



Meeting	Policing Performance Committee
Date	19 March 2025
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	COSLA Update Report
Presented By	Lesley Weber, Policy Manager
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

This paper provides the SPA Policing Performance Committee with an update on key areas of COSLA’s work of interest to the Committee. The update focuses on strategic developments and cross-COSLA activity that links to policing.

Feedback from PPC 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 Engagement: COSLA, Police Scotland, SPA

- 1.1. On Thursday 23rd January, the COSLA President, Councillor Shona Morrison and Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, Councillor Maureen Chalmers met with the Chief Constable for Police Scotland, Jo Farrell, and Chair of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), Martyn Evans, at Tulliallan Police College.
- 1.2. The purpose of the meeting was for a mid-year Presidential catch up in between the annual Police Scotland and Scottish Police Authority input into COSLA Leaders. The meeting was used as an opportunity to review organisational priorities and challenges, relationships and collaboration, and the COSLA, SPA and Police Scotland [Partnership Delivery Agreement](#) and [Delivery Plan](#).
- 1.3. There was a consensus on the strength of the partnership and continued commitment to work collaboratively to achieve the priorities of Local Government and Policing, in what are increasingly challenging fiscal times.
- 1.4. COSLA have more recently provided feedback to Police Scotland through their consultation on the Annual Police Plan for 2026/27 and look forward to continuing to work together to support delivery of the Plan.
- 1.5. COSLA Officers are also working together with Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and SOLACE, to redraft the terms of reference for the joint engagement session. The purpose of the session is to provide senior leadership that supports with the delivery of the Partnership Delivery Plan and Police Scotland Vision 2030, and providing planned oversight and action for national strategic priorities.

2 COSLA Budget

- 2.1. Scotland is facing a series of national challenges such as growing health inequalities, an aging population, a housing emergency, poverty and climate change and biodiversity loss. These challenges require a national joint approach, close engagement with the whole range of public sector partner organisations, and a clear recognition we cannot meet shared national challenges without funding that is fair and flexible, and which meets the real terms increases in costs required to run key services.
- 2.2. The Local Government ask for 2025/26 sought a fair share of additional UK Government funding; fair and flexible funding to

enable councils to balance budgets; a commitment for no Council Tax freeze; fair funding to support social care services; additional capital investment; and a commitment to good quality affordable housing.

- 2.3. The 2025/26 Scottish Budget sees Local Government receiving an overall settlement of £15.035bn, including £14,258.1bn in core revenue funding and £777.1m in capital funding. Whilst this was presented as an increase of “over 1bn,” the reality is that this is only an increase of £337.4m (revenue and capital) in uncommitted funding to address all pressures such as inflation, pay and increased demand particularly with regards to adult social care and additional support for learning.
- 2.4. There is an estimated direct cost of £240m to Local Government due to changes to employer National Insurance Contributions in 2025/26 – without being fully funded (at £144m), this additional cost will wipe out a significant proportion of the increase in uncommitted revenue funding. Additionally, there is an estimated £140m eNIC pressure in commissioned services, in particular adult social care.
- 2.5. Whilst this settlement goes some way to meeting Local Government asks, it falls short of the £700m revenue and £160m capital we sought in our budget lobbying. The budget will therefore not resolve the workforce capacity and recruitment crisis; it won’t provide adequate funding to cover the additional costs from the changes to employer National Insurance contributions; it won’t solve long-standing issues in social care associated; and it won’t reverse the impacts felt from long-standing cuts to non-statutory service areas.

3 COSLA Manifesto

- 3.1. COLSA are undertaking work to develop the COSLA manifesto ahead of the 2026 Holyrood election. The manifesto will set out the key asks and actions that will strengthen local democracy and support Local Government to be a part of public service reform during the next term of the Scottish Parliament.
- 3.2. Scotland’s communities are diverse in terms of their geography, demographics and the levels of deprivation they experience. These factors individually and combined mean that tailored solutions to the challenges faced are required and that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach that can be taken. The purpose is to set out a new vision for Localism in Scotland and the key asks and actions that will strength local democracy.

- 3.3. To support the drafting of the manifesto, engagement and consultation will take place with wider Local Government sector and key partners in the independent and third sectors.

4 Prisoner (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025

- 4.1. The Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025 (Commencement) Regulations 2025 were laid before the Scottish Parliament on 29 January 2025. These regulations brought the provisions of the Prisoners (Early Release) (Scotland) Act 2025 into force on 11 February 2025.
- 4.2. The Act forms part of a range of measures designed to deliver a sustained reduction to the prison population and ensure the justice system can continue to function safely and effectively for everyone.
- 4.3. COSLA Officers have worked collaboratively with Scottish Government and partners in preparation for implementation of the Act and are active members in the different governance groups.
- 4.4. COSLA has also worked closely with Scottish Government and partners, in the drafting of the legislation and the associated financial memorandum, that recognises the additional housing pressures that will likely be experienced locally.

5 Community Cohesion

- 5.1. Global threats to community cohesion continue to be an ongoing risk faced by communities. COSLA is looking to see what more is needed to support and enhance local preparedness and responses to the complex and challenging threats faced.
- 5.2. COSLA recently responded to the UK Government's call for Evidence on [Community Cohesion](#). There is currently no overarching definition or Strategy for Community Cohesion in Scotland, it is however, a multi-faceted priority that cuts across multiple policy areas and strategies.
- 5.3. The Scottish Government will be hosting a gathering of Scotland's political, civic and faith leaders in April, in response to the threat of polarising forces. COSLA will attend the summit, providing a civic voice.
- 5.4. COSLA will provide a more detailed paper to the Committee as work progresses in this policy area.

6 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1. There are no financial implications in this report.

7 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1. There are no personnel implications in this report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1. There are no legal implications in this report.

9 REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1. There are no reputational implications in this report.

10 SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. There are no social implications in this report.

11 COMMUNITY IMPACT

11.1. There are no community implications in this report.

12 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. There are no equality implications in this report.

13 ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

13.1. There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the report.