



Meeting	SPA Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee
Date	21 May 2025
Location	Online
Title of Paper	Best Value Update
Presented By	Patrick Brown, Director, Strategy and Analysis
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Yes

PURPOSE

To provide Members with assurance regarding preparations in Police Scotland, for the Best Value audit.

This paper is for discussion.

1. Update on progress

- 1.1 Police Scotland has now completed preparations for the upcoming Best Value review, including the production of a full self-assessment package and associated evidence, structured around the eight best value themes.
- 1.2 Police Scotland has followed the Public Service Improvement Framework in the best value preparations. Supported by the Improvement Service, we have adapted their framework statements to develop our Police Scotland self-assessment survey. This survey was completed by almost 100 of our Senior Leaders (Superintendent and above) at our Senior Leaders' Event in January and by the Chief Officers on the same day. The survey results were then correlated with our Your Voice Matters survey results, to contribute to our overall self-assessment against the eight Best Value themes.
- 1.3 The Best Value team has created a framework for gathering and assessing evidence against the areas of investigation highlighted in the joint Audit Scotland and HMICS letter from September 2024, which notified us of their intention to conduct a Best Value joint audit (see appendix).
- 1.4 Each theme lead has been required to complete a self-assessment against each statement and produce an evidence base to support their assessment.
- 1.5 To support theme leads, the Best Value team facilitated eight workshops, one for each theme, supported by Audit, Assurance and Risk colleagues. This approach allowed Audit, Assurance and Risk to share best practice from their experience and provide their perspectives on each theme. These workshops were followed by a series of eight development workshops, where progress was discussed and direction confirmed.
- 1.6 Each theme lead has then been required to present their assessment and evidence base, to the force executive via a series of rigorous scrutiny sessions. The purpose of these sessions has been to agree an overall self-assessment and in doing so, identify any gaps. These sessions were extremely valuable and allowed the Chief Constable and the Executive team, to provide their input to each of the theme assessments.

- 1.7 These scrutiny sessions were followed by several detailed reviews of the consolidated assessment document, by the Chief Constable and deputies.
- 1.8 To date, over 500 pieces of evidence have been submitted to the Best Value team in support of our self-assessment, demonstrating the scale and complexity of our organisation. Examples include the final report on our Vision 2030 development, the three-year business plan (2024-27), our Competency and Values Framework (CVF), the COSLA, SPA and Police Scotland Partnership Agreement 2023 and the Police Scotland Corporate Governance Framework, to name just five. The Best Value team have reviewed this evidence bank, removed duplication, streamlined it and catalogued the evidence to the self-assessment documents prior to submission to the auditing bodies.

2. Findings

- 2.1 The process to date has highlighted the historical key best value successes against the Outline Business Case for Police reform. It has demonstrated a culture of continuous improvement that has allowed Police Scotland to evolve and remain agile to ensure we maintain a strong policing service in Scotland. It has demonstrated we have a strong and well-recognised 2030 Vision which has set the strategic direction for our Revised Model of Policing.
- 2.2 The self-assessment process has also confirmed areas where we need to continue our improvement journey, to ensure best value is delivered for the people of Scotland.
- 2.3 Beyond the preparations for the upcoming review, we continue to develop how we further embed the best value self-assessment approach as part of our Vision 2030 and business planning process. We also want to ensure that the best value assessments complement the ongoing work on continuous improvement. across Police Scotland.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are potential reputational implications implied in the outcome of the best value audit, which will be published by Audit Scotland.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct social implications in this report.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 There are no direct community implications in this report.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct equality implications in this report.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this paper.

Appendix

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Best value audit self assessment – theme statements

1. Vision

- a.** We have set a clear joint vision for the organisation and policing. We have developed this in partnership with, and clearly communicated to, the public, officers, employees, key partners, and other stakeholders, creating a culture of openness, trust, confidence and commitment.
- b.** We have set joint strategic priorities to achieve the joint vision. These reflect the needs of communities and individual citizens, align with the priorities of Scottish Government and partners and are updated and refined in response to changing circumstances.
- c.** We have clearly defined which outcomes are priorities and have set performance targets to drive continuous improvement in achieving those outcomes.
- d.** We ensure our strategic plans demonstrate a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of strategic priorities and the long-term sustainability of policing.
- e.** We clearly link operational plans to our priorities and strategic plans. Operational plans reflect priorities identified through community planning and show how we are working with partners to provide services that meet community needs.
- f.** We ensure that plans are realistic and linked to available resources to deliver high-quality and efficient policing and ensure continuous improvement in both performance and delivery of outcomes.
- g.** We have developed a corporate approach to continuous improvement and use this to regularly monitor and update improvement plans.

2. Leadership

- a.** We demonstrate a strong culture of cooperation and collaboration, informed by a clear understanding of our respective roles and responsibilities and characterised by mutual respect, trust, honesty and openness and by ethical behaviours.
- b.** We have developed an organisational culture that recognises the value of working with wider stakeholders and partners to achieve better services and citizen-focused outcomes.
- c.** We create a positive culture in which our people understand their contribution to the vision and objectives and we empower staff/officers to deliver services and drive improvement.
- d.** Our leaders lead by example and are self-aware. They commit to training and personal development to update and enhance their knowledge, skills, capacity and capabilities to deliver Best Value and perform their leadership roles, and they receive sufficient support to do so.
- e.** We demonstrate effective and visible leadership in driving continuous improvement and transformational change and supporting the achievement of strategic objectives. In striving for improved outcomes, we prioritise the use of resources and performance improvements that are likely to have the greatest impact.
- f.** We have developed a clear and shared understanding throughout the organisation about how performance improvement is going to be secured nationally, locally and reliably.

3. Working with partners and communities

- a.** We are proactive in identifying the needs of communities, citizens, staff and other stakeholders and ensure early, meaningful and inclusive consultation and engagement informs strategic plans. This includes taking action to encourage the participation of hard-to-reach communities.
- b.** We are clear about the intended outcomes and likely impacts of partnership working, identifying and being sensitive to, the potentially different needs of partners and communities that we serve.
- c.** We encourage opportunities for formal and informal partnerships, including through joint use of resources and joint funding options, where this will offer scope for mutual benefit, better outcomes, as well as continuous improvement in organisational performance.

- d.** We seek to explore and promote opportunities for efficiency savings and service improvements through shared service initiatives with partners. We identify and address any impediments that inhibit collaborative working.
- e.** We ensure that local delivery plans clearly reflect the priorities identified through community planning and show we are working with partners to deliver policing that meets stakeholder and community needs.

4. Governance and accountability

- a.** We have a clear understanding and application of the principles of good governance and transparency of decision-making at strategic, partnership and operational levels.
- b.** We take decisions in an open and transparent way, with decisions based on evidence that shows clear links between the allocation of resources and the outcomes to be delivered to customers and stakeholders.
- c.** We have established robust structures that allow us to demonstrate effective scrutiny and challenge at all levels of planning, performance and service delivery.
- d.** We promote the highest standards of integrity and responsibility, establishing shared values, mutual trust and sound ethics across all activities. We have put in place effective procedures to ensure that officers/staff comply with relevant codes of conduct and policies. This includes ensuring that appropriate policies on fraud prevention, investigation and whistleblowing are established, implemented and effective.
- e.** We have effective and accessible systems in place to record, analyse and report on complaints outcomes, trends and actions taken. We ensure that the complaints system is in line with all relevant Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance on complaints handling processes.
- f.** We have an information governance framework in place to ensure proper recording of, and appropriate access to, that information including by the public. Our governance framework complies with legislation.
- g.** (where appropriate) We have clear governance and lines of accountability when delivering services via a third party, and there is evidence of the application of the principles within the '[Following the Public Pound](#)' guidance when funding is provided to external bodies. This includes, clearly setting out roles and responsibilities, objectives

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and outcomes and a process for managing and reporting on performance and risks.

- h.** We have a responsible attitude to managing risk and have business continuity plans (including civil contingencies and emergency plans) in place to allow an effective and appropriate response to planned and unplanned events and circumstances.
- i.** We make effective use of internal audit.

5. Effective use of resources

- a.** We make best use of public resources (including employees, ICT, land, property, vehicles and financial resources) based on robust evidence and intelligence. This includes keeping a considered and appropriate balance between quality, sustainability and cost.
- b.** We ensure that there is the organisational capacity to deliver services through effective use of all employees and other resources.
- c.** We have a strategy for procurement and managing contracts (and contractors) that complies with legal and best practice requirements to deliver value for money.
- d.** We have developed appropriate financial strategies and plans that show a clear alignment to the strategic priorities.
- e.** Our plans forecast and address risks to financial sustainability across the medium and longer term and allow us to actively manage short-term financial challenges.
- f.** We ensure that medium to longer term financial plans include clear links to how we use capital investment to deliver organisational priorities.
- g.** We have clear plans to transform services and realise efficiencies and/or benefits to close future budget gaps and are clear on how planned savings or cost-reduction might affect quality of service delivery or provision of services.
- h.** We ensure that transformation and investment decisions are informed by clear business cases, with the benefits of investment clearly articulated and with defined measures of success.
- i.** We allocate and regularly monitor and report on budgets and other resources to ensure that they are co-ordinated effectively and are delivering agreed strategic priorities, objectives and outcomes.

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- j.** We have put in place an organisational workforce strategy that sets out expectations for staff/officers in delivering their vision, priorities and values.
- k.** We have workforce plans, covering employee numbers, skills, knowledge, competencies and organisational structures, that demonstrate how staff/officers will be deployed. We regularly review plans at appropriate intervals.
- l.** We ensure that we have the organisational capacity to implement our plans and make full use of staff/officers, ensuring that any relevant statutory and professional responsibilities are supported through an appropriate policy of Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- m.** We ensure all employees are managed effectively and know what is expected of them. Employee performance is regularly assessed through performance appraisal, with individuals and teams being supported to improve, where appropriate.
- n.** We support employee wellbeing by demonstrating fairness, equity and safety in the workplace, adopting relevant statutory guidance through progressive workplace policies and a commitment to best practice in workplace relationships.
- o.** We have a systematic and evidence-based approach to managing and planning assets (including land, property, equipment, vehicles and digital infrastructure), including identifying and managing risks to assets, that ensures they are used most efficiently and effectively in supporting the delivery of organisational priorities.
- p.** We have information and digital strategies in place, including resilience plans for information systems.
- q.** We promote and use technology and digital transformation to enhance service delivery.
- r.** We share information appropriately with partners to improve outcomes.

6. Performance management

- a.** We set performance outcomes and targets that drive improvements in delivery of the strategic priorities. We can demonstrate a trend of improvement over time.
- b.** We have put in place effective performance management arrangements and systematically measure performance across all areas of activity, with performance reports being regularly scrutinised by managers and board members.

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- c.** We address areas of underperformance, identifying the scope for improvement and agreeing remedial action.
- d.** We have established a corporate approach to identifying, monitoring and reporting improvement actions that will lead to continuous improvement in priority areas. They clearly articulate improvement actions and identify responsible staff/officers and target timelines.
- e.** We use self-evaluation and other tools to identify areas for improvement. This includes using comparative analyses to benchmark, monitor and improve performance.
- f.** We take an innovative approach when considering how services will be delivered in the future, looking at the activities of other organisations to consider new ways of doing things.
- g.** We regularly conduct rigorous and transparent reviews and appraisal of options across all areas of work and where appropriate, develop relevant and prioritised improvement actions. We can clearly demonstrate how improvement actions reflect a pace and depth of improvement that will lead to the realisation of policing priorities and the long-term sustainability of services.
- h.** We ensure that performance reporting to stakeholders is regular and gives a balanced view of performance, linked to priority service areas. The information provided is relevant to its audience, and clearly demonstrates whether objectives and targets are being met.

7. Equality, diversity and inclusion

- a.** We demonstrate compliance with all statutory duties in relation to equalities and human rights.
- b.** We take active steps to tackle inequalities and promote fairness across the organisation and our wider partnerships, including working conditions, training and community participation.
- c.** We ensure that all officers, employees and corporate processes contribute to the commitment to equality and fairness outcomes.
- d.** We engage with, and involve, equality groups when developing relevant policies and practices and take account of socio-economic disadvantage when making strategic decisions.
- e.** We ensure the equality impact of policies and practices, including those delivered through partnerships, is always considered.

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- f.** We analyse equality impact information and data when planning services and measuring performance.

8. Sustainability and environment

- a.** We create a culture that focuses on environmental sustainability, with clear accountability for its delivery across leadership and management teams.
- b.** We have a clear framework in place that facilitates the integration of environmental sustainability into all policies, financial plans, decision-making, services and activities through strategic-, corporate- and service-level action. In doing so, we can demonstrate that we are making a positive contribution to the environment.
- c.** We have set out clear guiding principles that demonstrate our commitment to environmental sustainability.
- d.** We evaluate, scrutinise and publicly report on environmental sustainability measures and indicators (both qualitative and quantitative).