



Agenda Item 5

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>27 November 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>COSLA, Edinburgh</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Chief Constable's Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Jo Farrell, Chief Constable</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Noting</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Appendix A – Chief Constable's Report November 2025</b>

**PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

This report is submitted as a Standing Agenda Item.

**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The attached Chief Constable's Report provides the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

**2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC**

- 2.1 There are no further details on this report.

**3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report. Any financial implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report. Any personnel implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report. Any legal implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Given the nature of the report there are reputational implications however all reputational implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no direct social implications in this report. Any social implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**8. COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 8.1 Given the nature of the report there is potential community impact implications however community impact relating to subjects referenced have been fully considered at the time.

**9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications in this report. Any equalities implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct environment implications in this report. Any environment Implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to note the information contained in these reports.

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SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

**POILEAS ALBA**

# Chief Constable's Report November 2025

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# **Chief Constable's Report November 2025**

## **Overview**

As we approach the traditionally busy festive period and the end of 2025, I want to thank officers and staff for their service throughout the year, which has been set against an intensifying operating environment.

Poverty, geopolitics, cybercrime, and civil unrest is driving a high level of demand and the challenge for policing is evolving rapidly, illustrated by increasing online harm and threat, violence associated with organised crime, and a high level of protests.

My report reflects some of those challenges, and highlights action and outcomes driven by the hard work, skill and commitment of our officers, staff, and volunteers during October and November.

I detail a number of criminal justice outcomes following murder investigations. Although homicides remain at an extremely low level in Scotland, each one is a tragedy for the victim and their loved ones and each presents its own investigative challenges.

Our commitment to achieving answers for families continues to be illustrated by our very strong detection rate in relation to what are devastating crimes which also impact wider communities.

I want to thank the officers and staff, including forensic colleagues, for their skill, professionalism and resilience in these crucial cases.

My report outlines human trafficking operations, money laundering, and further arrests in relation to Operation Portaledge, an investigation into targeted attacks in the East and West of the country.

I also provide an update in relation to policing around criminality and disorder associated with the Bonfire Night period.

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A significant partnership drive, supported by strong community policing, sought to address the root causes of criminality and disorder which has been experienced during recent years.

Under Operation Moonbeam, Police Scotland was prepared to respond this year, while officers in many areas of Scotland were equipped with Body Worn Video as our national roll-out passed the halfway point ahead of Halloween.

Although we made a very small number of arrests, we recorded a strong reduction in fireworks related calls to the police compared to last year.

I want to thank our officers and staff, fire and rescue officers, other blue light colleagues, and partners at local authorities and the third sector including Crimestoppers, and communities for the support and cohesion demonstrated.

This positive outcome underlined the value of proactive, community based policing and I outline progress on an embedded, enhanced community policing model, with a test of change having commenced in Forth Valley at the end of September.

We are listening carefully to the experiences of officers, staff, the community and partners in Forth Valley as we assess the impact of the model to capture any learning as we move forward. I am grateful for the Authority's ongoing interest in this work and we will continue to report as progress is made.

While we are hearing some positive feedback, I have underlined my desire to invest an additional 600 officers in local policing over the next two years to address harm and vulnerability, contribute to community cohesion, ensure public trust to share information and public confidence that policing can prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour.

This is part of an overall resource requirement to strengthen our workforce, address pressure on our people and our policing performance and deliver on our vision of safer communities, less crime, supported victims, and a thriving workforce.

Investment will enable policing to strengthen our response to digitally enabled and globally connected crime to target sex offenders, organised criminals, and extremists

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who are radicalising, recruiting, exploiting and abusing our children, and bringing illegal drugs and violence to the streets of Scotland.

We must continue to improve our response to violence against women and girls and I outline work, including policing's role in campaigning to call on men to reflect on their behaviour, to prevent offending and tackle misogyny.

We have set out further details on our resourcing requirement for the coming years to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee in a written evidence submission and during a session earlier this month.

Throughout our evidence, we underlined the success of policing reform as an outlier in the Scottish public sector, as well as evidencing ongoing efficiencies and affirming our commitment to continuous improvement.

A flat cash scenario is not deliverable. It would require an immediate recruitment pause, and attrition of our workforce would lead to a significant reduction in visible policing, prevention work, delays in responding to calls from the public and a severe impact on our ability to respond to major events. Difficult decisions would be required.

Detailed engagement with the Authority and communication with the Scottish Government at ministerial and official level will continue ahead of the Scottish Budget in January.

Police officers, staff, and volunteers are the key to the success of policing. My report outlines our latest intake of recruits earlier this month which maintained officer establishment at around 16,500.

Lastly, I outline some changes to our Chief Officer Team's responsibilities.

## **Safer communities**

### **Death of Graham Wright – three people arrested**

Three people have been arrested following the death of 38-year-old Graham Wright in Glasgow.

On Saturday, 13 September 2025, officers were called to the Rubha Dubh, near Firkin Point, at Loch Lomond, after human remains were discovered.

47-year-old Linda Kelly and 50-year-old David McColl were both charged in connection with murder and appeared at Glasgow Sheriff Court last month. They made no plea and were remanded in custody.

53-year-old John Roarty appeared at the same court charged in connection with attempting to defeat the ends of justice.

Extensive enquiries remain ongoing.

### **Death of Lewis Cuthbert**

On Tuesday, 4 November, 2025, the body of a man was recovered from the River Clyde, near the Pacific Quay area of Glasgow.

The man was identified as 25-year-old Lewis Cuthbert, who was reported missing from Strathaven 13 weeks ago. His family has been made aware and are being provided with support.

Enquiries are ongoing to establish the full circumstances.

### **Death of Robert Best - six people arrested**

A murder inquiry has been launched following the death of Robert Best in Inverclyde.

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On Tuesday, 11 November, we were called to a report of a body found in a field near Kilmacolm. Robert, 50, was reported missing from Greenock on the same day.

Two men, aged 44 and 51, have been arrested and charged in connection with Robert's death and attempting to defeat the ends of justice. Both appeared at Greenock Sheriff Court on Wednesday, 12 November and made no plea and were remanded in custody.

Two women, aged 41 and 64, have also been arrested and charged in connection with attempting to defeat the ends of justice. They appeared at the same court on Wednesday, 19 November, and made no plea and were released on bail.

A 41-year-old man, who was arrested in connection with the death, has been released pending further enquiries.

A 45-year-old man, who was arrested in connection with assault, has also been released pending further enquiries.

We are providing Robert's family with support as our investigation continues and officers are appealing for further information. The Major Incident Public Portal (MIPP) has also been set up where the public can contact Police Scotland anonymously.

### **Death of Natalie Egan - man arrested**

A 26-year-old man has been arrested and charged in connection with the death of 37-year-old Natalie Egan in Dundee.

Around 7.25am on Friday, 31 October, emergency services attended a report of a fire at a property in the Byron Street area.

The fire was extinguished and Natalie, who was within the property, was later pronounced dead. Following a post-mortem examination, her death is being treated as murder and her family is being supported by specially trained officers.

Callum Miller appeared at Dundee Sheriff Court on Monday, 3 November. He made no plea and was remanded in custody.

### **Death of William Lambie - woman convicted**

In April 2024, officers were called to a property in Dundee following a reported assault and attempted robbery in relation to 97-year-old William Lambie.

Mr Lambie was taken to hospital to receive treatment for his serious injuries but died a month later.

Tandy Swinton, aged 44, was found guilty of culpable homicide at the High Court in Edinburgh on Tuesday, 21 October.

### **Murder of Stuart McGeachie - two men convicted**

Two men have been convicted of the murder of 38-year-old Stuart McGeachie, during an attack in Rutherglen in October 2023.

At the High Court in Glasgow on Monday, 27 October, 29-year-old Callum Cummins-Summers was convicted following a trial and 24-year-old Craig McColl pled guilty.

### **Murder of Ross MacGillivray - three people convicted**

Two men have been convicted of the murder of 36-year-old Ross MacGillivray in Inverness in November 2023.

Leon Headey, 23, and 30-year-old Craig Hayden pleaded guilty at the High Court in Glasgow last month. Samantha MacGillivray, 33, also admitted attempting to defeat the ends of justice.

### **Murder of Claire Leveque - man sentenced**

On Sunday, 11 February, 2024 emergency services were called to the Sandness area of Shetland and discovered Claire Leveque, a 24-year-old Canadian national, with a number of serious injuries. Claire was pronounced dead at the scene.

Aren Pearson, 41, who had been Claire's partner, was arrested and an investigation commenced which also established a prolonged period of domestic abuse and controlling behaviour.

Pearson was found guilty of murder and assault following a trial at the High Court in Edinburgh on Wednesday, 15 October, for his cruel abuse and murder of Claire. He was sentenced to life and ordered to serve a minimum of 25 years behind bars.

### **Murder of Keotshepile Naso Isaacs - man sentenced**

On New Year's Day in 2024, emergency services were called to an address in the Craighleith Avenue area of North Berwick following a disturbance.

Keotshepile Naso Isaacs, 33, who was known as 'Naso', was found with multiple stab wounds and pronounced dead at the scene.

Naso's husband Mompoti Dodo Isaacs, 39, was found guilty of her murder following a trial at the High Court in Edinburgh on Wednesday, 17, September 2025 and was later sentenced to life with a minimum of 21 years' imprisonment.

### **Murder of Stephen Gray - man sentenced**

A 33-year-old man was sentenced this month to 20 years in prison for the murder of Stephen Gray in Glasgow in November 2023.

Officers were called to a block of flats in the Govan area after a man was found with a knife wound to his chest. Paramedics attended but tragically, the 23-year-old was pronounced dead at the scene.

Following investigation, Gavin Gallagher was arrested and charged the next day in connection with Stephen's death.

He was sentenced to life at the High Court in Glasgow on Wednesday, 8 October, 2025.

## **Death of Callum Pollock - man sentenced**

A 35-year-old man was convicted of murdering Callum Pollock in Troon in July 2024.

James Thomson was found guilty of killing 22-year-old Callum Pollock on Thursday, 30 October, following a trial at the High Court in Glasgow.

Officers were called to a report of a man having been seriously injured within a property in the town. Callum was pronounced dead at the scene and Thomson was arrested and charged in connection with his death.

This was a shocking and violent attack which has resulted in the death of a young man. Thomson will now face the consequences of his actions. Such violence is not tolerated in our communities and our officers will continue to work tirelessly to bring those responsible to justice.

## **Murder of Jamie Lucas - man sentenced**

A 22-year-old man has been sentenced to 18 years and six months in prison for the murder of a 33-year-old Jamie Lucas in Airdrie.

In December 2024, Jamie was on a night out in Airdrie when he was stabbed in the street by Brandon McLachlan following an argument. Jamie was taken to hospital but died a short time later. McLachlan was arrested and charged in connection with his death.

## **Op Portaledge - five arrests**

Since my last report, a further five people have been arrested and charged under Operation Portaledge, an investigation into targeted attacks in the East and the West of the country, taking the total number of arrests to 62.

Extensive enquiries by the dedicated team of officers from our Specialist Crime

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Division, who are being supported by local policing officers, are ongoing with the public continuing to play their part.

A man was also sentenced to six years and nine months in prison last week after officers investigating Operation Portaledge recovered a firearm in the Roseburn Path area of Edinburgh in June of this year.

25-year-old Liam McDermid plead guilty to the serious organised crime offence at the High Court in Edinburgh in October.

### **Operation Koine – three people arrested**

Three people have been arrested and charged in connection with an investigation into the mishandling of cremated remains and funeral plan fraud in Dumbarton and Glasgow.

On Wednesday, 19 November, officers from Police Scotland's Operation Koine team, with support from colleagues from North Wales, executed search warrants at an address in the Flint area of Wales. A 58-year-old man and 38-year-old woman were rearrested.

On the same date, officers arrested a 58-year-old woman in the Bishopbriggs area of Glasgow.

Reports will be submitted to the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service in due course.

### **Serious sexual offending - man sentenced**

James Clacher, who fled abroad after being accused of sexual offences, was sentenced to eight years in prison. The 57-year-old had been reported missing in May 2022 and was traced in Spain in May 2024 and arrested on an international warrant before being returned to Scotland to face trial.

He was found guilty of the serious sexual assault of two women in August 2019 and September 2020 following a trial. He was placed on the Sex Offenders Register and given a 10-year non-harassment order.

This was a complex investigation spanning Europe. Extensive enquiries were carried out after Clacher was reported missing and it later became clear that he had faked his death and left the country in an attempt to evade justice. This case clearly demonstrates our commitment to investigating serious crimes and pursuing those who try to evade prosecution, no matter where they go.

## **Operation Leste**

We continue to see a high level of protest and counter protest across the country every week.

Officers are policing around 42 protests every week, with around 300 officers deployed. They work with professionalism to balance and uphold rights in difficult circumstances, while minimising disruption.

Earlier this month we saw the first anti-immigration protest take place in Inverness, which shows the spread of demand and impact of geopolitics and civil unrest across the country, reaching communities where protest activity is not common.

Local policing officers continue to be supported with national resources, shared learning and specialists such as protest liaison officers.

We are proud of our approach but the relentless challenge of carefully managing such intense and fragile issues has an impact on officer wellbeing and resourcing.

## **Operation Machinize**

We visited almost 200 premises across Scotland to target high street businesses involved in money laundering and other criminality as part of the UK-wide Operation Machinize.

This was an intelligence-led initiative, where officers from Police Scotland worked alongside partners within the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce to visit barbers, vape shops, nail bars, mini markets and car washes which encourage customers to use cash as payment to avoid paying tax and duty.

We know that much of this activity is being undertaken by serious organised crime groups and operations such as this can lead to the identification of other serious criminality such as human trafficking or modern slavery.

### **Drink and drug driving festive enforcement campaign**

During December we will carry out our annual festive drink and drug driving enforcement campaign.

Driving after taking drugs or alcohol destroys lives. Last year, we recorded 961 drink and drug driving offences over the festive period and carried out a record number of roadside tests.

Every day we have officers carrying out enforcement and educating drivers.

We continue to work closely with the Scottish Government and support their campaign aimed at young drivers to encourage behaviour change. Partnerships are a critical part of road safety.

### **Drug driving wipes**

Drug drivers are more likely to be caught as roadside testing kits have been rolled out to local policing officers.

Training has been delivered as part of a pilot to give local policing officers in East Ayrshire and North Aberdeenshire the ability to use Drug Wipe – a mouth swab drug detection kit – which will give an instant result to check for cannabis and cocaine.

Drug driving offences have risen by 60 per cent in the past three years and is now almost higher than drink driving.

Roadside Drug Wipe was introduced in Scotland in 2019 and has been only available to road policing officers.

I'd like to thank the ongoing support of Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services as we look to give officers an additional tool to help keep people safe on the roads.

We will report on the results of the pilot after it ends in March next year.

## **Review of policing of a protest**

On Thursday 4 September, For Women Scotland (FWS) undertook a pre-planned protest outside of the Scottish Parliament. Individuals from Cabaret Against the Hate Speech (CATHS) engaged in a counter protest

Police officers were in attendance and, following a report of a broken umbrella, we recorded a crime of vandalism with an individual later invited to discuss the offer of a recorded police warning.

As part of a broader review of the policing of the morning, it has been established that no crime was committed and we have written to the individual to apologise and offer further engagement.

Our review has also identified learning and recommendations in respect of communication between divisions and departments, governance around crime management and briefing around policing options during protest and counter protests. We will share and implement learning as required.

## **Less crime**

### **Operation Moonbeam**

Following our response to fireworks related criminality and disorder in 2024, we immediately began working with partners to plan for this year's Bonfire Night period,

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including a strong engagement and focused discussions with key partners and stakeholders on how we could address root causes.

I want to thank everyone who invested significant time and resource to a collaborative approach to keeping people safe over the Bonfire Night period including Scottish Government, Local Authorities, Blue-Light services, Fearless, the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service and third sector partners responsible for youth engagement and intervention.

Local policing divisions across the country, officers who know the complex needs and issues affecting their communities, engaged closely with partners on a range of education, intervention, prevention and diversionary initiatives aimed at changing behaviours around the criminal use of fireworks, and supporting those within communities to make positive choices that keep the public and emergency service personnel safe.

This was supported by a compelling multi-agency communications approach to highlight the real-life impact of fireworks offences from those on the frontline, and alongside partners at Lothian Buses and Places for People.

Positive engagement was also key in building vital intelligence. Detectives recovered more than two and half tonnes worth of illegal fireworks before they could be used to commit disorder offences on Scotland's streets.

I am encouraged by a reduction in fireworks related calls to police between 31 October and 5 November at around two-thirds of the level of last year, while Scottish Fire and Rescue Service colleagues also reported a reduction in fire-related antisocial behaviour.

There were still pockets of antisocial behaviour and criminality in parts of the country and investigations continue, with a very small number of arrests made.

We continue to work to identify any further learning as we plan for 2026.

## **Prevent referrals**

The number of referrals made to anti-extremism programme Prevent is at the highest level ever recorded in Scotland.

There were 162 referrals in 2024/25, which is an increase of 42 per cent compared to the previous year. This highlights the demand and threat we face.

Police made the highest number of referrals, followed by the education sector.

Most referrals continue to be for young men aged 15 to 20, while referrals for those under 15 are the second highest.

Prevent is a strand of the UK Government's counter terrorism strategy. It is delivered in Scotland through a multi-agency approach, with referrals initially handled by police, and designed to put in place safeguarding and supporting measures.

Strong partnerships with communities, the education sector, local authorities and others must continue to address the underlying causes that fuel radicalisation.

## **Cyber Security Awareness Month**

October was Cyber Security Awareness Month, and Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith led Police Scotland's engagement at the Futurescot Digital Justice and Policing Conference.

This was an opportunity to share the growing challenge of policing in a digital world and how Police Scotland is building capacity and capability to meet new and emerging threat, risk and harm.

DCC Smith also underlined our ethical approach to introducing new technologies.

Officers from our Cybercrime Harm Prevention team held an exhibition space, engaging with the community and promoting the benefits of the Police CyberAlarm, a free tool for businesses and organisations funded by the Home Office and offered by UK police forces.

Since launch, it has identified over a billion suspicious events, resulting in reports and advice being given to members, enabling them to take action to prevent a successful attack.

## **Operation Winter City**

Edinburgh Division's annual campaign to keep the public safe over the festive period officially launched for 2025 on Friday, 14 November, to coincide with the opening of the winter market and other festive attractions.

Crime prevention is at the forefront of the planning and officers will engage with the public, offer reassurance, provide advice on keeping safe, as well as responding to any incidents that may arise.

High-visibility police patrols within the city-centre will take place throughout Operation Winter City and officers will also be liaising with retailers and licensed premises.

Police Scotland will also be making Project Servator deployments to target and prevent criminal activity, including terrorism. Project Servator has been successful in gathering intelligence and has helped Counter Terrorism Units investigate and prevent acts of terror.

## **Supported victims**

### **Tackling violence against women and girls**

International initiative 16 Days of Activism to tackle gender-based violence commenced this week. Police Scotland has long been a supporter of 16 Days, it allows us to bring a spotlight to the action we take year-round to make our communities safer for women and girls.

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The focus this year is on cyber enabled offending targeting women and girls. As has been highlighted at recent committees this is an area of criminality that continues to grow in Scotland, and worldwide.

The programme of activism provides an opportunity to highlight action that we are taking, both as an organisation, and collectively with our partners, to tackle violence against women and girls.

Our latest That Guy campaign will run on our social media channels throughout 16 Days. Our recent survey highlighted that 94% of young men surveyed agreed men have a part to play in reducing sexual violence and three quarters of men (78%) agreed that they would like to do more to stop sexual violence. Our campaign continues to support them to do this.

Our domestic abuse campaign continues its run, signposting young men to support to change their abusive behaviour before it escalates.

Reports of sexual crime and domestic abuse continue to increase. We hope that this is in part down to the action we are taking in both prevention and operational spaces, and the increased confidence in victims to report.

Prevention is key but it operates alongside our commitment to continually improving the service we provide to victims of violence against women and girls, in all its forms.

Tackling violence against women and girls is a key element of our Vision 2030. Our new public protection model for local policing, developed with partners, will bring together a cohesive model for Safeguarding and Investigations across Scotland and ensure national consistency.

Police Scotland has made significant strides in delivering our strategy. This work will continue as we refresh our strategy for 2026, with a focus on continuing to improve victims' experiences of the criminal justice system, continuing to improve and refine our response, and identifying and responding to emerging threats.

## **A thriving workforce**

### **Police (Ethics, Conduct & Scrutiny) Scotland Act 2025 (PECSS)**

As previously reported, on Wednesday, 25 June, 2025, the first commencement regulations of the Police (Ethics, Conduct & Scrutiny) Scotland Act 2025 came into force.

Significant work continues within Police Scotland to implement the act.

Good progress is being made in relation to the development of a code of ethics, including consultation with staff associations and unions, including the Scottish Police Federation and the Association of Scottish Police Superintendents, our diversity staff associations and with a human rights advisor.

Over a period of years, Police Scotland has driven a focus on our values and standards of professional behaviour and the refreshed code of ethics will reflect that focus.

Progress is also being made to provide Police Scotland's view in relation to new vetting and conduct regulations which are being developed by the Scottish Government.

Strong engagement with the Authority continues, including through the Complaints and Conduct Committee earlier this month.

### **Workforce survey**

Our 2025-26 workforce survey opened in August and we have now closed the survey, with 10,770 respondents, equivalent to 46% of the workforce.

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Last year's survey findings underlined the commitment and teamwork of officers and staff, while also highlighting areas for improvement which have informed action by the Service and the Chief Officer Team.

This year's question set was very similar, with minor improvements based on learning from last year's survey along with some new questions.

At a high level, we are seeing a continued strong team ethos and some improvement across culture and the quality of supervisors and first line management.

We are working closely with the survey providers, Progressive Partnership, to understand the quantitative findings, including benchmarking, while qualitative analysis of over 23,000 open-ended comments continues.

Further internal and external communication and engagement will continue, and national level results will be reported through the Authority, while more detailed analysis will enable targeted action at divisions and departments.

The results will help me and the Chief Officer Team to assess the extent to which change is being felt and understand what more needs to be done to improve the experiences of our officers, staff and volunteers.

### **Oath of office**

On Thursday, 6 November, our latest cohort of 165 probationers made the declaration of a constable at swearing-in ceremonies across the country, bringing officer establishment to 16,532.

Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith addressed the new recruits at a ceremony in Police Scotland's Headquarters, Tulliallan, and Director of HR, Katy Miller attended an event in Edinburgh. Senior officers from local policing divisions were also in attendance at the other four ceremonies which took place in the North, East and West of the country.

I thank our new recruits for stepping forward to help safeguard Scotland's communities and wish them well in their two-year probationary journey. When they deploy to local policing divisions on 9 March next year they will uphold our values at all times.

## **Review of probationer training**

A review of probationer training is under way to ensure it remains fit for purpose and prepares new officers to meet the operational requirements of their role.

It seeks to identify and address gaps in probationers' knowledge, ability and behaviour; refine governance and re-define the role of tutor constables.

It will support the organisation in delivering a solid baseline of training which meets the needs of modern-day policing and equips officers with the right foundation to build their operational experience upon.

Part of the review will see the initial 13-week probationer training course be extended to 15 weeks, beginning in January with the first intake of the new year. The extension will facilitate a redesign of the course to include more contextualised, practical learning and additional fitness and wellbeing education.

This review shows commitment to policing excellence and will provide an inclusive, accurate and evidence-based analysis of Police Scotland's two-year probationer training programme. Without it, the organisation risks delivering outdated or misaligned training which leaves officers ill equipped to do their job.

## **Chief Officer Team responsibilities**

Assistant Chief Constable Emma Bond has taken on a UK role within Policing Reform Lead Assistant Commissioner Louisa Rolfe's team, initially until March 2026.

Police Scotland has strong experience of successful reform and Emma's appointment can further strengthen our engagement with broader UK policing to share learning and best practice.

Following this appointment, I have made changes to Chief Officer responsibilities.

Assistant Chief Constable Mark Sutherland, has taken on oversight of Criminal Justice and our Contact, Command, and Control (C3) Division, strengthening alignment between our initial contact from the public and the progression of cases through the broader criminal justice system.

ACC Sutherland will report into Deputy Chief Constable for Transformation, Bex Smith, reflecting the significant work ongoing within policing and across partners to introduce digitally enabled efficiencies, one example being the digitally enabled sharing capability (DESC).

ACC Wendy Middleton will take command of Local Policing West.

As an interim position until March, ACC Middleton and ACC for Local Policing East Tim Mairs will provide oversight for divisional commanders in the north of the country, with ACC Mairs supporting commanders in North East (A) and Tayside (D) Division and ACC Middleton taking responsibility for Highland and Islands (N) Division.

## **Delivering the next phase of police reform**

### **Strengthening community policing**

The test of change for our enhanced community policing model commenced on 29 September in Forth Valley (C) Division.

The model has been developed based on the findings of hundreds of interviews with officers, staff, partners and members of the public and through an industry standard service design approach.

The Enhancing Community Policing model establishes three core teams - Community Policing, Response Policing and a Community Investigations Hub.

The Community Investigations Hub's role is in coordinating and managing non-urgent demand, carrying out investigations and operational tasks for less serious incidents. The Hub enables us to tackle issues that communities tell us are important to them but previously have not had the response they deserve due to the volume of urgent demand on police officers.

The proof of concept in Forth Valley will continue until the end of the year and will be evaluated for any learnings as we look to roll this model out across the country.

### **Body worn video national roll-out**

The national roll out of body worn video reached its halfway point at the end of October (Wednesday, 22 October) as officers and staff were equipped with the devices in Edinburgh and The Lothians and Scottish Borders divisions.

For the first time BWV was used to capture footage of violence and disorder around Halloween and Bonfire Night too. The equipment can help to de-escalate incidents, improve public trust in policing and reduce complaints, as well as support officer and staff safety, and bring wider benefits to the criminal justice system.

With the whole of the east of Scotland now using body worn video this marks a key milestone since the project commenced in Tayside.

Since its introduction in March 2025, over 140,000 recordings have been captured by the devices with almost 32,000 hours of footage uploaded of which over 8,500 media files have been exported to our digital evidence sharing system, DESC.

Body worn video will be rolling out into the west of Scotland in early 2026 as the number of officers using the devices increases.

## **Digital evidence sharing capability**

The roll out of our digital evidence sharing capability (DESC) came to a conclusion at the end of September as it was introduced into Argyll and West Dunbartonshire (L Division) and Renfrewshire and Inverclyde (K Division).

DESC is the enabler for many of the innovations and improvements that are being rolled out including body worn video.

The efficiencies that DESC brings has seen us save many officer hours as evidence is easy to upload for victims and witnesses and fewer phones seized as a result too.

A recent survey of DESC users has said that it made their operational duties easier.

Work is ongoing to encourage retailers and various organisations to embrace DESC so that evidence can be easily provided, and we can capture and review evidence easily and efficiently.

## **Strategic engagement**

### **Criminal Justice Committee 2026-27 pre-budget scrutiny**

On Wednesday 5 November, along with Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs and Acting Head of Finance, Lynn Brown, I provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee to inform their 2026-27 pre-budget scrutiny.

During the session, which followed submission of written evidence, I outlined the future resource requirements for policing in Scotland, including £104.9m of unavoidable costs in 2026-27, in order to stand still.

I also detailed that a further £33.7m (equivalent to a 2.2%) cash terms uplift would support Police Scotland to strengthen our frontline across organised crime and counter terrorism, and public protection, underpinned by an enhanced community policing model.

Engagement around resourcing for the budget has included extensive work with the Scottish Police Authority and communication with the Scottish Government and this work continues.

### **Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee**

On Wednesday 12 November, along with Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs, I provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Citizen Participation Committee on their consideration of a petition by Lucy Hunter Blackburn, Lisa Mackenzie and Kath Murray calling on agencies to accurately record the sex of people charged or convicted of rape or attempted rape.

During the session, I confirmed that a man who was charged with rape or attempted rape is, should be, and will be recorded as a male by Police Scotland.

I outlined progress made in relation to Police Scotland's review of sex and gender, including the updates already shared with the Scottish Police Authority, as well as outlining a decision reached in October that Police Scotland would record a person's biological sex and, where relevant, their transgender status, for suspects and victims of all crimes and offences.

Our review will continue to be responsive and informed by developments in law and statutory guidance, human rights advice, and ongoing engagement. We will continue to take action on specific areas, and I expect to provide a further substantial update to the Authority early next year.

### **Convention of Scottish Local Authorities conference 2025**

On Thursday, 13 November, I addressed the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities conference 2025, which was held across two days in St Andrews, Fife, and which focused on the future of localism.

This was an important opportunity to thank local authority partners for our strong relationships at operational, strategic and national levels. I outlined the role policing

has in contributing to community cohesion and provided an overview of our ongoing reform programme.

I want to thank COSLA, their President Shona Morrison and community wellbeing spokesperson Maureen Chalmers for their continued support and collaboration.

## **Independent Police Advisory Council**

The new Independent Police Advisory Council (IPAC) held its first meeting at the end of September, sitting at a strategic level and acting as a critical friend and partner, supporting Police Scotland to deliver sustainable improvements to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Human Rights outcomes across the service.

The IPAC will offer informed expertise, guidance, challenge and assurance on the development of policies, procedures, strategies and practices to safeguard against adverse impact on any section of our internal or external communities.

It replaces groups including the National Independent Strategic Advisory Group, Independent Review Groups, Professional Reference Groups and the Border Policing Command Independent Advisory Group.

The membership and knowledge base of the IPAC is geographically and demographically diverse, with the 11 members offering a wide range of experience of underrepresented communities and/or of delivering equality and diversity and human rights outcomes in academia and the public, private and third sectors.

Former Police Scotland Superintendent, Shaheen Baber has been appointed Chair of the group, and experienced Community Advisor, Mahmooda Ausat has been appointed Vice Chair.

The group will hold its second quarterly meeting in December and all members represent their own views and advice, and not on behalf of another organisation.