



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	27 March 2025
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
Title of Paper	SPA Chief Executive's Report
Presented By	Lynn Brown, Chief Executive
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	Appendix A – Summary Report for Scottish Railway Policing Committee Meeting – 5 March 2025

PURPOSE

To update Members on activities carried out by the Authority's Chief Executive since the last Authority meeting held on 20 February 2025.

Members are recommended to consider this report and to raise any matters for clarification or further detail with the Chief Executive.

1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on key Authority business not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

2. Chief Executive Recruitment

- 2.1 We have now completed a procurement exercise to identify a recruitment partner for the Chief Executive Recruitment process. The advert for the post will go live on Monday 7 April 2025 with a closing date of Friday 9 May 2025. Interviews will take place week commencing Monday 16 June 2025.

3. Annual Delivery Plan 2025-26

- 3.1 Members approved the Scottish Police Authority Corporate Strategy 2023-26 at the Authority meeting in March 2023. The strategy is underpinned by a three-year implementation plan, detailing the activities we have identified to support delivery of our strategic outcomes as an organisation.
- 3.2 As reported in March 2023, as part of our corporate approach we put in place an annual delivery plan containing key milestones and actions. This informs reporting of progress towards delivery of the Corporate Strategy through the Authority's Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee on a quarterly basis, and the annual assessment of the Authority's own performance which is included in the Annual Report and Accounts.
- 3.3 The annual delivery plan for 2025-26 is now in place, developed in consultation with the Authority's Corporate team. This plan reflects a focus on key priority areas and commitments and progress will be reported regularly to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee.

4. Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) Act 2025

- 4.1 The Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) Act 2025 received Royal Assent earlier this month, and some of its provisions are likely to be brought into effect in the coming months. The Complaints and Conduct Committee has received detailed briefings on the Act, most recently at its February meeting. Below is a brief summary of the provisions which may come into effect in the near future, and which affect the Authority directly.

- Section 2 – This requires the Chief Constable to prepare and consult on a statutory code of ethics. The Act requires the Chief Constable to involve the Authority in preparing the draft code.
- Section 4 – This requires the Chief Constable to prepare a vetting code of practice. Again, the Chief Constable must involve the Authority in preparing the draft code.
- Section 9 – This requires the Authority to establish the barred and advisory lists. Police Scotland is carrying out work in this connection and the Authority will require to be involved in these preparations.

5. Review of Sex and Gender

- 5.1 At the Authority Board meeting in September 2024, Police Scotland committed to a wide-ranging review of Police Scotland policy and practice regarding sex and gender. The Authority's Policing Performance Committee (PPC), in December 2024, received assurances on the wide-ranging nature of this review and a commitment to the inclusion of operational policies and engagement with stakeholders. A further progress update was provided to PPC members on 19 March 2025 describing Police Scotland's proactivity in this space moving toward external engagement.
- 5.2 The external landscape continues to be dynamic and there is ongoing debate regarding the proportionate balancing of human rights to protect all individuals. The Authority would look to consider advice from Human Rights regulatory bodies in this field. The Authority has therefore sought, and continues to seek, both clarity and guidance from EHRC on possible implications. Since the Police Scotland review started there has been an [Intervention by the EHRC](#) in relation to a Supreme Court Appeal and a further letter from [EHRC to the First Minister](#) in February 2025 regarding the 2010 Equality Act and the 1992 Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations.
- 5.3 More recently, on 7 March 2025 the Chair of the Scottish Human Rights Commission wrote to the [Convener of the Equalities, Human Rights and Civil Justice Committee](#) clarifying their role and giving a position statement on Women's Rights and notes the EHRC provides guidance for Scottish public bodies.
- 5.4 On 12 March 2025 this was debated in the Scottish Parliament on [Protecting Single Sex Spaces in the Public Sector](#). The debate considered the position of a range of public sector bodies and

institutions policies across education and health relating to single sex spaces and referenced that the Police Scotland Sex and Gender Review was ongoing. The debate concluded reinforcing the role of the Equalities and Human Rights Commission in providing codes of practice and guidance.

- 5.5 The Authority remains supportive of Police Scotland’s wide ranging and inclusive approach to its Sex and Gender Review, in order to come to a proportionate and considered position. We expect the outcome of any relevant legal cases to inform that work. However, as Accountable Officer, understanding and assessing financial risks is a priority and I will be exploring the most appropriate mechanism to assess this risk within the current and evolving debate.

6. Scottish Railway Policing Committee

6.1 A meeting of the Scottish Railway Policing Committee took place on Wednesday 5 March 2025. Tom Halpin and Mary Pitcaithly were in attendance and represented the Authority at this committee.

6.2 A report summarising the key issues covered at this meeting is included at Appendix A. Further detail can be found on the [British Transport Police Authority website](#). The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Wednesday 4 June 2025.

7. Farewell and Thank You

7.1 On behalf of the staff in the Authority I want to add to the Interim Chairs thank you, our best wishes to the retiring board members Caroline Stuart, Grant Macrae and Catriona Stewart. Over the years we have benefitted from their insight and support to the oversight of policing in Scotland. Their commitment to ensuring the public interest is served in the work of the Authority has been invaluable and we wish them all the best for their future endeavours.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

Summary report from the Scottish Railway Policing Committee

Wednesday 5 March 2025

SPA Members – Tom Halpin and Mary Pitcaithly

Joint working Police Scotland / British Transport Police - Discussed when reviewing previous minute

Members sought assurance that BTP now had access to the Interim Vulnerable Persons Database in Scotland. It was confirmed that access is in place and being rolled out to all relevant officers. This will be complete by end of March 2025.

It was highlighted that there had been a discussion previously around deployment of drones with a predicted timeframe of early 2025 and a further update was requested. It was confirmed that there was no date set and a consultation had not been conducted as of yet. A fuller update would be provided post-meeting.

Strategic Risk

An update was provided on strategic risk. It was noted that discussions are being held with Police Scotland on how to join up with the BTP PROSCOT case management system that will be delivered in 2026. Regarding estates, the detail of the risk is being developed. It was agreed that a more detailed update will be discussed in June covering the Strategic Estates Plan and linked to the Police Scotland Estates masterplan.

Policing Plan Performance Q3 2024/25

Members commended BTP Scotland for continuing to lead the way in terms of performance, crime and safety. It was highlighted that there was an 8% reduction in overall crime in Q4 compared to Q1. At the end of Q2 there were 15 crimes per million passenger journeys in Scotland, which is much lower than the rest of Britain.

In terms of reporting, people are making more use of the text reporting service (particularly females reporting instances of VAWG). Shoplifting was highlighted as a key area of interest at present. A reduction in

football related violence was observed, with it being attributed to many factors – including use of Body Worn Video.

British Transport Police and Police Scotland / Joint Working

Members heard some positive examples of joint working between Police Scotland and BTP including a Road Safety Education event held in September 2024 in Edinburgh and a Senior Investigating Officer event in Dunblane in February 2025.

Industry Voice / Joint Planning for Extreme Weather Events

Representatives from Network Rail, Scotrail and BTP outlined the joint arrangements in place to plan for extreme weather events. Members acknowledged the good partnership working between industry and blue light partners. It was highlighted that a review by Network Rail on the lessons learned from Storm Eowyn is taking place, and a multiagency review will launch in March 2025.

Optimised Policing Model in Scotland

A verbal update was received on the Optimised Policing Model programme which seeks to ensure BTP officers are in the right place at the right time with the right skills to meet rising demand. It was acknowledged that the 10 December 2024 budget settlement for BTP fell short of what had been asked for. Planning has since been revised to review what adjustments need to be made in proposed deployment model. Staff association consultation begins tomorrow along with conversations with industry colleagues. Further detail will be provided at the next meeting of the Committee.

Audit and Inspections Update

Members heard an update on Audit and Inspections that BTP are involved in. There are currently 66 open actions relating to HMICFRS/HMICS, 31 from audits, 122 on 4 Action across all of BTP, 16 related to the Angiolini report and 9 actions from ICO.

It was highlighted that BTP met with HMICS in February 2025 with a further meeting planned for May 2025. Regarding the Angiolini Review, requested by the Chief Constable of BTP, work has concluded but the report is not yet published. A thematic briefing will be provided to the Committee once it has been released.

Evaluation Framework

Members agreed to an annual review of the core principles of the Committee, moving away from quarterly reviews. The quarterly reviews will instead be replaced with assessment of the best value themes and any areas of change.

AOB

The Chair expressed thanks to Deputy Chief Constable Alistair Sutherland for their time and input to committee and congratulated them on their retirement.