

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	25 November 2020
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
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

Wilful Fire-raisings – Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Division

Since July 2020, a series of fire-raising incidents have occurred at a number of residential properties in Greenock. These included an incident on Monday 13 July where incendiary devices were thrown against a flat window in Union Street, an incident on Saturday 19 September in Cumberland Road when an item filled with accelerant was thrown at a house, and an incident on Monday 28 September where a ground floor flat was set alight at Kincaid Court. The latter incident caused significant damage, leading to the evacuation of a number of residents. As a result of an investigation led by detective officers from Renfrewshire and Inverclyde Division, four males were arrested between Friday 6 and Tuesday 17 November. All appeared at Greenock Sheriff Court in respect of attempted murder and fire-raising, and were remanded in custody.

A significant investigation into these incidents continues, and the latest enforcement action builds on a number of other arrests in recent weeks. This serious criminality has caused distress and concern within the community of Inverclyde, and Police Scotland officers continue to provide a visible presence in the area to offer community support and reassurance.

Robbery – Fife Division

On Friday 4 May 2018, a 76 year old woman was threatened with a knife and robbed within her home address in Crossford, Fife. Following this distressing incident, detective officers from Fife Division, in conjunction with Forensic Services and the National Crime Agency, conducted a protracted UK wide investigation in an effort to identify the person responsible, including appeals through CRIMESTOPPERS and Crimewatch.

As a result of the investigation and nationwide appeals, on Thursday 29 October 2020, a 39 year old male was arrested and charged with robbery. He subsequently appeared at Kirkcaldy Sheriff Court where he was remanded in custody.

SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME**Drug Recoveries – Greater Glasgow, Lanarkshire and Tayside Divisions**

As a result of Police Scotland enforcement activity in early November, five European males involved in organised crime were arrested and subsequently remanded in custody, following the seizure of controlled drugs at various locations across Scotland.

On Monday 2nd November, following an intelligence led operation, officers recovered a cannabis cultivation within industrial premises in Glasgow, containing approximately 3,400 plants with an estimated street value of around £2 million. Linked enforcement action was subsequently taken at properties in Wishaw and Dundee, resulting in the recovery of further cannabis cultivations, with an estimated street value of around £550,000.

Police Scotland will continue to target those involved in serious and organised crime, focusing on disruption and intervention activity to protect communities from those who cause significant harm.

DRUGS SUPPLY AND HARM**Drug Enforcement Activity – Highland and Islands Division**

In recent months, officers from Highland and Islands Division identified a developing trend of controlled drugs being supplied via postal delivery services, particularly affecting island communities.

To address this criminality, and with support from community funding and the Scottish charity 'Dogs Against Drugs', drugs detection dogs have been deployed at local airports, ferry terminals and parcel delivery depots in the Western Isles, Orkney and Shetland. On Monday 19 October, an intervention by a drugs detection dog in respect of a parcel delivery to Orkney, led to the recovery of class A drugs with a street value in excess of £10,000, and the arrest of a 24 year old woman from Glasgow, who was charged in respect of controlled drugs supply.

Since January, this community based enforcement activity has resulted in the seizure of controlled drugs and cash with an approximate value of £250,000, making a significant contribution to keeping island communities safe.

ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

Police Scotland continues to prioritise visibility on the road network to positively influence driver behaviour and enhance road safety throughout Scotland. In conjunction with partner agencies, national road safety and enforcement campaigns continue, prioritising areas of particular risk and concern.

Our week long Winter Road Safety Campaign took place throughout the last week in October, which focused on encouraging road users to prepare for the additional challenges of travel during the winter months.

During November, officers from Road Policing Division carried out two national enforcement campaigns. Operation Drive Insured involved a week of intelligence led activity, designed to target and highlight the risk posed by those who drive vehicles while uninsured. This was followed by a national Seatbelt Day of Action on Wednesday 11 November. These campaigns resulted in the detection of almost 400 offences.

The annual Festive Drink and Drug Drive Campaign will run from Tuesday 1 December until Saturday 2 January 2021. High-visibility patrols supported by a sustained media campaign will focus on raising awareness of the risks associated with drink and drug driving. This national campaign will be supported by Road Policing and Local Policing Divisions, and is designed to remind people that driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs can have devastating consequences.

COUNTER TERRORISM

National Threat Level

Following incidents which took place in France and Austria, the Home Secretary on Tuesday 3 November 2020, announced an increase in the UK's Threat Level from SUBSTANTIAL to SEVERE, meaning an attack is assessed to be highly likely. There is no intelligence to suggest any specific threat to Scotland, and our advice remains consistent - be alert but not alarmed. Members of the public are encouraged to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity to police.

In response to this threat level change, Police Scotland has reviewed its operational patrol and event plans, and shared internal and external messages, in order to support and reassure communities.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Human Trafficking

Police Scotland is committed to protecting vulnerable people throughout Scotland, and continues to work with local, national and international partners to identify and support victims of human trafficking, and to target offenders who exploit people in this manner.

In October, Police Scotland welcomed two Vietnamese officers who will be seconded for a period of six months to the National Human Trafficking Unit (NHTU). The officers are supporting ongoing activity by the NHTU in respect of the gathering and collation of information and intelligence to identify trafficking routes, uncover exploitation networks, and pursue those engaged in human trafficking and exploitation.

On Sunday 18 October, Police Scotland marked international Anti-Slavery Day with public messaging through a variety of national and online media channels, emphasising that slavery is not simply confined to the past, but continues to blight communities in Scotland.

Domestic Abuse

The fifth anniversary of the implementation of the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland (DSDAS) was reached on Thursday 1 October. The scheme is designed to help tackle and prevent domestic abuse, giving people the right to ask on their own behalf, or on behalf of others, for disclosure of information from Police Scotland, should they suspect a current partner may have an abusive past. Where information or intelligence exists, Police Scotland also has the power to tell individuals that they may be at risk of domestic abuse in their relationship.

The DSDAS provides an additional level of support and protection for those who may be at risk of harm from domestic abuse, with relevant disclosures made where it is lawful, necessary and proportionate to do so. Since its introduction, more than 8,500 people have made applications through DSDAS, with over 4,500 disclosures made. In the period since March when coronavirus restrictions were introduced in Scotland, there has been an increase in applications of around 33%, the majority of which were proactively submitted by Police Scotland officers and staff to protect those who may be at risk.

Child Protection

On Saturday 7 November, the Children (Equal Protection from Assault) (Scotland) Act 2019 came into effect, which seeks to provide children with the same protection from assault as adults, abolishing the previously available statutory defence of 'justifiable assault', also known as 'reasonable chastisement'.

In preparation for the legislation being introduced, Police Scotland worked collaboratively with a range of partners to develop national awareness raising approaches and produce relevant guidance. An internal communication campaign, in conjunction with training and policy development, was designed to support a proportionate and appropriate policing response in respect of equal protection incidents.

Naloxone – Test of Change

Police Scotland is committed to proactively tackling problem drug use in our communities through harm reduction, as we continue to target and pursue those organised crime groups who exploit vulnerable people and communities through the supply of controlled drugs.

As previously reported, Naloxone is an emergency antidote to overdoses as a result of heroin or other opioid/opiate use, which reverses the suppression of the respiratory system. The medication, which is viewed as a first aid treatment, provides additional time for the delivery of emergency medical treatment by Scottish Ambulance Service personnel.

After careful consideration, and following consultation with a range of partners through the Naloxone Delivery Steering Group, Police Scotland will introduce a Test of Change for the carriage and use of Naloxone intra-nasal spray by officers in three identified areas next year. The Test of Change has been initiated in response to ongoing year-on-year increases in drug-related deaths in Scotland, with statistics indicating that opiates/opioids are implicated in, or a potential contributory factor, in a high percentage of such deaths. Following the Test of Change, a full evidence-based evaluation will be produced, to inform any future decision on whether Naloxone should be carried more widely by Police Scotland officers.

TACKLING CRIME IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Tackling Online Child Sexual Abuse - Taskforce

Protecting children is a key priority for Police Scotland. As previously

reported, incidents of online child sexual abuse and exploitation continue to rise, and the impact of COVID-19 has undoubtedly led to an increased global presence online. In the period between April and September of this year, 1,036 online child sexual abuse crimes were recorded in Scotland.

On Tuesday 1 September, Police Scotland established a national taskforce to enhance our continued efforts to tackle online child sexual abuse and exploitation, comprising officers from the Specialist Crime Division Public Protection Unit, Organised Crime & Counter Terrorism, Intelligence and Major Crime. Since the taskforce was established, proactivity and investigations have resulted in over 100 arrests, with offenders ranging in age from 14 to 79. Importantly, 139 children have been safeguarded, with a further 28 referred to partners and multi-agency child protection measures initiated.

Work aligned to recommendations made by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland continues, and Police Scotland will continue to work with national and international partners to protect children, through prevention and enforcement activity, using available resources and technology to track down abusers and bring them to justice. We have also recently introduced phase two of the national prevention campaign, 'get help or get caught', which has been expanded to run on additional online platforms.

Cyber Champions

Recognising the ever increasing demands associated with cybercrime and cyber investigation, Police Scotland has introduced a cadre of Cyber Champions. This cadre is comprised of 22 officers and eight police staff with existing cyber interest or capability, who, in conjunction with their core roles and duties, will form part of a nationwide network to assist with these types of investigations.

Each Local Policing Division has a minimum of two champions, and with ongoing support from the Cybercrime Investigations Unit, members of the cadre will offer a point of contact to provide initial guidance in respect of cyber incidents, an element of high end capability for complex investigations, and assist in the early identification of emerging issues and trends.

SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONAL POLICING

Local Policing Programme

As previously reported, the Local Policing Programme (LPP) was

established in 2019 with strategic aims designed to support the provision of local policing in our diverse communities, with the flexibility and agility to meet changing needs and demands.

Through the LPP, and ongoing engagement with Local Police Commanders, key partners and stakeholders, we have delivered change to support local delivery and enhance confidence in policing. Changes introduced include the provision of enhanced public contact and call handling arrangements; developing greater autonomy for local commanders within a defined corporate framework; strengthening the relationship between local policing and corporate and national functions; and improving our response to changing demands.

Local policing is the cornerstone of Police Scotland, and all policing activity is ultimately delivered to benefit communities across Scotland. We remain fully committed to the LPP, the benefits of which will be particularly apparent as we respond to acute, consecutive and concurrent policing demand in 2021.

Public Confidence

Public confidence is built on values based policing which reflects and represents our communities. This is vital to maintain public consent from which policing draws its legitimacy. During the coronavirus pandemic, Police Scotland has altered aspects of our deployment model in order to provide a safe and appropriate policing response and support the citizens of Scotland, during this period of unprecedented challenge.

The most recent report from the Police Scotland Public Confidence Governance Board confirmed that a high level of public confidence in policing in Scotland has been sustained during the period of the pandemic, with an overall confidence level of 64% being recorded, around 20% higher than pre COVID-19 levels. This is supported by sustained high levels of user satisfaction from those who have engaged with Police Scotland officers and staff, demonstrating the enduring bond of trust which exists between the people of Scotland and its police service.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

SCOTTISH RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP

The Scottish Resilience Partnership has established a Police Scotland led Concurrency Sub-Group (CSG) to develop a broad and consistent definition for 'concurrency'. Taking a strategic view of concurrent risks,

the CSG considered the interdependencies of the operational response plans for civil emergencies of specific organisations/sectors, emergencies, and the arrangements required to support these and co-ordinate the wider response.

A two phased approach has been adopted, focusing on the establishment of a multi-agency assessment of preparedness in phase one, followed by the creation of a practical framework in phase two. A key aspect of the framework is the establishment of an all-risks approach to co-ordinate the multi-agency response to concurrent risks. This has led to the evolution of the Brexit Co-ordination Centre, which has become the National All-Risks Co-ordination Centre to manage the response to EU-Exit, COVID-19 and any other civil emergency that may occur.

PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

On Monday 26 October 2020, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr and Detective Chief Superintendent Pat Campbell provided evidence to the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing in respect of the EU-Exit Impact on Policing. The evidence session considered in depth Police Scotland's ongoing preparations for EU-Exit, including civil contingency planning and measures to mitigate the potential loss of Justice and Home Affairs measures.

On Tuesday 3 November, as part of a panel of witnesses, Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie provided evidence to the Justice Committee in respect of the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. ACC Ritchie also provided evidence to the Equalities and Human Rights Committee on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) Bill on Thursday 19 November.

The continuing level of interest, oversight and scrutiny is welcomed, and reflects the unique nature of policing in Scottish public life.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENGAGEMENT

On Tuesday 3 November, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr and other members of the Force Executive participated in a virtual engagement session with senior representatives from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE). The session further enhanced the strong relationships which exist between Police Scotland and Local Authorities, and generated positive discussion on a number of areas of shared interest and responsibility, including the response to COVID-19, EU-Exit, Criminal Justice matters and significant events in 2021.

REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS HANDLING, INVESTIGATIONS AND MISCONDUCT ISSUES

On Wednesday 11 November, Dame Elish Angiolini published the final report following her Independent Review of Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct Issues in Relation to Policing. I am grateful to Dame Elish for her significant work which underlines the range and depth of challenges for policing, those who scrutinise policing, and the public we serve. The recommendations in the report are wide-ranging and their implications now require careful consideration.

Racism and discrimination of any kind is deplorable and unacceptable. It has no place in society, and no place in policing. Our core values are integrity, fairness and respect, and a commitment to upholding human rights. These are the foundations of policing in Scotland, and are demonstrated every day by officers and staff up and the down the country. The bond of trust we have with the citizens of Scotland is maintained and enhanced by our commitment to improving standards where learning is identified. It is crucial that the culture of Police Scotland is welcoming and inclusive, and that we support all our people to thrive and flourish in what is an extremely demanding job. Police Scotland will continue to work with communities and other partners to relentlessly improve how we serve our fellow citizens and maintain their trust and support.

POLICING GOVERNANCE ROUNDTABLE

On Thursday 12 November 2020, accompanied by Deputy Chief Constable Fiona Taylor, I attended a Policing Governance Roundtable event, hosted by the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, Humza Yousaf MSP. This was the second Policing Governance Roundtable following an initial meeting in March 2020, and was attended by stakeholders from Scottish Government, Scottish Police Authority, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland, Audit Scotland and the Police Investigations & Review Commissioner.

The session provided a valuable opportunity, along with those involved in the wider policing system, to further consider the governance of policing in Scotland.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS

POLICING RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – OPERATION TALLA

Police Scotland's approach to the evolving circumstances and impact of

COVID-19 remains consistent, delivering a proportionate and common sense policing response to the national health emergency, with enforcement action being taken where blatant or repeated breaches of regulations occur. We continue to tailor our response to meet local requirements, particularly following the introduction of a five tiered system on Monday 2 November, which resulted in restriction variations in different Local Authority areas.

In the period from the introduction of initial legislation in respect of coronavirus until Sunday 1 November, police officers across Scotland engaged with individuals in respect of coronavirus legislation on more than 84,000 occasions. In approximately 94% of these interactions no formal enforcement action was required.

OPERATION MOONBEAM

Halloween and Bonfire Night have recently been associated with an increase in antisocial activity and criminality across the country, particularly in respect of the use of fireworks and unauthorised bonfires. Operation MOONBEAM was introduced following significant incidents in November 2017, where Police, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Scottish Ambulance Service personnel were deliberately targeted.

Operation MOONBEAM is a national operation, with public order officers deployed in support of Local Policing Divisions, where violence and anti-social behaviour escalates. This year, the cancellation of planned fireworks display events across Scotland resulted in a potential increase in spontaneous and unplanned use of fireworks, and higher levels of anti-social behavior and disorder.

On Wednesday 4 and Thursday 5 November 2020, almost 1,000 calls relating to fireworks and fires were received, which was a slight increase from 2019, although a reduction from 2018. While the majority of the public enjoyed bonfire night safely and responsibly, a minority continued to put others, including police officers and other emergency service personnel, at risk, due to their dangerous and irresponsible use of fireworks.

EU-EXIT PLANNING

As the end of the EU-Exit transition period approaches, Police Scotland continues to monitor the progress of negotiations between the UK Government and the European Union. It remains uncertain whether a trade deal will be reached, and the Police Scotland Brexit Contingency Team continue to prepare for the reasonable worst case scenario.

Police Scotland contingency planning in respect of EU-Exit will be discussed as a substantive agenda item during the Board meeting.

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP26)

The COP26 Conference in Glasgow will take place in November 2021, one year from now. This milestone provided Police Scotland with an opportunity to raise awareness among officers and staff across the organisation, of the scale of the event and the ongoing planning developments. Consultation is ongoing with staff associations, trade unions and representative bodies to develop appropriate Workforce Agreements, alongside the creation of COP26 Wellbeing, and Equality and Diversity Strategies.

An Independent Advisory Group for COP26 will be established, with international membership and terms of reference under development. It is anticipated that the United Nations Head of Security for COP26 will join the IAG as an observer.

6. OUR PEOPLE

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

During October, Police Scotland joined with diversity staff association SEMPER Scotland to celebrate Black History Month. A series of talks took place to honour, celebrate and learn about the contribution Black and Minority Ethnic people have made to Scotland's rich history and commemorate this achievement. I thanked colleagues in Police Scotland who shared their testimonies and stories, along with SEMPER, for the valuable work they do in representing officers and staff from minority ethnic communities.

Representing our diverse communities is fundamental to the principle of policing by consent, and Police Scotland remains committed to creating a more inclusive organisation.

COVID-19 OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT TEAM

In October, a dedicated COVID-19 Outbreak Management Team (OMT) was formed to provide support to Police Scotland officers and staff when dealing with COVID-19 outbreaks in the workplace.

The OMT works in partnership with local health protection contact tracing teams, to ensure a consistent and measured response to tracing and self-isolation requirements emerging from potential work-related exposures.

On identification of positive COVID-19 test results, real time support and guidance is provided, including assistance with the decision making and risk management processes required, as part of the appropriate response to an emerging incident.

POLICE SCOTLAND OFFICERS AND STAFF HONOURED

Serving and retired Police Scotland officers and staff received awards in Her Majesty's Birthday Honours. Retired Chief Superintendents Campbell Thomson and Hazel Hendren both received the prestigious Queen's Police Medal for services to policing. Special Constable Graham Wilson and Scottish Police College estates supervisor Tom Kenny received British Empire Medals, while Special Constable John Bullough, who is also the Chairman of Scotland's Charity Air Ambulance, received an OBE. In addition, Police Staff member Khadija Buke Coll received an MBE for services to diversity and equality in Scotland.

These honours recognise the dedicated service each recipient has given to public life in Scotland, a level of dedication and commitment to public service that is reinforced by officers and staff throughout Police Scotland on a daily basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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