



Authority Meeting

27 March 2025

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 20 February 2025 at Merchants House, Glasgow

Board Members present:	Fiona McQueen (Interim Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Angela Leitch Katharina Kasper Mary Pitcaithly Grant Macrae Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Catriona Stewart
In attendance:	Scottish Police Authority Lynn Brown, Chief Executive Karen Vallance, Governance Support Officer Police Scotland Chief Constable Jo Farrell Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Forensic Services Fiona Douglas, Director

1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1.1 INTERIM CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

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

1.2 APOLOGIES

Members noted apologies from Catriona Stewart.

1.3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND CONNECTIONS

No declarations of interest or connections were raised.

1.4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members raised no other business.

1.5 DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE (ITEMS 9-10)

Members agreed that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Authority would consider items 9-10 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 MINUTE FROM MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2024 FOR APPROVAL

Members approved the minute from the meeting held 28 November 2024.

2.2 ROLLING ACTION LOG

The Interim Chair noted that the action was proposed ongoing but suggested it be closed on the basis that it was due to be reported to the Policing Performance Committee in June 2025.

Members agreed to close the action on the log.

2.3 DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

The Chair confirmed two decisions were taken via correspondence since the last Authority Meeting. The first was in December 2024 where Members approved an offer to be made to the Trade unions in respect of the staff pay claim. The second was in January 2025 where Members approved the appointment of Tom Halpin as Chair of the People Committee to allow Fiona McQueen to take on the role of Interim Chair.

3. SPA INTERIM CHAIR'S REPORT

The Interim Chair highlighted a number of key points within her paper and commented on the 4.75% pay deal which was confirmed for officers following a period of arbitration. The Interim Chair commented that the outcome reflected the contribution and value of officers. She thanked those involved in the negotiation and arbitration stages.

Noting the update on the COSLA Presidential Meeting, Members sought further information on whether SPA had taken part in discussions on public sector reform. Lynn Brown (LBrown) confirmed that there was ongoing dialogue with COSLA and advised she had attended the Scottish Government Public Sector Reform Summit. LBrown advised it was her view that a lot of discussion was on areas where Police Scotland have already made progress during the first phase of reform. LBrown commented that both SPA and Police Scotland would share their experiences of the first phase and communicate their commitment for a second phase. LBrown noted that outcomes of the event were due to be made public and she would share with Members at a future seminar.

Members noted the report and approved the appointment of the following, effective from 1 April 2025:

- **Chris Creegan as Chair of the Legal Committee.**
- **Chris Creegan as a member of the Complaints and Conduct Committee.**
- **Pauline Howie as Chair of the Resources Committee.**
- **Pauline Howie as a member of the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.**
- **Angela Leitch as a member of the People Committee; and**
- **Mary Pitcaithly as a member of the Legal Committee.**

Members also the appointment of Angela Leitch as the Authority's Whistleblowing Champion, effective immediately.

Members agreed the following action:

20250220-BM-001 - Documentation sent in advance of event to be shared with Authority Members.

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

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- Policing Together Oversight Group
- Policing Performance Committee
- Resources Committee
- Forensic Services Committee
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Policing Performance Committee Member, Katharina Kasper, highlighted that Police Scotland's sex and gender review must consider relevant legislation and ensure they are accurately reflected in any internal or operational policies She stressed that the review is vital in providing assurance to respond to any potential criticism.
- Resources Committee Chair, Grant Macrae (GMacrae), noted a correction to the update he provided to the Authority on 22 August 2024. At that meeting, when referring to the item on the Police Housing Policy, he had stated that an Island Communities Impact Assessment had been completed. GMacrae confirmed that this assessment was in still progress and not complete. GMacrae confirmed that the Resources Committee Chairs Report provided to the Authority meeting in August 2024 is factually accurate and requires no correction.

Members noted 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. Chief Constable Jo Farrell (CCFarrell) provided an overview of the points noted within the executive summary of her report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members referred to the Glasgow football disorder in December 2024 and sought assurance that lessons learned are incorporated into future planning. DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) commented that policing football is challenging as there are prevalent risk groups across Scotland. Disorder includes pyrotechnics and pre-arranged violence and those involved have no regard for the local community or reputation for football. DCCConnors confirmed there was a policing plan including public order and preventative action in place and resources were sent quickly to bring disorder under control. DCCConnors assured Members that Police Scotland monitor intelligence and work with football clubs to gather information and establish deterrents. Members were told of various partnership initiatives to address the issue, such as a multi-agency group to

look at football banning orders and current legislation; a specific group to deal with pyrotechnics and work with the judiciary sector. DCCConnors assured Members that intelligence gathering is maximised.

- Members sought comment on what the implications for delivering the three-year plan would be, should funding for 2025/26 be less than anticipated. CCFarrell confirmed that additional employee national insurance costs could impact the progress of the next phase of police reform. Discussions with Scottish Government have indicated that Police Scotland will be supported with 50% of costs. CCFarrell highlighted that Police Scotland have undertaken significant reform and policing in Scotland has removed £200m of costs on an annual recurring basis. She confirmed that delivering a balanced budget is a priority. CCFarrell further commented that the 2025/36 budget is challenging and requires £9m of efficiencies to be made. Members were advised there would be a probationer recruitment intake in March but recruitment for the rest of the year would be reviewed. CCFarrell outlined some of the areas Police Scotland will be focussed on during the next financial year, including developing a community policy model, establishing a new cybercrime and fraud command, further investment in technology, modernising the workforce, and delivering a safe and secure Commonwealth Games.
- Members sought further information on implementation of mental health work. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) commented on the introduction of the mental health taskforce and highlighted the reliance on collaboration from partners. DCCSpeirs also confirmed the Mental Health Index was now rolled out across the service and there was 24/7 access to mental health clinicians. DCCSpeirs assured Members progress was being made and there was positive commitment from partners.
- Members requested further comment on progress of the Policing Together Strategy. DCCSpeirs summarised progress made since the last Authority meeting including recruitment of community relationship specialists, introducing an Independent Advisory Council, rolling out further training on anti-racism, and embedding a fair play advisor. Members also heard a culture dashboard would be available from April and will be reported to the Policing Together Oversight Group. CCFarrell added that she felt there was momentum in the area and spoke of how other UK forces are looking to Police Scotland for support and advice.
- Referring to Operation Moonbeam, Members asked what further actions the legislation allows. DCCConnors commended the officers who worked as part of Operation Moonbeam, confirming there were 61 arrests, mostly in the East of Scotland. DCCConnors highlighted

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the new legislation regarding proxy purchasing of fireworks, firework control zones and dispersal zones. DCCConnors confirmed Police Scotland support Scottish Fire and Rescue Service view that fireworks should be for organised events and legislation should cover preventing the sale for intended disorder.

- Members congratulated those who had been recognised in the King's New Year Honours.
- Members sought comment on how animal welfare is managed within the organisation. DCCConnors highlighted that police dogs and horses are part of the policing family and the organisation was committed to their welfare. DCCConnors listed some of the standards Police Scotland work under: National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) police dog welfare standards, National Canine Accreditation Scheme, Police Scotland Mounted Unit Guidance and the NPCC mounted police guidance. Members heard there was veterinary access 24/7 and were assured all decisions are based on the welfare and quality of life of the animals. DCCConnors also confirmed there was support available to dog handlers and mounted branch colleagues.
- Regarding the information provided in the report on child sexual exploitation offences, Members sought information on lessons learned and how they will be applied. DCCConnors advised Police Scotland have undertaken benchmarking to compare findings from a number of reports including the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and have shared findings and lessons learned with other forces. DCCConnors advised that having one vulnerability database and a single intelligence database has meant Police Scotland's child protection policies mirror recommendations from the IICSA. Members heard there was a dedicated specialist resource in each division plus a unit dedicated to online child sexual abuse and exploitation. DCCConnors confirmed progress by Police Scotland to tackle child exploitation is advanced but continual focus is required.
- Members asked CCFarrell to outline the rationale to raise a judicial review against Scottish Ministers for the Sheku Bayoh enquiry. DCCSpeirs confirmed Police Scotland still recognise the impact that Mr Bayoh's death has had on his friends and family, and reiterated Police Scotland's commitment to engage with the Public Enquiry. DCCSpeirs advised there was a request in September 2024 to extend the enquiry Terms of Reference and Police Scotland were asked to submit submissions on the extension, but they had been declined access to all the information. This has since been rectified and a full position has been submitted, with a response due from the Deputy First Minister in the near future.

Members noted the report.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Members considered the report which detailed activities involving SPA corporate staff since the previous Authority Meeting. LBrown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought further comment on the timescales for the upcoming Best Value audit and what engagement has taken place. LBrown responded that HMCIS and Audit Scotland have confirmed the areas they will look at and HMICS have confirmed that a Terms of Reference will be received in April. CCFarrell added Police Scotland welcome the inspection and they intend to present a lot of evidence and will welcome the findings and areas of improvement. DCCSpeirs confirmed 8 theme leads had been identified and the next step is for theme leads to present their evaluation for Senior Executive agreement. He told Members that a small Best Value team have been established who are adding value.
- Clarity was sought on how SPA will manage capacity and capability of Authority Members in the period following several retirements. LBrown noted that the approvals taken at Item 3 will help in the interim and there will be an expectation that Members will focus on core governance issues. Should any time pressures arise, LBrown may speak to Scottish Government to enquire if more days can be provided, however Scottish Government have been in contact with SPA regarding recruitment timelines which have been positive.

Members noted the report.

7. FORENSIC SERVICES DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on key activities across Forensic Services. Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members sought further comment on the timescales for the Long-Term Sustainable Model for Criminal Toxicology. FDouglas responded that the Full Business Case needs to be developed and

will take approximately 12 months although the financial detail will be ready during that timeframe. In the short to medium term, Members were assured that work to improve processes continue, with an improvement plan looking at methods and processes as well as work with Police Scotland and the outsourcing partner to understand demand.

- Members congratulated Forensic Services on receiving accreditation continuously for 26 years.
- Members referred to the upcoming publication of findings from the Westminster Commission on Forensic Sciences and questioned what learning can be taken. FDouglas responded that learning can be shared between Scotland and England, but a key learning would be on workforce planning.

Members noted the report.

8. FINANCIAL QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Members considered the report which provided an update on the financial position of the SPA and Police Scotland for quarter three of the financial year 2024-25. James Grey highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

The Resources Committee Chair reiterated the benefits for multiyear planning, and confirmed the Committee were content reporting of the revenue and capital status.

Members noted the report.

The remaining items were taken in private.