



## Authority Meeting

28 November 2024

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Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 26 September 2024  
at COSLA, Edinburgh

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Board Members present:	Martyn Evans (Chair) Fiona McQueen (Vice Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Katharina Kasper Mary Pitcaithly Grant Macrae Catriona Stewart Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Angela Leitch
In attendance:	<b>Scottish Police Authority (SPA)</b> Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer  <b>Police Scotland</b> Chief Constable Jo Farrell Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs James Gray, Chief Financial Officer  <b>Forensic Services</b> Fiona Douglas, Director

	<b>COSLA</b> Councillor Shona Morrison, COSLA President (Item 7) Councillor Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson (Item 7)
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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

### 1.1 CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed all Authority Members and representatives from Police Scotland's senior leadership team.

### 1.2 APOLOGIES

Members noted apologies from Angela Leitch.

### 1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONNECTIONS

Declarations of interest were raised by two Members during the meeting:

- Regarding a question he had on COSLA partnership working (Item 7), Paul Edie advised he had previously been an Edinburgh Councillor.
- Regarding a question she had relating to Neurodiversity (Item 7), Catriona Stewart advised she had previously Chaired the Scottish Women's Autism Network.

### 1.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members raised no other business.

### 1.5 DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE (ITEMS 11-13)

Members agreed that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Authority would consider items 9-11 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.

## 2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

### 2.1 MINUTE FROM MEETING HELD ON 22 AUGUST 2024 FOR APPROVAL

**Members approved the minute from the meeting held 22 August 2024.**

### 2.2 ROLLING ACTION LOG

Regarding Action 20240822-BM-001, SPA Chief Executive Lynn Brown (LBrown) summarised the response she received from the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group, which detailed the scope of their work and confirmed they are not considering recent public disorder across other parts of the UK.

**Members agreed to close both actions on the log.**

**2.3 DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Chair confirmed no decisions were taken via correspondence since the last Authority Meeting.

**3. SPA CHAIR'S REPORT**

The Chair referred to his report and the evidence presented to the Scottish Parliaments Criminal Justice Committee regarding workforce wellbeing. The Chair summarised the operational stressors and organisational stressors that negatively affected offer and staff wellbeing discussed at the session, and highlighted the requirement for a capital increase to allow the required improvement to estates which was deemed to be a very significant organisational stressor for Police Officers.

The Chair offered Chief Constable Farrell (CCFarrell) the opportunity to provide comment on recording of sex and gender self-identification. CCFarrell acknowledged that self-identification is an emotive and divisive topic in public policy. She confirmed neither the Scottish Government or the UK government have set out a policy approach therefore Police Scotland have determined a policy and practice that aims to be a legal and appropriate balance of rights and duties. This practice applies to many scenarios and is not restricted to criminal investigations. It was recognised that the focus of debate is within the area of serious sexual offences therefore Police Scotland has clarified its approach in these cases. CCFarrell confirmed that Police Scotland take a victim centred approach, and improving victim experience is at heart of all work and is part of the long-term vision. CCFarrell refuted public commentary that Police Scotland are perpetuating a policy that is misogynist, and she offered reassurance that officers and staff are trained to investigate crime that is victim centred and mitigates risk. CCFarrell highlighted Police Scotland's commitment and support for the LGBTQI+ community and stated that keeping people safe applies universally. In relation to sexual offences, she confirmed a man who commits rape or serious sexual assault will be recorded as male. CCFarrell confirmed it was her understanding that in Scotland no male accused of rape had been recorded as a woman. CCFarrell also highlighted that DNA samples are obtained from all individuals charged with sexual assault and results provide a record of biological sex which is kept on the database to aid historic and future investigations. CCFarrell confirmed procedures on the identification of sex and gender is evidence led and in keeping with the values of respect and upholding human rights. Work on data collection is ongoing and once the review is complete, outcomes will be reported to the Authority.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members welcomed the update and thanked CCFarrell for the clarity provided, noting it would help restore public confidence.
- Comment was sought on self-identifying in other circumstances but CCFarrell confirmed she would not respond to hypothetical scenarios to allow Officers and staff the discretion to make good judgements in a complex space. Members were assured Officers and staff are equipped, skilled and have positive intent to respond appropriately based on risk.
- CCFarrell assured Members that work in the area goes beyond crime statistics, and is more victim centred.
- Members welcomed the commitment to review the policy and sought assurance it would be shared publicly. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) responded that he had looked at a range of topics at pace and had made a recommendation to CCFarrell that a wider review was required with external engagement. Members heard a team and structure are in place to do it, but timescales could not yet be confirmed. Attendees agreed reporting on the policy review would be brought to the Policing Performance Committee, with consideration given to reporting to People Committee.
- Members shared their expectation that the policy is written, legislative analysis is sound and that appropriate groups are consulted. If Officer discretion is applied, data captured should be disaggregated to show when the policy has been overridden.
- Members noted that Police Scotland recorded statistics are accredited, unlike some forces in England and Wales, and the authoritative nature of data meant it was important to maintain accreditation.

**Members noted the report.**

#### **4. COMMITTEE CHAIRS' REPORT**

Members considered the report which provided an update on business progressed through Committees and Oversight Groups since the last Authority Meeting. Committee and Oversight Group Chair summarised their reports which covered:

- Revised Model of Policing Oversight Group
- People Committee
- Complaints and Conduct Committee
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
- Resources Committee
- Policing Performance Committee

**Members noted the report.**

## 5. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which provided detail relating to the Police Service, policing, and the state of crime. CCFarrell provided an overview of the points noted within the executive summary of her report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought detail on timescales of the roll out summary case management pilot and were informed timescales are being discussed and agreed through a Working Group following analysis of learning from the pilot and with partners.
- Members were informed that the Mental Health Index was available across Scotland and evaluation would be undertaken with initial feedback being positive. Feedback is scrutinised monthly and early evaluation would be available by the end of the year.
- Members sought comment on when Police Officer numbers would return to 16,600. DCCSpeirs responded that a challenge was the number of officers retiring but it was still the intention to reach 16,600 by the end of the year. Members were assured that the standard of recruitment selection had not changed, and retention numbers were good.
- Members sought comment on preparedness of the Commonwealth Games. DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) responded that until fuller engagement was undertaken, and details are agreed, Police Scotland were not sure what the scaled back Games would look like. There were no concerns on policing the event, roles and responsibilities would be clear and Police Scotland would not absorb responsibilities they would not normally have. Members were told the Games would impact on business-as-usual activities. James Gray (JGray) confirmed there was a good finance team to deliver cost recovery and they would work close with the planning team. LBrown added she was assured the finance team would deal with resource well, but she had concerns that there was still uncertainty over who SPA and Police Scotland were working with in terms of finance. The Chair commented that the risk of not knowing who the funder was, was outside appetite, therefore he requested that reporting on policing the Games is reported to each Authority Meeting.
- Members requested detail on the disproportionate number of road deaths in certain areas of Scotland, and how campaigns are evaluated. DCCConnors responded that there was an analyst within Roads Policing to allow decisions to be taken on appropriate preventative work. Young and older aged drivers and their speed tended to be the main reason for fatalities. Current focus of preventative work is on changing behaviour as opposed to extending fines.

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- Members were informed of preventative activity for keeping students safe such as the roll out of bar staff training programmes.
- Members heard there was a significant increase of seizures of e-bikes due to two main reasons: illegal use such as converting, and them being used in an anti-social manner. DCCConnors encouraged people to check the law and legislation prior to purchasing any e-bikes, and she committed to confirming the process of seizure and disposals of unlawful ebikes.

### **Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

20240926-BM-001: Process to be confirmed of seizure and disposals of unlawful ebikes.

## **6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. LBrown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper, and also praised the recent Forensic Services Excellence Awards, as well as congratulating the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme for winning Outstanding External Partner of the Year at the Police Scotland Criminal Justice Services Division Awards.

### **Members noted the report and approve the calendar of Authority and Committee Meetings for 2025/26.**

## **7. COSLA STRATEGIC UPDATE**

Members considered the report which provided an update on key areas of collaboration between COSLA, SPA and Police Scotland. Councillor Shona Morrison (SMorrison), COSLA President, and Councillor Maureen Chalmers (MChalmers), COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought comment on the advantages and challenges to multi agency approaches. SMorrison spoke of the advantages of partners co-locating during time of fiscal challenges. MChalmers added that data sharing can be a challenge and removing barriers should be encouraged.



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- Members asked what one area could be strengthened in partnership working. MChalmers responded that more time to discuss and respond to larger challenges would be beneficial.
- Members asked how COSLA maintain good partnership working when one partner has financial challenges. SMorrison responded that despite financial challenges impactful work was still continuing. MChalmers added positive relationships build trust which maintains good partnership working.
- Members sought comment on Police Scotland's approach to anti-social behaviour. MChalmers responded that there were different approaches due to different resources but there was a broad consistency of a police-based approach.
- The Policing Performance Committee Chair thanked MChalmers for her contribution to the Committee.
- Members were informed there were governance mechanisms in place to gather feedback and take forward evaluation of Firework Control Zones.
- Members were told a special working group had been established to deal with the challenges and pressures from the early prison release scheme. Concern had been raised about the sustainability of it and this would be discussed with Scottish Government.
- Members noted that there was evidence that neurominorities disproportionately come into contact with criminal justice system, and asked whether COSLA were aware of any issues. MChalmers stated she was not aware of any work at COSLA level but would seek comment at the next Justice Conveners Meeting.
- MChalmers confirmed she would seek to determine the pace of implementation regarding the Asset Sharing Principles Document.
- CCFarrell thanked COSLA for the good relationship and partnership and advised that one of the priorities in the business plan is to strengthen community policing.

### **Members noted the report.**

## 8. POLICE SCOTLAND THREE YEAR BUSINESS PLAN

Members considered the report which presented Police Scotland's 2030 vision and three-year business plan. CCFarrell highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were informed that details around the Commonwealth Games were not known at the time of drafting the plan, but it was anticipated it would impact some delivery timescales. Once more detail on the Games is known, some flexibility and resetting may be required.
- Members heard that workload would be managed through prioritisation and staff and Officer consultation had begun where feedback on workload impacts will be considered.
- Members were informed of engagement with communities, staff associations and Unions which had happened on the vision first then the plan after. Members heard feedback that partners' ability to influence the Annual Police Plans had provided continual development.
- Members were told direction, clarity, and priorities, and using framework to make those choices provides the confidence that the plan will be successful. However, if it was accepted that successful implementation will depend on sufficient investment from Scottish Government. Should funding not be available, the plan will be reviewed and flexed where appropriate. James Gray (JGray) explained a reasonable uplift on revenue was sought to cover pay and inflationary pressures, along with an increase capital funding.
- Members were assured each milestone will have a delivery plan with detail on outcomes.
- The Chair noted that staff associations had expressed the view that staff were underrepresented within the plan. CCFarrell responded that one area of the plan is workforce modernisation which was essentially having more specialist staff. She confirmed she had met UNISON and Unite colleagues to highlight how Police Scotland have worked to improve inclusion.
- The Chair stated that the Authority had asked Police Scotland to provide a vision, a roadmap, and milestones, and what had provided made the demand clear.



**Members noted the report and endorsed the Business Plan.**

## **9. ESTATES MASTERPLAN**

Members considered the report which set out how the estates masterplan has been developed, the strategic priorities for the estate, and an outline 10-year capital programme of estates modernisation to support the review model of policing. JGray highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- It was noted that the Resources Committee had been provided with more in-depth information and had agreed the direction of travel was right, following scrutiny. The Committee had also agreed it was imperative that the full Authority be provided the opportunity to review the information and discuss.
- The Authority agreed the level of information provided to the full Authority was not sufficient enough for them to endorse the masterplan. Attendees concluded that Members not on the Resources Committee would be provided with the information previously shared at the Committee, and a decision would then be made on when to have another public discussion.
- The Chair highlighted that three crucial areas identified for estates were public access, custody, and staff welfare, and all three of these areas had been discussed at the Resources Committee.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

20240926-BM-002: Slides presented to the Resources Committee to be shared with all Members, with an opportunity to discuss, before further public presentation.

## **10. ANNUAL CLIMATE CHANGE ACTIVITY REPORT**

Members considered the report which provided an update on the Climate Change Duties for the financial year 2023-24. JGray highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were assured there was a degree of confidence that targets would be met.

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- Members heard the biggest challenge is energy inefficient buildings therefore the Estates Masterplan could have a positive impact.
- The Chair requested benchmarking work is undertaken in the area.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

20240926-BM-003: Benchmarking work to be carried out to enable continuous improvement in the area.

**The remaining items were taken in private.**

*End.*