



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>26 September 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>COSLA, Edinburgh</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>COSLA Strategic Update</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Cllr Shona Morrison, President of COSLA Cllr Maureen Chalmers, COSLA Community Wellbeing Spokesperson</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

This paper provides the Authority with an update on key areas of collaboration between COSLA, the SPA and Police Scotland. The update focuses on strategic developments and cross-COSLA activity that links to policing.

Feedback from and discussion with Authority 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 Presidential Update

- 1.1. In February 2023, COSLA, Police Scotland and Scottish Police Authority, approved a Partnership Agreement to formalise the relationship and key areas of joint working. The Partnership Agreement commits to strengthening collaboration on a range of agreed strategic priorities, as well as to promote and support overall partnership working. From this agreement a Partnership Delivery Plan sets out joint activity under key priority areas. Significant activity is taking place across the partnership to deliver these activities. This paper provides an update on some of these activities including the work of Equally Safe, Mental Health Distress, Bairns' Hoose, and the supporting of sharing of physical assets.
- 1.2. Alongside the work of the Partnership Delivery Plan, COSLA is involved in a range of key policy areas relating to community safety and community justice, all of which require close partnership and collaboration with Police Scotland and wider partners.
- 1.3. This paper provides an overview of some of this activity, demonstrating a significant amount of work between partners to ensure the safety and wellbeing of communities.
- 1.4. The recent riots in England have not to date been replicated in Scotland. Partners are not complacent to the potential risk, and are working closely together to identify, prevent and respond to public disorder. COSLA is also a member of the Operation Moonbeam Gold Group, providing strategic direction in advance of the increased risk of public disorder and antisocial behaviour over the Bonfire Night period.
- 1.5. There is also substantial partnership working taking place in response to the rising prison population and the commitment from Scottish Government to shift the balance from custody to community. Emergency release powers were enacted over the summer which required close collaboration. It is critical for COSLA to monitor and identify the impact any measures will have on local government resources and services.

## 2 Partnership Delivery Plan

### 2.1. Equally Safe

[The Equally Safe Delivery Plan 2024 – 2026](#) was published on the 13<sup>th</sup> of August. The Plan was launched via a joint Ministerial and COSLA Spokesperson visit to Glasgow and Clyde Rape Crisis Centre,

where [Kaukab Stewart and COSLA Spokesperson Cllr Maureen Chalmers spoke about the priorities outlined in the plan.](#)

COSLA's commitments in the plan include working with partners and stakeholders to take forward the establishment of a public health approach to preventing VAWG; to developing a flexible and stable funding model for VAWG services which reflects the ambitions of Equally Safe; to further support the development of trauma and VAWG informed workplace practices; to strengthen links between VAWG and other areas of Public Protection and to establish a clear governance structure for Equally Safe delivery. COSLA has also committed to the development of a programme of work across COSLA to addressing gender inequality through policy scrutiny, development, and decision-making processes.

## **2.2. Bairns' Hoose**

The Partnership Delivery Plan commits to ensuring a Trauma Informed response to child victims and witnesses through the Criminal Justice System through the ongoing delivery of Bairns' Hoose. COSLA and Police Scotland are members of the National Bairns' Hoose Implementation Group which meets for the first time on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024, replacing the previous Bairns' Hoose Governance Group. While there are officially 6 pathfinders and 4 affiliates, most areas of Scotland are actively considering how to develop Bairns' Hoose – COSLA is supporting all 32 local authorities with implementation of the Scottish Child Interview Model and most local partnerships are building on this to develop Bairns' Hoose.

## **2.3. Mental Health Demand**

The Partnership Delivery Plan includes the intention to identify opportunities to collectively influence wider mental health policy.

In October 2023, HM Chief Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS) published a Thematic Review of Policing Mental Health in Scotland. This was intended to assess the state, efficiency, and effectiveness of Police Scotland's provision of mental health-related policing services. Several issues identified within the report corresponded with those raised within consultation and research for the COSLA/Scottish Government Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy including high levels of demand and the need for a whole system approach.

Following the publication, discussion has continued to take place between COSLA, Scottish Government, Police Scotland and the SPA on mental health demand, including attending the newly established Mental Health Distress and Policing Partnership Delivery Group (PDG), chaired by the SPA. The group are currently considering a

'framework for collaboration' and in the process of putting together an action plan of work to be undertaken nationally.

#### **2.4. Asset Sharing Principles Document**

As part of the implementation of the 'resource and investment' priority of the Partnership Agreement, it was agreed to develop a joint set of high-level guiding principles to help support the sharing of physical assets between local authorities and Police Scotland.

A small Working Group with representation from COSLA, SOLACE, Police Scotland, and Scottish Futures Trust, was set up in 2023 to develop this resource. Scottish Futures Trust has drafted the final version of the Document, since taken to the relevant strategic Boards in Police Scotland, SOLACE and COSLA. The Working Group will now consider next steps to support with implementation.

### **3 Community Safety**

#### **3.1. Counter-Terrorism Prevent**

COSLA are members of the Prevent Subgroup, a multi-agency governance group that holds the strategic lead for the co-ordination and support of Scotland's approach to safeguarding vulnerable individuals from being drawn towards violent extremist narratives and terrorism. The Scottish Prevent Subgroup also assists with supporting specified authorities in Scotland to deliver the requirements under section 26 of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (CTSA 2015) (the 'Prevent Duty').

Local authorities play a crucial role in the delivery of Prevent across Scotland, providing support, training and take a role in handling Prevent casework alongside multi-agency partners such as police, health and education.

The Prevent Duty Guidance for Scotland has been refreshed this year and became statutory on the 19 August 2024. The refreshed guidance is available online: [Prevent duty guidance for specified authorities in Scotland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/prevent-duty-guidance-for-specified-authorities-in-scotland)

#### **3.2. Processions**

COSLA joined the Action Group on Processions set up by the Scottish Government to specifically work through the conclusions and recommendations of the [November 2022 report](#) from the Short Life Working Group's on Processions.

Following agreement of the final draft of the Report between Scottish Government, COSLA and Police Scotland, the Scottish

Government published the [Report](#) of the Action Group on Processions on 24 June 2024. The report sets out six recommendations which have all been accepted and are being taken forward by Scottish Government in partnership with COSLA and local authorities, Police Scotland and independent experts.

The working group are continuing to come together to collectively work through and take forward the six recommendations.

### **3.3. Fireworks and Pyrotechnics**

COSLA was involved in the development of [guidance](#) for local authorities to set up Firework Control Zones (FCZ) and has worked with Scottish Government to agree the methodology for distribution of funding to local authorities to support the implementation of designated FCZs.

COSLA has also worked together with SOLACE and Police Scotland in the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Police Scotland and local authorities. The MoU is designed to ensure a consistent approach across all 13 local policing divisions and 32 local authorities to respond to data requests. Not all local authorities currently have areas being considered as FCZs but the MoU enables data sharing agreements to be implemented should they receive a case for an area to be designated as a FCZ. The MoU will also assist on those occasions where an area being considered as a FCZ overlaps more than one local authority. The document outlines the expectations and responsibilities of both Police Scotland and local authorities.

### **3.4. Hate Crime**

COSLA is represented on the Scottish Government's Strategic Partnership Group (SPG), which was established in April 2022 to ensure a multi-agency, strategic approach towards the development of the Hate Crime Strategy. The Hate Crime Strategic Partnership Group supports the implementation of the Hate Crime Strategy, and the activity in its associated delivery plan.

The Strategy includes 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. COSLA are currently working in collaboration with Scottish Government to deliver a range of engagement sessions with stakeholders working with communities effected by hate crime, to help inform the toolkit. An initial draft of the toolkit is due to be taken to the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board in December 2024.



### **3.5. Antisocial Behaviour**

In November 2023, the Minister for Victims and Community Safety announced that she was convening an independently chaired group of experts and practitioners to consider the effectiveness of current approaches to tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) and develop proposals for a more strategic approach based primarily on prevention.

COSLA Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing, Cllr Maureen Chalmers, and COSLA Spokesperson for Children and Young People, Cllr Tony Buchanan, met with the Co-Chairs of the newly formed Group in March 2024, where discussions took place on a need to focus on prevention, being mindful of resources and budget pressures in local authority, the need for local responses when considering consistency, ensuring those with lived-experience inform the work, and taking a multi-agency approach.

The Scottish Government are in the process of facilitating a range of engagement sessions, including a joint session with COSLA for elected members in August 2024. The initial findings from the review are expected to be shared toward the end of 2024.

### **3.6. XL Bully Dogs**

COSLA has worked together with local government partners, Police Scotland, and Scottish Government, to prepare for the implementation of the XL Bully Dogs Safeguards, which came into force on the 31 July 2024. Since this date it has been an offence to own an XL Bully without an exemption certificate. There are resource challenges across Police Scotland and local authorities, to support the implementation of the new safeguards. Collaborative work is currently underway to identify what is possible within existing resources and where there are gaps. Work is also underway to update the existing joint protocol which details the responsibilities of different bodies in dealing with irresponsible dog ownership.

## **4 Community Justice**

**4.1.** COSLA continue to work with Scottish Government and partners to support the delivery of the revised National [Strategy for Community Justice](#). We facilitate collective political scrutiny of the Delivery Plan by local government through our Community Wellbeing Board, and we are involved with various strands of work in the plan.

**4.2.** The Strategy commits to shifting the balance between custodial and community disposals. With Scotland's prison population still amongst the highest per capita in Western Europe, this year

emergency measures have been enacted to enable the early release of prisoners.

- 4.3.** COSLA has been a member of the Prison Population Leadership Group since it was established in 2023 in response to the emerging situation around the rising prison population. Through this we have worked alongside partners on various workstreams to address the pressures in prisons and to identify any pressures the shift of balance will place on community justice.
- 4.4.** We have been involved in the preparation and roll-out of the emergency release measures and have been engaged in work to identify lessons learned from this exercise. We have also participated in the consultation in relation to long-term prisoners.
- 4.5.** COSLA will continue to work with partners and the Scottish Government's Programme for Government, which has committed to continue supporting a sustainable reduction in the prison population and the introduction of a Bill which will propose changes to the release process.

## **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1.** There are no financial implications in this report.

## **6 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1.** There are no personnel implications in this report.

## **7 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1.** There are no legal implications in this report.

## **8 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1.** There are no reputational implications in this report.

## **9 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1.** There are no social implications in this report.

## **10 COMMUNITY IMPACT**

- 10.1.** There are no community implications in this report.

## **11 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

**11.1.** There are no equality implications in this report.

**12 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

**12.1.** There are no environmental implications in this report.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss.