, and partnership implementation.

- 2.4. Learning from the project will be made available across Local Policing to support upscaling of any successful 'tests of change' identified, alongside a toolkit shaped by the experience of carrying out the research.

### **3 KEY PROGRESS AND LEARNING TO DATE**

- 3.1. Activity in 2021-22 focused on designing the research, bringing partners on board and establishing selection criteria for adopting locations.
- 3.2. Locations have been selected based on a combination of factors: (a) positioning on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) in relation to the national picture and the wider local authority; (b) police intelligence relating to levels of trust and confidence in policing in communities (c) locations where social capital, partnership arrangements and willingness to participate were judged to be strong but not overly complex and (d) consideration given to how replicable the insights and learning may be.
- 3.3. The Steering Group has so far adopted four locations to work in: Letham in Perth (fieldwork commenced in July 2022), Fullarton in Irvine, North Ayrshire (fieldwork commenced in November 2022) and Levenmouth in Fife (fieldwork commenced in November 2022). Fieldwork in the fourth location – Wick – is anticipated to commence in the spring of 2023.
- 3.4. One of the key benefits of conducting the research in a phased manner is the ability to document learning as the research progresses and adapt the engagement approach accordingly. This learning will also be captured and incorporated into a toolkit for practitioners, which will be a legacy benefit from the project.

### **4 PROJECT OUTLINE FOR 2023-24**

- 4.1. The research project is expected to conclude in March 2024. A number of publications will be produced and shared with partners and those involved in the research activities: (a) location-specific evaluations (b) an overall evaluation and (c) a practitioner toolkit.
- 4.2. At present, fieldwork is active in three localities. In Letham, Perth, the fieldwork is at an advanced stage, with community engagement, survey research, and an environmental visual audit

having been completed. Initial research findings for Letham were published in [December 2022](#), and these were used to shape a recent Community Conversation event in Letham, led jointly by the Authority, the Local Policing team and the Partnerships, Prevention and Community Wellbeing Division of Police Scotland. Themes arising include: a desire for greater police visibility; a desire to improve awareness of what modern policing involves on a daily basis, including safeguarding, public protection and other less visible activities; greater opportunities for the local community and the local police to interact with one another. A second community event is being planned for later in March, where the Local Policing team will outline proposed 'tests of change' based on all of the findings and available intelligence. These 'tests of change' are expected to be implemented in 2023.

- 4.3. Fieldwork has also commenced in Fullarton and Levenmouth, with initial community engagement activity undertaken, and surveys issued. It is expected that the fieldwork will progress to community conversations and proposals around 'tests of change' by the early summer.
- 4.4. Fieldwork in the fourth proposed location – Wick – is planned to start at the end of March 2023.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. There are/ are no financial implications in this report.

## **6 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. There are/ are no personnel implications in this report.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. There are/ are no legal implications in this report.

## **8 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. There are/ are no reputational implications in this report.

## **9 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. There are/ are no social implications in this report.

## **10 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

10.1. There are/ are no community implications in this report.

**11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1. There are/ are no equality implications in this report.

**12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1. There are/ are no environmental implications in this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.