



Authority Meeting

20 February 2025

Minutes of the Authority Meeting held on Thursday 28 November 2024 at Merchants House, Glasgow

Board Members present:	Martyn Evans (Chair) Fiona McQueen (Vice Chair) Chris Creegan Paul Edie Tom Halpin Alasdair Hay Pauline Howie Katharina Kasper Mary Pitcaithly Grant Macrae Caroline Stuart
Board Member apologies:	Angela Leitch 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 Bex Smith Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs Assistant Chief Constable, Mark Sutherland James Gray, Chief Financial Officer Forensic Services Fiona Douglas, Director

	<p>Biometrics Commissioner Brian Plastow, Commissioner (Item 8) Ross MacDonald, Director (Item 8)</p> <p>HMICS Craig Naylor (Item 9)</p>
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1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

1.1 CHAIR’S OPERNING REMARKS

The 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 Angela Leitch and 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 14-16)

Members agreed that, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Authority would consider items 14-16 in private for the reasons set out on the agenda.

2. MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 MINUTE FROM MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2024 FOR APPROVAL

Members approved the minute from the meeting held 26 September 2024.

2.2 ROLLING ACTION LOG

Members agreed to close both all actions on the log.

2.3 DECISIONS SINCE LAST MEETING

The Chair confirmed one decision regarding pay and reward was taken via correspondence since the last Authority Meeting.

3. SPA CHAIR'S REPORT

The Chair took his report as read and thanked the Scottish Police Federation for the invitation to attend the Bravery Awards and paid tribute to those Officers recognised.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Alasdair Hay confirmed the Policing Performance Committee will take over the main oversight of the revised model of policing work. The Committee will scrutinise progress of the business plan on a six-monthly basis, starting December 2024.
- The Chair commented that in making the case to Scottish Government for a significantly increased capital funding, it was highlighted that Police Scotland is one of the few public sector organisations that has gone through significant structural reform and is now a national asset. The Chair stated that he felt that organisations who have delivered reform should be rewarded. The Chair advised that an increased capital budget over next 10 years would make a difference to the public view of policing, experience of Officers and staff and public safety.

Members noted the report and agreed to stand down the Revised Model of Policing Oversight Group, and stand up the Commonwealth Games Oversight Group and membership.

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:

- Policing Together Oversight Group
- Revised Model of Policing Oversight Group
- Forensic Services Committee
- Legal Committee
- Complaints and Conduct Committee
- Resources Committee
- Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee

People Committee Chair, Fiona McQueen (FMcQueen), summarised the meeting which took place on 27 November. She explained Union and Staff Association representatives were in attendance and a helpful conversation took place on the staff survey results which focussed on transparency and acceptance of results. Union representatives recognised the positive comments such as access to welfare support and safety equipment but also the areas for improvement such as manageable workload. There was a commitment from all three organisations to address the findings and

have full involvement of Unions and Staff Associations in creating solutions. The Committee will receive an annual update to review progress.

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 addition to the report, CCFarrell made an appeal for information relating to Alistair Wilson's murder and asked that anyone with information contact 101 or the dedicated online portal. CCFarrell advised a new investigation team is in place who will examine all evidence gathered over the last 20 years and will investigate new opportunities such as advances in technology and forensic testing. CCFarrell confirmed Police Scotland's commitment to the reinvestigation and underlined support for Mr Wilson's family and the forces determination to bring those involved to justice.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members referred to the Mental Health Taskforce and asked what the priorities and expected outcomes are. DCC Alan Speirs (DCCSpeirs) responded that the priority is collaboration, and work with the Scottish Government to publish a multi-agency collaboration framework continues. Members were also assured bespoke training is being rolled out.
- Members asked how Police Scotland are using learning from events such as Black History Month to get tangible action. DCCSpeirs advised the key strand of the Policing Together portfolio is community and partnership working. There have been a number of events this year leading to increased engagement and additional community advisors have been recruited with a bespoke job description. Survey results will work in parallel with benchmarking to measure process and unity training continues to be rolled out. CCFarrell commented that, compared to last year, the wealth and depth of contribution to Black History Month from those in the organisation and from the community was richer, and she feels there is movement towards acknowledging a desire to be anti-racist and a focus on making a difference.
- DCC Jane Connors (DCCConnors) informed the Authority that the extra powers in relation to Operation Moonbeam had a deterrent effect and worked well. Increased partnership working in Dundee was also positive although the policing response started earlier, on

31 October 2024. DCCConnors supported the call for fireworks only to be sold for organised events.

- An update on the local police service delivery review was sought and Members heard it was a key opportunity to build front line capacity. DCCConnors confirmed the review would be reported to the Resources Committee and updates and timelines will go to the Policing Performance Committee.
- Members sought assurance that there was a sustainable model for roads policing and heard that the service and capability provided to roads policing are in line with budgets available. CCFarrell confirmed Police Scotland were committed to responding to HMCIS recommendations and progress will be reported through appropriate governance routes.
- Further comment was sought on the impacts of the Force Mobilisation Model. CCFarrell stated that ahead of the workforce survey, a key message received when talking to the front line was that the ability to respond at weekends was challenging due to rising demand. The Force Mobilisation Model will help move front line Officers and staff onto a pattern where additional support at the weekends will be provided.
- The Chair sought CCFarrells view on live facial recognition. CCFarrell advised that whilst it is being used elsewhere in policing in the UK, she felt it was important that the deployment of any new technology can maintain the confidence of communities. Therefore, before any implementation, Police Scotland have agreed to have conversations with the public so they can express their views. DCC Bex Smith advised she was the strategic lead and was confident that Police Scotland will create opportunities for people to share their varied views.

Members noted the report and agreed the following action:

20241128-BM-001: Outcome of national conversation on live facial recognition to be concluded by May 2025.

6. SPA CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

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

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members welcomed the knowledge exchange visit and commitment to benchmarking and peer reviews.

OFFICIAL

- Tribute was paid to LBrown following the very positive SPA staff survey results, especially around responses relating to culture.
- Members sought comment on timelines relating to pay and reward. LBrown confirmed the Authority had not been in this position before so the various stages of the current process were new territory. She confirmed the Authority is committed to effective and meaningful engagement so that a resolution can be found.
- Congratulations were paid to Lindsey Davie, Scott Ross and Susan Montgomery for the work undertaken to implement DESC.

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 were informed the cost for the long-term model for criminal toxicology have been fully accounted for but are not in the 25/26 request for funding as investment is required beyond that. Current timescales are for progression to full business case which will take 12-18 months and beyond that there will be a significant period of implementation. There is currently an improvement plan in place and Forensic Services continue to work with outsourcing partners within budget.
- The Authority heard the long-term model was a top priority of the Forensic Services Committee.
- The Authority praised the outcomes of the recent BDO audit on Forensic Services performance management.
- The Chair thanked Paul Edie for his involvement in the Forensic Services Parliamentary Engagement evening which took place on 20 November 2024. The Chair encouraged Police Scotland to arrange similar events.

Members noted the report.

8. SCOTTISH BIOMETRICS COMMISSIONER ANNUAL UPDATE

Members considered the report which provided an update on the Scottish Biometrics Commissioner's Annual Report and Accounts 2023/24; the

Joint Review of the Laws of Retention for biometric data conducted in partnership with Scottish Government; progress made by Police Scotland in relation to recommendations arising from Assurance Reviews published in March 2023; and an update on the Commissioner's work programme over the winter of 2024/25. Dr Brian Plastow (BPlastow) and Ross MacDonald highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- BPlastow advised that his view was that biometric data retention should be shorter, in particular in relation to DNA. Members heard all police forces are in the same situation however it was a requirement of UK law that there must be periodic review.
- Members sought BPlastow's opinion on live facial recognition. BPlastow spoke of meeting with CCFarrell and the SPA Chair and agreed it was important that the views of all stakeholders are taken into consideration. He stated he felt the use of the technology is wrongly framed as a surveillance tool when it is a public safety tool. BPlastow confirmed he would support its use in Scotland in circumstances where it can contribute to policing and felt it would be beneficial in the violence against women and girls' space.
- BPlastow advised SPA Forensic Services are the biggest public sector provider of forensics in Europe, it provides low cost and consistent services that other countries do not receive. BPlastow stated that some scientific techniques deployed by SPA Forensic Services are world leading and they analyse DNA to a higher standard than the rest of UK, EU, and North America. This is important as it can identify and eliminate more people.

Members noted the report.

9. HMICS ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Craig Naylor (CNaylor) paid tribute to the work conducted during the Chair's tenure, specifically partnership working with COSLA, work around children in custody, and work on mental health calls. CNaylor referred to the HMICS Inspection of SPA Corporate and praised the improvement work undertaken since the previous inspection in 2019. CNaylor raised concern on the lack of progress from Scottish Government in advertising for a new Chair. CNaylor highlighted a number of key points as detailed within the HMICS Annual Report.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair thanked HMICS for the work undertaken and thanked them for their approach and partnership.

- Members sought information on the process for revisiting older recommendations. CNaylor advised that there are regular meetings with the Police Scotland audit and risk team to ensure work is progressing. CNaylor highlighted that some were closed in 2024 after being open 7 years. Members were told HMICS intend to publish recommendation updates on their website.
- Members heard of CNaylor's concern on the lack of reform in other public sector organisations and his hope for future cross-sector inspections to improve collaboration and drive improvement.
- CNaylor confirmed he would like to have capacity to undertake joint inspections in the preventative space since a lot of work done is done in silo. CNaylor cited recent work to tackle drugs use and drugs deaths and how results of naloxone are positive but there is not a wider society approach to drug issues.
- Members sought further information on any benchmarking work and heard there has been some limited work on conduct and discipline matters with the West Midlands Police. CNaylor also advised of benchmarking work relating to delivery of homicide investigations and in the cyber area.
- The Chair asked how HMICS are moving to joint inspections that are people focussed. CNaylor responded that work is ongoing with the Public Protection Scotland Scrutiny Network to look at outcomes, good practice and challenges around drugs death and mental health.

Members noted the report.

10. SPA GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Members considered the report which sought approval for update to the Authority's Corporate Governance Framework. LBrown highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were informed Annex A is a Scottish Government document. It was last updated in 2020, and feedback has been provided on the recent template. LBrown stated she hoped to see a revised version by the end of calendar year.
- The Chair thanked LBrown and her team for the review, advising it was the fundamental underpinning of effective governance.

Members noted the report and approved the updates proposed in the Standing Orders, Committee Terms of Reference, Matters Reserved for the Board and Financial Regulations.

11. WORKFORCE SURVEY RESULTS

Members considered the report which provided headline results from Police Scotland's refreshed 2024 workforce survey. DCCSpeirs highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper and CCFarrell added that by committing to do annually, the period to respond was eight months. CCFarrell stated some results were more positive than anticipated but some areas of concern did replicate what Officers had told her.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- The Chair stated that annual surveys provided challenge in identifying progress over a relatively short period of time, but the Authority supported the intention to improve openness and transparency.
- FMcQueen reiterated the positive discussion held at the People Committee where attendees recognised the survey was about learning and improvement, and not judgement. She stated there were excellent contributions from Unions and Staff Associations and the Committee were happy with the approach, response, and ownership.
- Members sought assurance that areas with poor scoring will be focussed on in future months. DCCSpeirs described the internal governance meetings where discussion will take place to progress action, with some meetings attended by Unions and Staff Associations. Disaggregated data indicate there are themes relating to ranks and pay grades and this will be a focus to determine how it can be improved either locally or nationally.
- Members heard the company that provide the survey have undertaken benchmarking work with comparable organisations. They have adopted a question set that is seen in England and Wales to provide more focus on qualitative benchmarking as opposed to comparing results.

Members noted the report.

12. FINANCIAL MONITORING

12.1 FINANCIAL QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

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

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members heard the Resources Committee had discussed the paper in detail and the key issue was confirming the pay settlement for this year and beyond. The Committee also raised concern that some capital spend is reliant on suppliers, so any delays are out with Police Scotland's control.
- The Chair stated that by asking for more capital in future years, Police Scotland have to spend the current capital within the financial year. DCCConnors responded that one issue was the impact from previous recruitment freezes however she assured Members that work was being undertaken to progress at pace.
- Members heard the Resources Committee agreed that a balanced budget is dependent on the future pay settlement.

Members noted the report.

12.2 FINANCIAL PLANNING – BUDGET PROPOSAL 2025/26

Members considered the report which set out the revenue, capital, and reform budget requirement for policing for financial year 2025-26. JGray highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- LBrown raised an issue relating to the threshold change for National Insurance. Members heard discussions with Scottish Government officials had taken place and there was a guarantee from UK government to meet the change, but the cost was still not clear. LBrown also raised the issue of financial flexibilities.
- Members were assured the budget had accounted for efficiency savings and the level set is a manageable level of risk.
- The Chair detailed the process to develop the budget: CCFarrell and the Chair meeting with the Budget Development Group; the finance teams working through scenarios with budget holders; draft iterations discussed with budget teams; and pre-budget scrutiny at the Scottish Parliament.
- The Chair advised he and the Chief Constable had had a direct meeting with the Cabinet Secretaries for Finance and Justice to set out the plan for the second phase of public service reform within the police service. The Chair also highlighted the joint advocacy agreement between SPA and Police Scotland in building the case for a budget settlement for 2025-26 to deliver a safe Scotland.

Members noted the report and approved the submission of the updated proposal to Scottish Government.

13. ESTATES PLAN

Members considered the report which set out how the Police Scotland Estates Masterplan has been developed, the strategic priorities for the estate, and an outline 10-year capital programme of Estates modernisation to support the Police Scotland 2030 vision, revised model of policing and the 3-year business plan. ACC Mark Sutherland highlighted a number of key points as detailed in the paper and JGray summarised the financial ask.

In discussion the following matters were raised:

- Members were informed the Resources Committee recommended the plan.
- Members were assured that communication with the public and the workforce will continue, with engagement plans in place.
- Members heard LBrown and JGray had written to the Exchequer to ask for the rules around flexibility and borrowing to be reviewed.

Members noted the report and endorsed the plan.

The Vice Chair, Chief Constable and Chief Executive all paid tribute to the Chair and thanked him for his work, support, and leadership. The Chair thanked SPA, Police Scotland, and Forensic Services for their support.

The remaining items were taken in private.

End.