



Legal Committee

11 March 2025

Minutes of the Legal Committee held on 7 November 2024 via Webex

Board Members present:	Caroline Stuart (Committee Chair) Grant Macrae Christopher Creegan Pauline Howie
Board Member apologies:	Tom Halpin
In attendance:	<u>Police Scotland</u> ACC Stuart Houston, ACC Professionalism and Assurance Claire Pender, Principal Solicitor ClaireLouise Ritchie, Senior Finance Business Partner Insp David Bellingham, SECU Gillian Douds, SECU <u>SPA</u> Eric Leggat, Solicitor Colette Craig, Governance Support Officer

1. Introduction and Welcome:

1.1 Chair's Opening Remarks

The Chair welcomed all attendees.

1.2 Apologies

- Tom Halpin, SPA Board Member
- Robin Johnston, Head of Legal
- Susan Montgomery, Lead Solicitor
- James Douglas, Legal Services Manager

1.3 Declarations of Interest and Connections

None.

1.4 Decisions taken since last meeting

The Chair advised that the committee had taken decisions in private under section 20 of the standing orders, on the 24th September 2024 and 4th October 2024 regarding ongoing legal matters.

1.5 Decision on taking business in private (Item 5-8)

Members agreed to take items 5-8 in private.

2. Minute and Actions from previous meeting:

2.1 Minute from meeting held on 8 August 2024 for approval

Members **AGREED** the Minute from the Legal Committee on 8 August 2024 was an accurate record of the meeting.

2.2 Rolling Action Log and Matters Arising

Members **AGREED** the action log, and noted the updates provided.

3. Legal Services Claims Handling - Quarterly Statistical Information Report - Trends & Analysis in litigation

Claire Pender (CPender) provided an overview of this quarterly report of settlement figures arising from claims raised against Police Scotland. During discussions the following matters were raised;

- Members noted a higher volume of employers' and public liability claims during the period in question and sought clarity on whether there were any insights into particular reasons which

might be causing this increase. CPender advised that she was not aware of any particular reasons being identified and advised that she would take an action to collate the type of claims which are being made which may assist in identifying underlying factors or trends that may require preventative action.

- Members noted that what is budgeted for is based on best knowledge at a moment in time and sought clarity on whether there was a need for further financial contingencies before year end. CPender advised that although the volume of claims is high, the average settlement figures are lower in comparison to last year, therefore she did not believe there to be any budgetary concerns.
- Members sought clarity on the approach taken by Police Scotland on the settlement of claims. CPender advised that a combination of both pace and Best Value are considered by Police Scotland solicitors when they are negotiating settlements.
- Members further noted the need to understand, in relation to employers' liability claims, what the breakdown is between the different types of claims and what the patterns are in order to further understand the granular detail. The Chair asked that consideration be given to future public reports including additional information on employers' liability claims (i.e. accidents, employment tribunals claims etc) and public liability claims being made to assist members to identify trends going forward.

Members **NOTED** the report and **AGREED** the following actions;

20241107-LC-001: Claire Pender to bring forward an update to committee on the various types of employers' liability and public liability claims being made in order to identify any underlying causes or trends.

20241107-LC-002: Claire Pender to give consideration to how the format of the statistical report might be amended to provide additional information on employers' liability claims (i.e. accidents, employment tribunal claims etc) and public liability claims being made to assist members to identify trends going forward.

4. Legal Committee Work Plan

Members **NOTED** the report.