



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Policing Performance Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>16 September 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Video Conference</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>COSLA Update Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Cllr Maureen Chalmers</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

## PURPOSE

This paper provides the SPA Policing Performance Committee with an update on key areas of COSLA's work of interest to the Committee. The update focuses on strategic developments and cross-COSLA activity that links to policing.

Feedback from PPC Members would be welcome on the items covered in the paper.

## **1 Engagement: COSLA, Police Scotland, SPA**

- 1.1 COSLA President Cllr Shona Morrison and COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson Cllr Maureen Chalmers met with the Chief Constable and the SPA Chair on 13 August.
- 1.2 The meeting was used as an opportunity to review organisational priorities and challenges, relationships and collaboration, and the COSLA, SPA and Police Scotland [Partnership Delivery Agreement](#) and [Delivery Plan](#).
- 1.3 There was a consensus on the strength of the partnership and continued commitment to work collaboratively to achieve the priorities of Local Government and Policing, particularly around local policing, scrutiny and councillor safety.

## **2 Community Cohesion**

- 2.1 Councillors highlighted escalating concerns around community cohesion at the latest meeting of COSLA Leaders on 29 August. The following statement was released by COSLA President, Cllr Morrison, after the meeting:

“While there is an important democratic right to peaceful protest and assembly in this country, councils across Scotland are highlighting growing concern about the rise in protests where false claims and hateful rhetoric are being spread, and where the expression of racist sentiment, violence and intimidation are becoming commonplace. Coupled with an associated increase in misleading and factually incorrect information being circulated online, this is resulting in increasing divisions in our communities that are deeply worrying. COSLA therefore reaffirms the commitment of Scottish councils to welcome all people who are seeking safety in this country and to work in partnership across our communities to ensure that all feel safe and included, and are treated with dignity and respect, no matter where they are from”.
- 2.2 The following statement from Cllr Chalmers was added to the COSLA press release: “Scotland has a proud history of welcoming people who are fleeing conflict and oppression, and Scottish councils continue to play a key role in this. In recent years this has included providing support for people fleeing the war in Ukraine and

for people whose lives were under threat because of their work with the UK Government in Afghanistan. It is right and proper that asylum applicants are also provided with the support that they need while their claims for asylum are being assessed. However, it should be noted that it is the Home Office which provides them with accommodation and financial support during this process”.

- 2.3 Work is underway to agree priority areas for COSLA in this space over coming months, with initial engagement with LA officers already undertaken in the last few weeks.

### **3 Antisocial Behaviour**

- 3.1 The COSLA Community Wellbeing Board considered the recommendations of the [Independent Working Group on Antisocial Behaviour](#) at its last meeting on 22 August.

- 3.2 The Working Group sets out 5 key recommendations and several other actions. An overview of the recommendations is provided below:

- i. Setting up of an independently chaired oversight board to support a whole system approach;
- ii. Review current antisocial behaviour legislation, definition and guidance;
- iii. Systematic review of data and information gathering, analysis and exchange to enable more effective flow of data, better information gathering, new systems for reporting antisocial behaviour;
- iv. Development of a preventive framework outlining the supports and resources within public services to achieve upstream prevention, and
- v. All Local Authorities should review and update their current Antisocial Behaviour Strategic arrangements and Strategies, to ensure a dedicated focus and spend on the prevention and addressing of antisocial behaviour.

- 3.3 The Board stressed the importance of prevention and flexible, multi-agency approaches to tackling antisocial behaviour, while avoiding duplication of existing national efforts through careful mapping of current work. It also highlighted that additional investment in Local Government is essential.

- 3.4 The Board also stressed that any review of legislation, while sensible, would need to retain existing flexibility of approach and include a cost impact assessment.

- 3.5 Members emphasised that any new data and reporting requirements must be properly resourced and avoid duplication. Finally, COSLA also argued that local authorities are best placed to decide when and how to refresh their antisocial behaviour strategies working with partners locally, cautioning against a mandated national approach given existing legislative duties and differing local timelines.

#### **4 Briefing for Elected Members on Marches and Parades**

- 4.1 COSLA worked collaboratively with the Scottish Government and Police Scotland through the Action Group on Processions over the course of 2023 and early 2024 to consider the conclusions and recommendations of the report published by [Short Life Working Group on Facilitating Peaceful Assemblies](#).
- 4.2 One of the Action Group's recommended next steps was for training/briefing packages for local authority officials/elected members to be developed to help inform and share good practice on the responsibility for, and process of, facilitating peaceful processions in Scotland and how the protection of human rights is central to this.
- 4.3 On the back of this recommendation a briefing for Elected Members was developed and endorsed by the Board at its meeting on 22 August. The briefing will be published imminently on the Improvement Service (IS) website as part of an existing collection of resources for Elected Members.
- 4.4 A brief overview of key points from the briefing is provided below:
- Local Authorities and Police Scotland have an obligation to ensure that a peaceful assembly can take place at the time, place and in the manner that the organiser wishes wherever possible.
  - There are limited circumstances in which a local authority may prohibit a march/parade from taking place or place special conditions on it.
  - Organisers do not have to apply to hold a march, parade or protest. For marches and parades there is a notification process which organisers must follow.
  - Good practice shows that the effective use of the 28-day notification period ensures that march organisers can appeal decisions if they need to.
  - Elected Members need to understand the legislation that underpins marches, parades and protests and the importance of ensuring human rights legislation is considered.
  - It is important for Local Authorities to clearly articulate decisions.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1. There are no financial implications in this report.

## **6 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

## **8 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

## **9 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no social implications in this report.

## **10 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

10.1 There are no community implications in this report.

## **11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

## **12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.