



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	10 June 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	COSLA Update Report
Presented By	Cllr Maureen Chalmers
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

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 and specifically on any additional areas that Members would wish to see covered in future COSLA updates.

1 COSLA-Scottish Government Hate Crime Toolkit

- 1.1. COSLA is represented on the Scottish Government's Strategic Partnership Group (SPG) for Hate Crime, which was established in April 2022 to ensure a multi-agency, strategic approach towards the development of the Hate Crime Strategy. The Hate Crime SPG supports the implementation of the [Hate Crime Strategy](#), published in March 2023, and the activity in its associated [Hate Crime Strategy Delivery Plan](#), published in November 2023.
- 1.2. COSLA is working with Scottish Government to take forward Action 10 from the Hate Crime Strategy Delivery Plan. Action 10 is a commitment for Scottish Government to work with COSLA to develop a toolkit of resources for local authorities and their partners to help address hate crime and build community cohesion. To support this, COSLA committed to undertake a joint programme of engagement to understand what local authorities would find helpful in a toolkit.
- 1.3. Following engagement with local authorities over the course of last year, a draft toolkit has been developed for consideration by the Community Wellbeing Board on 6th June. At the time of writing this report the Board is yet to consider the toolkit, as such a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.
- 1.4. The toolkit outlines the harmful impact of hate crime on individuals and communities and aims to help local authorities develop targeted local responses. It highlights the toll that such crimes take on victims and communities and includes best practice examples from Scottish councils highlighting local initiatives aimed at addressing hate crime and prejudice.

2 Raising the Standard: A Call for Civility in Public Life

- 2.1. COSLA hosted a roundtable discussion attended by the Scottish Government, media and public and third sector experts on the 28th of May 2025, aimed at tackling abuse and intimidation towards elected officials.

- 2.2. The roundtable was convened as a result of an unprecedented rise in abuse towards elected members, particularly those from underrepresented groups. This rise has been fuelled by misinformation—especially around council tax and councillor remuneration—and amplified by the growing influence of social media. Concerns were also highlighted on the increasing use of social media to spread hate speech, misogyny, and threats, creating a hostile environment for those in public office.
- 2.3. Following the Roundtable, which was also attended by SPA and Police Scotland, representatives will collectively develop a Scottish Action Plan. Further updates will be provided to PPC in due course.

3 Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission

- 3.1. The Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission was established in February 2025 to consider how imprisonment and community-based interventions are used in Scotland and ensure that it has a sustainable prison population. The Commission will make recommendations for improvements in how offending behaviour can be dealt with the underlying aim of ensuring less crime, fewer victims, and safer communities.
- 3.2. Cllr Chalmers and COSLA President Shona Morrison met with the Chair of the Sentencing and Penal Policy Commission, Martyn Evans, on 29 May to discuss the work of the Commission and ongoing engagement with Local Government. Mr Evans will also be attending an upcoming meeting of COSLA Justice Conveners, chaired by Cllr Chalmers, on 12 June for a conversation with Elected Members on the Commission and its areas of interest.
- 3.3. COSLA has also responded to the Commission's call for evidence. At the time of writing this paper, COSLA's draft response is due to be considered by the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board on 6 June. COSLA's draft submission emphasises our ongoing support for a safe shift from use of imprisonment to community disposals wherever appropriate, while not losing sight of victims' rights and perspectives. The submission highlights existing good practice as well as resource pressures on local authorities. It invites the Commission to further explore a number of key themes, such as judicial confidence and awareness of community disposals and the use of digital technology to support pre-release planning and reintegration.

4 National Joint Investigative Interviewing Project

- 4.1. COSLA and Police Scotland co-chair a new National Oversight Group for joint investigative interviewing, which is aimed at supporting work to ensure the Scottish Child Interview Model is fully implemented across the country.
- 4.2. The Scottish Child Interview Model is a trauma-informed approach to joint investigative interviewing which keeps the child's needs and rights at the centre, while capturing best evidence through improved planning and interviewing techniques. It is available to children living in every part of Scotland, except Shetland who will be offering this new approach from November this year.
- 4.3. All local policing divisions and local authorities are working collaboratively with their partners in health, third sector, SCRA and COPFS to create the system change necessary to fully implement this new trauma informed model of interviewing practice. Full implementation in this context means all joint investigative interviews being conducted using the new approach, and all quality standards within the model being met.
- 4.4. Around 9,000 children to date have benefitted from this improved approach to joint investigative interviewing, with feedback consistently reflecting an improved experience for the child.
- 4.5. Evaluation feedback from COPFS and SCRA in relation to the evidential quality of the interview's highlights evidence of improved standards and more consistent quality. This has contributed to a significant increase in the use of joint investigative interviews (as a form of pre-recorded evidence) in court proceedings. This is helping to protect children from the distressing experience of repeating the details of their abusive experience in a court setting.
- 4.6. The work of the National Joint Investigative Interviewing Project is informing Bairns' Hoose developments at both a local and national level.

5 Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

- 5.1. COSLA and Scottish Government jointly published the national Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and associated Delivery and Workforce plans in 2023.

- 5.2. These plans were originally intended for revision in spring 2025. However, to take account of emerging challenges and wider strategic developments this has now been delayed until early 2026. In the interim work will continue on the current plans and consideration given to content of the next iteration of plans, utilising the expertise and networks of the existing mental health and wellbeing governance.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. There are no financial implications in this report.

7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1. There are no personnel implications in this report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1. There are no legal implications in this report.

9 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. There are no reputational implications in this report.

10 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no social implications in this report.

11 COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 11.1. There are no community implications in this report.

12 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1. There are no equality implications in this report.

13 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1. There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the report.