



Agenda Item 5

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	27 March 2025
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Jo Farrell Chief Constable
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	Appendix A – Chief Constable's Report March 2025

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

- 1.1 The attached Chief Constable's Report provides the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

- 2.1 There are no further details on this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report. Any financial implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report. Any personnel implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report. Any legal implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Given the nature of the report there are reputational implications however all reputational implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no direct social implications in this report. Any social implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

- 8.1 Given the nature of the report there is potential community impact implications however community impact relating to subjects referenced have been fully considered at the time.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications in this report. Any equalities implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environment implications in this report. Any environment Implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

Chief Constable's Report

March 2025

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Chief Constable's Report March 2025

Overview

As we move towards 2025-26, I will continue to drive the next phase of reform to implement an effective and sustainable model of policing in Scotland which delivers safer communities, less crime, supported victims, and a thriving workforce.

Key planning, including my annual policing plan and the budget for policing in Scotland set the parameters for the second year of our business plan to deliver on my vision for policing.

Policing in Scotland is an exemplar of public service reform, reducing the annual cost base to the public purse by around £300m compared to legacy arrangements, while maintaining and improving services and enhancing organisational learning, professionalism and governance.

That has been achieved by a workforce that has reduced from over 24,000 to closer to 22,500, and through significant challenge and effort.

My report outlines the broad and complex police work delivered by those officers, staff and volunteers to deliver great value and improve the lives and wellbeing of the people and communities of Scotland every day.

This ranges from our response to murders, human trafficking and exploitation, securing criminal justice outcomes in relation to serious sexual offending and drug dealing to policing events.

I outline work designed to take a more intelligence driven and technology enabled approach to tackling retail crime, work with partners to build a society which is more resilient to cyber fraud and crucial efforts to take a more compassionate approach to communicating with victims of crime, while also continuing to broaden our understanding and engagement with all the communities we serve.

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All this is delivered through the dedication, skill, expertise, professionalism and goodwill of police officers, police staff and volunteers who maintain and build the support and co-operation of the public.

At the end of February, I was able to meet and personally thank officers, staff, volunteers and their families and other members of the public who had played outstanding roles in that whole-system mission to build a safer Scotland or to step forward when tragedy or disaster occurs during my annual bravery and excellence awards.

The nominations were powerful examples of the value policing brings to society. I also outline a programme of staff recognition during February as part of a broader campaign across UK policing aimed at highlighting the crucial support and expertise non-warranted police staff bring to policing.

I want to thank officers, staff and volunteers for everything they do and recognise the personal commitment they make to what is a vital and fulfilling, and very demanding job.

From my first day 18 months ago, we've driven efforts to focus our response on threat, harm and risk and on problem solving and proactivity which can prevent crime and help to reduce demand.

At the same time, we've been working hard to prioritise the frontline and collaborating with partners to provide better services in the criminal justice system and in response to mental health incident, while reducing inefficient demand on police officers.

My report outlines some of what has been achieved through working with NHS24 and staff at Contact, Command and Control (C3) to refer more calls to health colleagues, to help people get help from those best able to give it, while reducing officer hours spent responding to incidents where they are not needed.

I also highlight promising signs that a partnership focus on case management is reducing the number of witnesses, including police officers, who attend court but are not called to give evidence.

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We must continue to drive and capture efficiencies to make conscious decisions to reinvest to deliver a sustainable and effective policing model.

Continuous reform and efficiency must be the new normal in public service and we remain committed to delivering best value. Reform achieved should be rewarded.

Our budget remains challenging, with a built-in savings requirement and anticipated pay pressures.

However, Scottish Government funding allows us to continue officer recruitment while modernising the workforce to release experienced officers from roles which don't need warranted powers so that we can prioritise, maximise, and support the frontline to deliver for our communities.

Our allocation enables policing to progress on the delivery of our business plan. Key plans for 2025-26, include the development of a strengthened community policing model to provide identifiable officers to local areas, and the establishment of a new cyber fraud unit to tackle online crime and better support victims.

Ensuring Scotland continues to be a safe place to live and work is my commitment and priority. As Chief Constable, my view is that the route to a safer Scotland is through the next phase of policing reform.

Tackling threat, harm and risk

Murder of Amen Teklay - Glasgow

On Wednesday, 5 March, police attended a report of a person found seriously injured outside a property in Clarendon Street, Glasgow. 15-year-old Amen Teklay was pronounced dead a short time later. Amen's death is being treated as murder and two male youths, aged 14 and 16, have been arrested and charged in connection with the death. A 15-year-old male youth was arrested and charged in connection with assault.

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Extensive enquiries are ongoing and the thoughts of everyone at Police Scotland remain with Amen's loved ones.

Murder of James Jarvis - Glasgow

On Wednesday, 5 March, police attended a report of a body found within a property in Monar Street, Glasgow. Following a post mortem, the death is being treated as murder. A 38-year-old man was arrested in connection with the death and was due to appear at Glasgow Sheriff Court on Monday, 10 March.

Extensive enquiries continue and our thoughts are with James's loved ones.

Tayside human trafficking and county lines

Four warrants were executed in Dundee, Birmingham and Wolverhampton on 20 February which led to the arrests of two men, aged 63 and 26, and a 23-year-old woman. They were arrested in connection with human trafficking and county lines offences.

Policing of disorder around Celtic and Rangers football match

Officers policing the match between Celtic and Rangers on Sunday, 16 March, 2025 used powers under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to stop and search people where this was appropriate and necessary.

Implementation of this legislation is only undertaken when there is sufficient risk of serious disorder and unfortunately, this fixture attracts a minority of people who seem intent on using the game as an excuse for violence and the use of weapons.

On the day a group of 90 people, most of whom had concealed their identity, were contained and reported to the Procurator Fiscal after refusing to be searched by officers.

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This group posed a threat to the safety of people within the stadium and to the public. While the group was contained, pyrotechnics were disposed of and set off causing a fire, endangering both the public and officers. Thankfully no-one was injured.

As part of the wider policing operation there was one arrest at the match; a 20-year-old man. He was arrested and charged for alleged police assault on approach to the stadium. A second man, aged 46, is the subject of a report to the Procurator Fiscal for allegedly being in possession of a pyrotechnic.

Our officers acted swiftly to avoid any further disorder and we will continue to work with partners, including the clubs, to improve safety and order and to ensure that the sporting event is the real focus.

Significant court outcomes

A man and woman were sentenced on Thursday, 13 March for the murder of Susan Turner in Ayr. The body of 41-year-old Susan was found at a property in the Nursery Hall area of the town on Monday, 27 March, 2023, with the two arrested less than two weeks later in April 2023. Both were given life sentences with Ryan Hill, aged 27, serving a minimum of 20 years, and Michelle Ramage, aged 43, a minimum of 22 years. This was a brutal murder which affected the local community, and I'd like to thank them for their assistance throughout our investigation, and their patience waiting for this outcome.

A 55-year-old man was sentenced to 12 years in prison, a life-long non harassment order and placed on the sex offenders register for a series of violent and sexual offences including rape committed between 2004 and 2022 in the Inner Hebrides, Ross-shire and Moray Firth areas. Robert Mackinnon Stirling had previously been convicted at the High Court in Inverness in February. Stirling is clearly a very dangerous individual and we recognise how difficult it has been for his survivors to come forward to help us with the investigation. We are grateful for their assistance.

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A 20-year-old man was convicted of the murder of a 21-year-old man at the High Court in Glasgow on Friday, 7 March. James Wilson killed Ryan Willcox at a property in the Castlemilk area of Glasgow in July 2023. He is due to be sentenced at a later date.

A 35-year-old man was sentenced to 15 years in prison for serious sexual offences including rape. Stuart Harding committed serious sexual offences against three women and two female youths in Orkney, with his offending history spanning almost nine years. Following extensive enquiries carried out by specialist officers, he was brought to justice and arrested in October 2022.

A 35-year-old man pled guilty to being concerned in the supply of cocaine and amphetamines in Aberdeen. John Gallagher was arrested after being caught with cat A and cat B drugs which were found by police in various addresses in the city. He was sentenced to seven years in prison.

Prevention, problem solving and proactivity

Kevin Booth - Trafficking and Exploitation Order

In a landmark decision and a first in Scottish legal history, a final written judgement on a Trafficking and Exploitation Order was handed down at Wick Sheriff Court on 20 February in Police Scotland's favour. This order prohibits an individual named Kevin Booth from travelling outside the UK for five years. His previous offending in both England and Scotland involved him travelling abroad to recruit vulnerable women and subjecting them to serious violence.

This result shows our determination to keep people safe, not only by pursuing criminal justice outcomes but also civil outcomes as well.

Motorcycle Safety Campaign

During the spring and summer months we focus on one of the most vulnerable road users - motorcyclists. Motorcyclists make up less than one per cent of all road users, yet account for 18 per cent of deaths.

Road safety education and enforcement activity takes place all year round but we know March to September sees the highest number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured.

As part of the campaign, officers in our National Motorcycle Unit will be speaking to bikers, attending events and encouraging them to be aware of known risks such as cornering left hand bends and overtaking.

Drivers of other vehicles are more likely to see bikers on the road, especially in rural areas at weekends, so we're asking them to take another look. It only takes a split second for a collision to happen and the impact on your life can be devastating.

Rider Refinement courses are being offered to support motorcyclists.

The one-day course is available in locations across Scotland. Led by Police Scotland motorcyclists and third sector partners IAM RoadSmart, the course looks at key risk factors and gives motorcyclists the knowledge and skill to be safer and better riders.

We want to encourage people to take responsibility and take care of each other on the road.

Police Scotland will keep doing all we can to embed crucial behaviour change in our partnership approach to road safety.

Retail Crime Taskforce

The Scottish Government has made a £3 million revenue allocation to address retail crime for the year 25-26. With the funding, Police Scotland is establishing a Retail Crime Taskforce under the strategic direction of Assistant Chief Constable Tim Mairs.

A strategy has been developed in consultation with stakeholders including the Scottish Retail Consortium, Retailers Against Crime, the Scottish Grocers Federation, the Scottish Government, Crown Office, the Scottish Partnership Against Acquisitive Crime, and Trading Standards Scotland.

The 4P approach includes:

- **Pursue:** Bringing offenders to justice, with a focus on repeat offenders and organised criminals.
- **Protect:** Strengthen the collective protection against Retail Crime.
- **Prepare:** Reduce the impact of Retail Crime.
- **Prevent:** Stop people from becoming perpetrators of Retail Crime.

The taskforce will be led by a Chief Inspector and comprising detectives, uniformed officers, and specialist analysts working with local policing divisions.

Supporting Opportunities for Life

Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL) is a partnership project between being delivered by our officers in partnership with charity Aid and Abet and the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit. Peer mentors will work with officers in West Lothian and engage with young people aged 10-25 in schools, colleges and in the community.

Through the use of early intervention inputs, SOL will help to build and support the young people break that cycle of offending, encourage them to make positive life choices and identify pathways out of offending.

Cyber Scotland Week - 24 February to 2 March 2025

As the digital world evolves, so do the threats we face online. Recent figures highlight the increasing risks posed by cybercrime. Half of businesses (50%) and around a third of charities (32%) reported having experienced some form of cyber security breach or attack in the last 12 months.

Therefore, to raise awareness of cyber security and strengthen cyber resilience by sharing information and advice with the public, our partners and our workforce as part of Cyber Scotland Week 2025.

This annual initiative aligns with Policing in a Digital World and our 2030 vision for policing and focuses on providing individuals, organisations and businesses with essential digital skills and guidance.

Policing Together and working with communities

Mental Health Taskforce

Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs is leading Police Scotland's collaboration with partners including health colleagues, the Authority, the Scottish Government, and the third sector and we've established a mental health taskforce to drive work to reset the parameters of our contribution to a system-wide approach to mental health.

The taskforce has established a number of workstreams, with promising indications that progress is being made including:

- All Contact, Command and Control (C3) personnel have been trained to use the Mental Health Pathway. This collaboration with NHS24 helps ensure members of the public access the right care at an earlier stage, redirecting officers back to core policing duties. In the year after training of C3 personnel commenced in September 2023, the number of referrals to the pathway increased by over 2,000, which equates to a reduction of 41,932 officer hours being spent responding to mental health calls where they are not needed. Over 12,000 referrals have been made since the pathway was first established in August 2020.
- All officers have access to the Mental Health Index (MHI) which allows them to speak to clinicians in their area, when they have encountered an individual in mental health crisis or distress, who can offer advice and arrange access to the most appropriate services. Since the MHI was introduced in September

2024, we've received positive feedback from officers around the benefits to individuals as well as reductions in the length of time spent on incidents.

- In February, 70 officers from across Scotland attended a train the trainer event for Distress Brief Intervention (DBI) in Glenrothes. DBI enables trained officers to signpost and refer people experiencing mental health distress to the right agency which can provide the support they need. This event will enable more officers to deliver the training locally, increasing divisional capacity in the 14 health board areas signed up to the DBI service. Over 1,900 officers are now trained in DBI and more than 4,600 referrals have been made since 2017.

Supported victims - People at Heart

The People at Heart approach was developed by the First Word in partnership with criminal justice agencies, third sector partners and people with lived experience.

The approach aims to put people at the heart of communications by being empathetic and empowering, and ensuring that communications are easy to access and understand. Alongside rewriting key justice communications, the First Word has produced a People at Heart style guide and training materials to support the transformation of written communications with victims and witnesses across the criminal justice system.

During Victims' Awareness Week in February, officers and staff took part in an introductory webinar to find out more about how we can take a more person-centred, trauma-informed, approach to our communications. This month, we are building on that introduction with workshops delivered by the First Word.

Marking cultural and religious events

Recognising the various cultural and religious events that are important to our people and the communities we serve is an important part of our commitment to becoming an anti-discriminatory service.

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This month we celebrated International Women's Day by sharing content on our internal communication channels, and earlier this week we held an online panel event, that included ACC Emma Bond, which discussed sex equality and how we tackle misogyny.

We are also marking Ramadan and have shared content and guidance across the Service that raises awareness and includes practical policing considerations and information on fasting for all colleagues and managers.

As part of our Policing Together inclusion calendar, we're also sharing messages about Lent during March and April.

Understanding that our colleagues who are neurodivergent have unique and valuable skills that they bring to policing can be a real source of strength for Police Scotland. We shone a light on that last week (17 to 23 March) as we marked Neurodiversity Celebration Week across the organisation.

Interfaith communities

Through our Policing Together programme we are working to better understand and connect with the underrepresented communities we serve, and local policing teams play an important part in building these relationships.

This month, 25 probationary constables took part in an awareness session with representatives from the Edinburgh's interfaith communities.

The programme of work with the Edinburgh Interfaith Association (EIFA) aims to provide officers with enhanced knowledge and understanding of different communities' beliefs and traditions, as well as operational considerations.

International Policing Engagement

Policing in Scotland has a strong track record of international development programmes over the course of many decades and there is great value in enhancing policing nationally and internationally through partnerships, learning and innovation.

In recent weeks we welcomed a delegation of 27 American and Canadian law enforcement representatives as part of their preparations for policing the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

This international interest underlines Police Scotland's strong reputation for the effective and values based policing of major events with experience including the Commonwealth Games, UEFA Euro 2020, golf championships, COP26 and the Cycling World Championships

We also recently hosted 12 officers from the police services of Malawi and Zambia and delivered a two week-long course of specialist training, focusing on leading investigations and supporting victims in cases of sexual violence and other gender-based violence, including child protection issues.

The visit was co-ordinated by our International Academy and is part of a three-year programme of assistance to Malawi and Zambia via the Scottish Government's International Development remit. This visit concluded as we marked International Women's Day, highlighting our efforts within our organisation to make Police Scotland an inclusive and welcoming place to work, and with partner services and agencies overseas, to address Violence Against Women and Girls.

Change to prioritise frontline policing

Criminal justice efficiencies

We continue to work closely with criminal justice partners to drive efficiencies and improve the experiences of all victims, witnesses and offenders during the court process.

We are seeing positive progress with the summary case management scheme which continues to show a significant reduction in citations and re-citation of witnesses, including police witnesses with Dundee showing a reduction in police witnesses from an average 348 first citations per month to 88, and from 469 recitations per month to 45 in January 2025.

This streamlining of the process has significant benefits for victims, especially domestic abuse victims, as it reducing their time spent in court and cases are resolved much more quickly. It also means officers can spend more time in communities rather than being cited for court.

Police Scotland is committed to playing our part, and we are driving efficiencies through our own processes including supporting officers to manage case reporting more efficiently, supporting better use of direct measures and development of better analytics to measure demand.

We have also opened up our police estate to enable investigations and interviews with suspects to be carried out within police buildings in local communities other than our main custody hubs. This again is enabling officers to spend more time in communities rather than often travelling significant distances.

Supporting officers and staff

Chief Constable's Bravery and Excellence Awards

On 27 February, I hosted my annual Bravery and Excellence Awards for 2024, which celebrates the outstanding contributions to policing and our communities from the previous 12 months.

Every year, these awards highlight the bravery and excellence that is shown day-in and day-out throughout Scotland. They remind us all of the incredible work our colleagues and members of the public do to keep our communities safe and thriving, often putting themselves in the face of danger to save someone else.

Reading the nominations, powerful illustrations of bravery and inspiring examples of skill, professionalism and dedication, has been a great pleasure and a real highlight of my year.

The Greater Glasgow Child Abuse Investigations Unit received the overall award. The unit's work resulted in a group of abusers being jailed for a total of 93 years and

given Orders for Lifelong Restriction for the sexual abuse of children in the Glasgow area between 2012 and 2019.

I want to congratulate all the winners and nominees for the valuable contribution to our communities and policing.

Celebrating police staff

Monday, 3 March, 2025, marked the start of Police Staff Recognition Week, a UK policing-wide initiative which provides an insight into the significant value delivered by our non-warranted staff, and an important opportunity to recognise their contribution to policing.

Police leaders personally thanked staff across the Service and took time to hear directly from them. As part of this I met with staff in our Motherwell Service Centre and Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors spent time at Bilston Glen and Govan service centres, speaking with service staff and call handlers who are that critical first point of contact for those who need our help. Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs held a series of online calls while other members of the Chief Officer Team spent time with teams in Gartcosh and Edinburgh.

We also highlighted the contribution of staff members through individual case studies which explored roles including service advisors, fleet co-ordinators, Public Enquiry Support Officers and safety camera unit team leaders.

Recruitment

Following the deployment to local policing divisions of 251 probationary constables following their initial training in February, 123 new probationary constables took their oath of office at ceremonies across the country on Thursday, 13 March, maintaining our officer establishment at 16,631. I addressed and thanked officers in Dundee, while Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors oversaw a ceremony at Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan. Following initial training, the probationary constables will deploy to communities across the country in June.

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Our police officer recruitment campaign continues with ongoing digital and radio advertising. Since the campaign launched in September 2024, over 2,000 applications have been received, ensuring a strong pipeline of applicants.

A campaign, using the same #AJobLikeNoOther recruitment brand, for vacancies in our Contact, Command and Control (C3) Division has recently concluded and resulted in a substantial 134% increase in applications for our Bilston Glen Service Centre in the East between January and February 2025.

Chief Officer Team

I have refreshed the Deputy Chief Constable responsibilities as follows:

- **DCC Jane Connors LVO QPM - Operational Policing** - Operational Support; Local Policing East; North and C3; West; Major Crime, Public Protection and Local Crime; Organised Crime, Counter Terrorism and Intelligence; and Criminal Justice.
- **DCC Alan Speirs KPM - Professionalism and Enabling Services** - Professionalism and Assurance; Policing Together; Corporate Finance; People and Development; Strategy and Analysis.
- **DCC Bex Smith - Transformation** - Digital, Data: and Transformation.

Following the retirement of Assistant Chief Constable Andy Freeburn and the imminent retirement of ACC Gary Ritchie the Scottish Police Authority appointed Allan Waddell as an ACC. Patrick Brown has been appointed as Acting Director of Strategy and Analysis and this month, we welcomed Breeda McCaffrey as Director of Transformation.