



Authority Meeting

22 August 2024

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 27 June 2024 at COSLA, Edinburgh

Board Members present:	Martyn Evans (Chair) Fiona McQueen (Vice Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Katharina Kasper Angela Leitch Grant Macrae Mary Pitcaithly Catriona Stewart Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	None
In attendance:	Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer Police Scotland Chief Constable Jo Farrell Deputy Chief Constable Bex Smith Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Katy Miller, Director of People and Development

	Tom McMahon, Director of Strategy and Analysis Patrick Brown, Head of Finance (Item 7) Forensic Services Fiona Douglas, Director
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1. WELCOME AND STANDING ITEMS

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

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** no apologies.
- **NOTE** no declarations of interest or connections.
- **NOTE** no other business.
- **AGREE** that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Board would consider item 10 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.
 - Item 10 – to approve Minutes from meetings held in private on 23 May 2024 and 30 May 2024.

2. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **AGREE** the minute of the 23 May 2024.
- **AGREE** the action log.
- **NOTE** no decisions were taken via correspondence since the last full Authority Meeting.

3. SPA CHAIR’S REPORT

The Chair took his report as read and added that he had met the Scottish Police Federation with the Chief Executive and Authority Member Tom Halpin, where they discussed a number of issues including mental health demand, estates, Policing Together and pensions issues. The Chair also noted he had met with Unison along with the Vice Chair and Katy Miller (KMiller) to discuss a number of concerns they have.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **AGREE** the proposed amendments to Committee Memberships.

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:

- People Committee
- Policing Together Oversight Group
- Complaints and Conduct Committee
- Policing Performance Committee
- Resources Committee

In addition to the written reports provided, the following matters were raised:

- Chief Constable Jo Farrell (CCFarrell) commented on her year-end performance assessment which highlights progress and delivery over the last 12 months and provides details in relation to progress on volume crime, response to 999 calls and injuries to officers and staff. There are a number of items and deliverables, some of which are partly complete. CCFarrell assured the Authority that work will continue at pace and the Policing Performance Committee have provided a lot of scrutiny which will be reflected within this year's Annual Police Plan. CCFarrell noted some deliverables were reliant on partners and funding so were ambitious so while Police Scotland need to challenge themselves, they also need to be realistic on achievability.
- In response to the Policing Performance Committee update, DCC Bex Smith (DCCSmith) advised that the performance team are using dashboards to identify hotspots and locations to help assist preventative work in relation to serious violence. Local divisions and tasking divisions are also working collaboratively to help understand youth violence. The Policing Performance Committee Chair accepted the offer of case studies to be brought to a future Committee.
- The Authority heard the Legal Committee met on 10 June to discuss and take a decision in relation to an employee liability matter.

The Board **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** 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:

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- Members sought information on timescales for Police Scotland support to criminal justice reform, and how any impact will be measured. CCFarrell stated that Police Scotland's motivation is primarily to do with improving the service victims receive. In relation to specific areas, Members heard the digital capability for data exchange is well advanced in relation to roll out and will continue for another 18-24 months, whilst the roll out of body worn video to all officers is a three-year programme. CCFarrell commented that partnership work in the area is focussed on change of policy and practice in terms of the way partners are operating to manage and progress cases through the system to ensure a more efficient service.
- Following the recent Biometrics conference, Members sought comment on opportunities and safeguards required, and heard a programme of work is underway to understand issues around the use of facial recognition, building on lessons learned elsewhere. CCFarrell stated that opportunities capitalised at the conference were about opening the debate on balancing privacy and exploiting technology available, whilst introducing a message of reassurance that there will be a rights-based pathway with internal and external challenge and scrutiny. CCFarrell advised that the Metropolitan Police have progressed in the area more so than others and Police Scotland are linked in to learn from what they have done.
- Members sought more information on the impact of recent campaigns on tackling violence against women and girls, and child exploitation. DCCSmith stated that evaluating preventative activity is challenging but work is ongoing to try do so. Feedback is being sought from third sector partners to help inform future campaigns and focus groups with survivors have been held to help understand how campaigns can improve. DCCSmith referenced the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland, noting requests had risen which was positive, however, the scheme will be independently evaluated to understand how that can also be improved. DCCSmith highlighted that feedback on the 'That Guy' campaign has impacted versions 2 and 3 to focus on male perpetrators.
- The Chair sought comment the use of facial recognition for child sex exploitation cases to which DCCSmith responded that utilising technology has had an impact on capacity as Police Scotland can process more to reduce threat and risk in that area.
- Members questioned how the mental health taskforce will help deliver work at pace. CCFarrell confirmed that Police Scotland will never turn their back on people in crisis and know they have a role to play. However, Officer feedback is that a disproportionate amount of time is spent supporting those in crisis. Partnership working has driven some improvements, but the taskforce will look

at resetting policy and working further with partners to establish what is available to Officers locally to give confidence to make good risk assessments. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) added that robust governance arrangements are in place and increased training will be rolled out. All C3 staff have been trained to help identify mental health issues and how they can divert to NHS services for a more appropriate response.

- Members sought comment on the operational benefits of hosting the FBI Leadership Programme and the cost recovery. DCCSpeirs responded that the benefit of hosting allows the organisation to focus on key shared themes, and participation allows development opportunities. DCCSpeirs confirmed that it generates an income and there could be an opportunity for wider sector participation.
- In response to a question on Corporate Parenting, CCFarrell commented that she felt the organisation have a strong responsibility to ensure opportunities are available. CCFarrell acknowledged more work can be done to link the teenage youth volunteer scheme and progressing into Police Scotland as a career.
- Noting he had a connection to a private retail business, Alasdair Hay (AHay) sought further information on the retail crime pilot. CCFarrell explained that the pilot uses technology to allow retail outlets to report shoplifting in an efficient way. Officers are not deployed to speak to security specialists as they can provide evidence virtually, which provides a collaborative partnership approach. CCFarrell noted that increases in shoplifting partly relate to targeted inquisitive crime and also from the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. DCCSmith added that prevention is key when addressing targeted retail crime and Police Scotland are working with partners and businesses to address the issues. AHay welcomed the proposal to bring a case study to a future Policing Performance Committee.
- Members sought comment on the role of police staff in providing warranted officers with support. CCFarrell commented that feedback from staff is that they don't always feel included. A new staff survey is due to be launched with inclusion and connection being a key theme. CCFarrell highlighted some skilled staff roles and noted the balance was not right between Officers and staff as more specialist staff expertise was required.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. Lynn Brown (LBrown) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper and shared a number of key outcomes from the recent SPA staff survey: improvements across all 8 headings compared with the last survey, 95% overall return rate, 90% agreeing SPA was a good place to work, and 100% had discussed the skills required for their job. The only reduction was good work/life balance which had reduced to 87% and can be attributed in part to carrying vacancies across the org. The surveys have taken place for the last three years so there is now data available which identifies improvements. SPA will look to benchmark against its results against other organisations.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Mary Pitcaithly, Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee Chair, noted that the statutory responsibility for Best Value lies with CCFarrell and SPA's role is to oversee it through the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee. The last Committee expressed concern on the time taken to build resource to deal with the area, and the Committee intends to monitor this to ensure it becomes properly resourced to allow CCFarrell to fulfil her statutory responsibility.
- In relation to the HMICS Review, LBrown advised there was only one recommendation, to monitor progress on areas for development, and progress will be scrutinised through the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

7. FINANCIAL INDICATIVE OUTTURN

Members considered the report which provided an update on the financial outturn position of the SPA and Police Scotland for FY 2023/24. Patrick Brown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Resources Committee Chair commented that the Committee recognised the balanced budget was a major achievement when there was an initial projected overspend. He paid tribute to Police Scotland's Senior Leadership as well as the finance team.

- Members sought detail on the approach to project managing the digital and estates areas. Jame Gray (JGray) noted that during the last financial year, there was a large over allocation of capital which meant spending had to be slowed which had taken time to rebuild. JGray advised additional governance arrangements have been put in place to help monitor spend.
- CCFarrell thanked JGray and DCCSpeirs for driving operational changes and the mitigations that had to be put in place, confirming the Senior Leadership acknowledged the impact this had on frontline policing. Members supported the comments made.
- CCFarrell explained there was more scrutiny and visibility of budget management for all executive officers to give them more responsibility and accountability. CCFarrell also noted a broader discussion with Scottish Government on capital investment was required. The Chair commented that a balanced budget is essential, and the Authority have to advocate for more by demonstrating that investment in technology is being spent appropriately.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

8. POLICE OFFICER RECRUITMENT AND INITIAL TRAINING

Members considered the report which provided an overview of the future plans for police officer recruitment and current developments in the initial training for new police officers. DCCSpeirs highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought more information on the evaluation of the non-residential course to which DCCSpeirs responded that the cost per head and the product benefits will be analysed. DCCSpeirs commented that the MacLeod remedy meant there was an increased number of retirements, so the non-residential courses will help build officer numbers. DCCSpeirs confirmed it was the intention to hold the programme in areas out with the central belt.
- Members questioned what the selection criteria was for the non-residential training, how it might differ to residential courses and whether it fed into more flexible working opportunities. DCCSpeirs confirmed that it was not mandatory to reside at the Scottish Police

College during training, but a large number do stay. DCCSpeirs acknowledged that the non-residential programme for July 2024 was done at pace so the selection criteria was purely based on geographical links to Jackton. In future, applicants will be given a choice of locations. DCCSpeirs confirmed Police Scotland were committed to looking at flexible working opportunities.

- In response to points raised by Members on diversity, DCCSpeirs agreed that the non-residential training will benefit neuro diverse and underrepresented groups.
- Members questioned how delivery risks are being managed and heard standards at the entrance point have not been altered so there was no compromise in quality of applicants or standards of vetting. DCCSpeirs advised there were qualified trainers who are SQA assessed so the training content is considered and measured.
- Members sought comment on public confidence in relation to officer numbers. CCFarrell responded that Police Scotland have advocated for funding for 16,600 officers and the numbers are important for deploying and training officers to undertake duties that only frontline officers can do. Balancing budget against recruitment is a challenge and work continue to ensure operational delivery is efficient. DCCSpeirs explained the impact of having less than funded numbers was daily pressures on the ability of resources. There had to be a focus on overtime which has to be managed.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

9. WORKFORCE ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the report which provided annual sight of relevant reports from the People Committee in relation to workforce data, wellbeing, health and safety and equality diversity and inclusion. Katy Miller (KMiller) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The People Committee Chair noted the Committee were pleased to see the dashboards and information on wellbeing. She sought comment on current employee relations and heard relations has had its challenges as there has been much change over the years. Whilst there has been points of tension, KMiller confirmed that

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CCFarrell and the Executive team are committed to valuing the voices of these groups.

- Members sought more detail on modified duties, to which KMiller confirmed there are 756 officers who are deployable but restricted in a particular way whilst 1239 aren't actively deployable. KMiller advised that of those who aren't deployable, they are doing beneficial work. A national duty modified panel look at detail of those on modified duties to ascertain if ill health retiral should be considered.
- Members questioned how the number of leavers completing exit surveys can be improved. KMiller replied that further work was required to identify whether it should be completed by Line Managers, HR or by an independent, and whether it should be completed online and/or anonymously. KMiller added that scenario planning was key in responding to retirement increases.
- Members sought information on how occupational health provisions are evaluated. KMiller confirmed occupational health and employee assistance programmes were recently retendered and there are two different providers. Members heard the retender focussed on performance of those contracts and whether officers and staff were getting assistance at the time required. An independent review has also taken place, as well as an HMICS audit on wellbeing.

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **NOTE** the report.

The following item was taken in private.

10. MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The Authority **RESOLVED** to:

- **AGREE** the minute of the 23 May 2024.
- **AGREE** the minute of the 30 May 2024.

End.