



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	23 March 2023
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Sir Iain Livingstone QPM Chief Constable
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	No

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

The purpose of Police Scotland is 'to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland' and our focus is Keeping People Safe. This paper is intended to provide Members with an update on key activity and events.

2. TACKLING THREAT AND RISK

SERIOUS VIOLENCE INCLUDING HOMICIDE

Since the last meeting of the Scottish Police Authority Board on Thursday 23 February 2023, Police Scotland has carried out investigations into five murders at various locations across Scotland. Each death is a tragedy, which has a lasting impact on individuals and families, and in the communities where they occur.

A professional investigative response by officers and staff from Police Scotland's Major Investigation Team (MIT) and Local Policing Divisions, driven by the particular circumstances of each death, has resulted in the identification and arrest of an accused person or persons in each of the murders.

The ability to respond to multiple incidences of serious criminality occurring within a compressed time period, and conducting complex investigations while supporting the families and communities affected, demonstrates the value of the integrated and effective national service.

Murder of Brenda Page - Aberdeen

On Thursday 9 March, Christopher Harrison, aged 82, was found guilty at the High Court in Aberdeen of murdering his ex-wife 32-year-old Dr Brenda Page within her home on Friday 14 July 1978. Harrison subjected her to a prolonged campaign of domestic abuse including coercive and controlling behaviours throughout their relationship, which culminated in her violent murder.

This has been one of Scotland's longest-running murder investigations and Police Scotland's MIT instigated a re-investigation in 2015 following instruction from the Lord Advocate.

Various improvements in available evidence since 1978 allowed the investigation to progress to trial. This is in part due to a better understanding of domestic abuse and abusive relationships which helped highlight what Brenda went through over many years.

Police Scotland ensures that time is no barrier to justice. Unresolved and undetected murder cases are never closed in Scotland. The investigation of homicides is an area where the national police service has driven high standards of investigation and compassion. The ability to respond professionally and thoroughly, and provide answers for families, is a core duty of policing.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

Domestic Abuse - Significant Sentences

Stephen Kidd, aged 36, appeared at Aberdeen High Court in February, having been found guilty of 22 charges, including rape, committed against nine victims between 2005 and 2020. He was sentenced to 12 years imprisonment and a further three year extended sentence. This conviction and sentence follows a proactive non-recent enquiry undertaken by the Domestic Abuse Task Force.

In March, Paul Callanin aged 35, was sentenced to 11 years imprisonment at Aberdeen High Court in connection with serious sexual offences carried out on women in the West Dunbartonshire area between 2005 and 2013. Callanin is a predatory and dangerous man who committed a variety of serious sexual crimes against women over a protracted period of time.

These convictions and sentences followed investigations by Police Scotlands Public Protection Unit officers, and enabled by the bravery and courage of victims who came forward to report what happened to them.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

TACKLING CRIME IN THE DIGITAL AGE

The fifth annual Cyber Scotland Week started at the end of February and involved significant engagement from the Cybercrime Harm Prevention team. They launched Cyber Choices Scotland which is a National Crime Agency led programme designed to identify young people on the cusp of cyber criminality and divert them to legal and positive pathways.

The team continue to deliver significant preventative interventions across Scotland, and most recently, they have been working with Children's Hearing Panel members to deliver in depth sessions that highlight the online realities faced by young people today.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy

Police Scotland has undertaken a significant programme of research and engagement activity to develop a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy that meets the needs of victims and survivors and reflects the unique role policing has in tackling VAWG.

Scottish Government, COSLA and SPA are key stakeholders and have been integral to the development of the strategy.

The VAWG Strategy and Implementation Plan was presented to the SPA Policing Performance Committee on 16 March and further details on this important work will be outlined later in today's meeting.

ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

On 16 March we presented our third Performance Report of 2022 – 23 to the Performance Board. This report covers the breadth and depth of Police Scotland's response in the year up to December 2022.

Despite significant reductions in road fatalities between 2010 and 2020, 2022-23 has seen a concerning increase on recent years and against the five year average.

We continue to work with the Scottish Government, Transport Scotland and a range of other road safety partners to improve road safety in Scotland. Our commitment is clear – road safety is a priority and our officers are supporting this every single day through education and enforcement.

The new Road Safety Framework (RSF) with interim targets to 2030 has been published and has challenging reductions in the number of adults and children killed and seriously injured from a 2014/18 baseline, working towards the Vision Zero target of no deaths and no serious injuries on Scotland's roads by 2050.

Police Scotland has been identifying and mitigating risks to all road users to meet this target, including an in-depth fatality study in partnership with Transport Scotland. The National Road Safety Calendar of activity will focus on the fatal five causation factors, careless driving, drink/drug driving, speeding, seatbelts and mobile phones / distraction, and all initiatives are being supported by Corporate Communications and Social Media.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

WOMEN IN POLICING (WiP) CONFERENCE

Between Wednesday 8 and Friday 10 March, Police Scotland welcomed over 350 police officers and police staff from across the UK and abroad to the WiP Conference, coinciding with International Women's Day.

I had the privilege to open the event and welcome delegates on behalf of Police Scotland. The event focused on the themes of Life, Leadership and Legacy, and in addition to inputs from the senior leadership team on sexism and misogyny, and values and legacy in policing, Constable Jo Hay provided a personal account of her lived experience in the organisation.

International Women's Day

On Wednesday 8 March Police Scotland hosted an online event, open to everyone, as part of Police Scotland's programme to mark International Women's Day. A panel comprising Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham, Chief Superintendents Gillian Docherty, Laura Waddell and Lynn Ratcliff, and the Scottish Women's Development Forum Deputy Chair Jenni Stuart, shared their own experiences of policing and the work ongoing within the organisation to improve sex equality and tackling misogyny.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) ENGAGEMENT

On Wednesday 1 March I assisted colleagues from SFRS and Scottish Government with the SFRS Chief Officer recruitment process. I look forward to working with Ross Haggart, and continuing a close relationship between Police Scotland and SFRS.

In addition to being a member of the interview panel, I undertook an independent advisor role for the incident command element. Engagement and support to, and from, our Emergency Services Colleagues at all levels, helps us collectively keep the communities of Scotland safe.

PARLIAMENT ENGAGEMENT

On Wednesday 8 March, Detective Chief Superintendent Sam Faulds QPM provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee. The evidence session was one of a series considering post-legislative scrutiny of the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018.

Police Scotland recognises the important role that policing holds, both within the justice system in Scotland and across wider public life, and will continue to engage with parliament in an open and transparent manner.

CHIDLIGHT

On Wednesday 15 March, along with colleagues from our Public Protection team, Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors QPM and I attended the official launch of Childlight - Global Child Safety Institute, in Edinburgh.

Childlight has been established by the Human Dignity Foundation in partnership with the University of Edinburgh, to gather and visualise the global prevalence and nature of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Working with partners from around the world, Childlight aims to improve and standardise the collection of data relating to child sexual exploitation and abuse and using the data to drive change in real time.

I gave an opening address at the launch, and participated in panel discussions around the importance of data in tackling this issue from a law enforcement perspective.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

On 14 March I opened the FBI National Academy Alumni event in Edinburgh.

The event, for serving senior officers from across the UK, consisted of a number of strategic inputs covering topics such as the challenges facing policing in the UK, Strategic Leadership of an organisation, the threat from Cyber across Industry, and Law Enforcement.

In my opening remarks I highlighted the positive impact Police Scotland has, not only in our local communities, but also across UK policing and internationally.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS

LEAGUE CUP FINAL

On Sunday 26 February, the National Stadium, Hampden Park, hosted the League Cup Final between Rangers and Celtic Football Clubs. A full Gold command structure and a significant policing and stewarding operation were in place to manage and coordinate the response.

Working in partnership with both clubs, an extensive policing operation involving the deployment of hundreds of officers was implemented. Prior to kick off, elements of both supporter groups clashed outside the stadium. Police officers prevented escalation of this incident, which was widely reported on social and mainstream media. A criminal enquiry is ongoing into the circumstances and to identify those involved.

TUG BOAT CAPSIZE – GREENOCK

On Friday 24 February, Police received a call from the Coastguard regarding a capsized tug vessel at Custom House Quay, Greenock. Two crew men, aged 65 and 74 were on board the vessel at the time.

A multi-agency response was initiated and a search and rescue operation instigated immediately, however tragically, both crew members died during the incident. The Marine Investigation Unit are leading the investigation and being supported by Police Scotland specialist services.

SHORE RECYCLING CENTRE EXPLOSION, PERTH

On Tuesday 28 February, Police Scotland was alerted to an explosion and fire at Shore Recycling Centre, Friarton Bridge Industrial Park, Perth.

Police attended along with SFRS and Scottish Ambulance Service (SAS) and a multi-agency response was instigated.

Tragically, a 46 year old man died at the scene and another man sustained significant injury. The cause of the fire remains under joint investigation led by the MIT North, with the assistance of Tayside Divisional resources, Health and Safety Executive, SFRS and Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service.

6. OUR PEOPLE

CORE OPERATIONAL SOLUTIONS – EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Core Operational Solutions (COS) Insight team received an award at the Elastic Excellence Awards for the Insight Search function. Insight is a search tool designed to give fast access to information and allows officers to search across a number of source systems, including the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database (iVPD) and The Protection of Vulnerable Groups Database (PVG) instantaneously.

In addition to helping officers deal with complex situations the technology also ensures that assistance is provided to vulnerable members of the public as quickly as possible.

Receiving this endorsement from the worldwide technology community is testament to the hard work put in by all the members of the team.

NATIONAL POLICE CHIEFS' COUNCIL (NPCC) AWARD

Police Constable Carly Fulton and her Police Dog Ben won the NPCC 'Dog Team of the Year' award at Crufts on Sunday 12 March.

In August 2022 Carly and her Police Dog were searching for a missing woman, and working over difficult and uneven terrain. During the search, Carly lost her footing, breaking her heel bone and tearing ligaments in her ankle and foot. Despite this, Carly continued on her hands and knees to search for the woman, and found her.

This award illustrates the level of commitment shown by our police officers and staff who provide crucial support to local policing and communities.

RECRUITMENT

On 24 February I was delighted to welcome almost 190 new officers into policing at the Oath of Office ceremony at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan.

Policing is a hugely rewarding vocation in which officers help our fellow citizens every day, right across Scotland. Making the Declaration of Constable is a significant day in the lives and careers of those who join this vital public service.

I thank everyone who makes that important commitment to work for the benefit of others and to keep people safe. I am also grateful to the families and loved ones who support them.

POLICE OFFICER PROMOTIONS

In February, we marked the largest Promotion Parade in the history of Police Scotland. One promotion parade was held over three ceremonies in the one week to formally promote 305 Police Officers, and formally recognise 105 members of Police Staff who had been promoted since June 2022.

Effective leadership is vital, and I congratulate each officer and staff member on their personal achievement and wish them all the best in their new roles.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENT

On Monday 27 February, along with SPA Chair Martyn Evans, I was delighted to formally welcome ACC Wendy Middleton when she was sworn in as a Police Scotland officer at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan. Her oath of office was overseen by Justice of the Peace David Donaldson.

ACC Middleton will lead the Criminal Justice portfolio within the Local Policing command area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to note the information contained in this report.

