SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY
ÙGHDARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA

Agenda Item 3.1

Meeting	**Policing Performance Committee**
Date	**12 March 2024**
Location	**MS Teams**
Title of Paper	**Community Confidence Project update**
Presented By	**Amanda Coulthard, SPA Head of Strategy and Performance and Aidan Curran, Change Advisor**
Recommendation to Members	**For Discussion**
Appendix Attached	**No**

PURPOSE

This paper provides a progress update to the Committee on the joint SPA / Police Scotland Community Confidence Action Research Project.

The paper also describes the conclusion of the delivery phase of the project and next steps regarding post-project write-up, dissemination and impact.

1.   Background and Context

1.1   In 2021 the Authority and Police Scotland initiated a three-year research project aimed at understanding levels of public confidence and trust in policing in areas experiencing socio-economic deprivation, with a view to co-developing 'tests of change' that may help to improve trust and confidence.

1.2   The Project originated as a result of a correlation being identified at a geographical level between low confidence in policing and the incidence of deprivation in communities, as measured by the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. Pooled data from the previous decade's Scottish Crime and Justice Survey was analysed by academics based at the University of Edinburgh on behalf of the Authority, with a paper being provided to the Authority in the summer of 2020.

1.3   Since 2021 Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority have been undertaking participative action research, along with key local and national partners, focused on understanding local community level confidence in policing. The project is working in four local communities across Scotland to develop small-scale, sustainable activities that may help to improve confidence.

2.   Research Project Design and Governance

2.1   The development of the project was sponsored jointly by Authority's Chair and the Deputy Chief Constable for Local Policing and is delivered jointly by the Authority's Strategy and Performance team and Police Scotland's Prevention, Partnership and Community Wellbeing division, with support from local policing teams in relevant divisional areas to deliver on-the-ground change.

2.2   A Project Steering Group was established in late 2021 and consists of representation from the public and third sector, academia, Scottish Government, the College of Policing, COSLA, as well as Police Scotland and the Authority. The Steering Group has been providing feedback and advice to Project Team on an ongoing basis.

2.3   A primary aim of the Project is to gain additional insight into the relationship between deprivation and levels of trust and confidence in policing, and use this insight to co-design, with communities, a series of small-scale and sustainable initiatives (tests of change) that may help to improve levels of trust and confidence over the long term.

3. Key Progress and Learning to Date

3.1. The project is nearing the end of the fieldwork phase and is on course to conclude this financial year as planned. The four areas participating in the Project are as follows: Letham in Perth; Irvine Fullarton in North Ayrshire; Levenmouth in Fife; and Wick in Highland. A summary of work in each area is summarised below. Further detail of work carried out in each community can be found on the Authority's dedicated web page for this Project, alongside the findings from surveys and community conversations held at various stages during the fieldwork period in each of the communities.

Letham (Perth) – Fieldwork Completed

3.2. Work in the Letham area of Perth has fully concluded, with the final report for the area having been published in November 2023 in conjunction with holding final community-based conversations in Letham. Key findings for Letham include:

- A cohesive community, viewed positively by local people;
- Participation in community improvement activities is a challenge being seen by multiple local partners, both during the COVID period and post-COVID, and exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis;
- Cross-agency issues such as antisocial behaviour, vandalism and littering, and housing/tenancy issues are cited as being problematic for the community, although low-level drug-dealing was also cited as a problem; and
- The tests of change implemented locally were not noticed by many local people, however people who had seen them largely viewed them positively, but felt that they needed more time (than three months) to embed and/or generate confidence among local people.

Irvine Fullarton (North Ayrshire) – Fieldwork Completed

3.3. Work in the Irvine Fullarton area of North Ayrshire has fully concluded, with the final report for the area having been published in February 2024 in conjunction with holding final community-based conversations in Irvine Fullarton. Summary of main findings for Irvine Fullarton:

- Seasonality plays a key role in influencing demand on policing, and feelings of safety among local people, due to the close proximity of Irvine Fullarton to a beach. Depending on the weather and the timing of school holidays/weekends, the

beach has previously attracted an influx of young people from across Western Scotland to the locality and has resulted in alcohol-related antisocial behaviour;

- There is an appetite for improved local communications from the police and partners, as well as access to points of contact for direct reporting of issues, and greater clarity on who things should be reported to;
- Additional issues raised relate to the urban nature of Irvine-Fullarton: it is an area takes in part of the town centre and a large shopping mall. Some of these spaces are identified by local people as being intimidating places at certain times of the day due to the presence of people loitering and acting rowdily; and
- The tests of change implemented locally were, like Letham in Perth, not noticed by many local people. There was no indication among people who had awareness of some or all of the tests of change, that they had higher confidence or trust in the police, however the number of people participating in the evaluation stage of the Project in Irvine-Fullarton was insufficient to form a conclusive view.

Levenmouth (Fife) – Fieldwork Completed

3.4. Work in the Levenmouth area of Fife has fully concluded, with the final report for the area having been published in February 2024 in conjunction with holding final community-based conversations in Levenmouth. Summary of main findings for Levenmouth:

- The Levenmouth area has an active and widely-recognised community planning partnership in place, called the Improving Levenmouth Together (ILT) collaborative, which the Project was able to map onto with relative ease;
- Issues raised during the surveys and community conversations largely centred on aspects of antisocial behaviour, including quad bike/off-road moped misuse in public places, as well as other youth-related antisocial behaviour; and
- In common with Letham, it was found that people who had seen, or were aware, of certain tests of change viewed these as positive developments. Local examples included a local newsletter, presentations at the Levenmouth Academy, a drop-in surgery at a local community hub, and augmenting existing foot patrols through supervisors patrolling locally in uniform.

Wick (Highland) – Fieldwork Completing End of March 2024

3.5. Work in the Wick and Caithness area is nearing completion, with the fieldwork evaluation report and overall final report for the area expected to be published at the end of March, in conjunction with holding final community-based conversations.

4. Next Steps

4.1. In addition to finalising work in Wick, the Project Team is developing a final set of reports and is planning post-project activities. The Project Steering Group, which next meets on 18th March, will be guiding these activities, with report outlines being presented for review and endorsement at the meeting on 18th March.

4.2. Key project products include:

- A full report for the Project as a whole aimed at the research community, police practitioners and policy-making audiences. A future meeting of the Joint Research and Evidence Forum will consider the contents of this report as part of identifying and clarifying specific research questions to take forward alongside other priority areas;
- An accompanying easy-read infographic-based report aimed at the wider community;
- A practitioner toolkit, aimed at audiences in local policing, and co-produced with participating local policing teams; and
- An internal post-Project lessons learned report, based on ongoing reflective practice throughout the life of the Project, and comments received by local and national stakeholders and community groups.

4.3 The Project Team will also be identifying opportunities to share knowledge, experiencing and findings more widely, via relevant knowledge exchange events, to maximise awareness and impact.

4.4 Finally, the Project Team also intends to check-in with local stakeholders and community partners in each of the four communities approximately one year after fieldwork closure in each area, to observe the Project's legacy and capture additional reflections and learning.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. There are no direct financial implications in this report.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no direct personnel implications in this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS
7.1. There are no direct legal implications in this report.

8. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no direct reputational implications in this report.

9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no direct social implications in this report.

10. COMMUNITY IMPACT

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

11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

11.1. There are no direct equalities implications in this report.

12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

12.1. There are no direct environment implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.