



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Forensic Services Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>3 February 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Online</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>Committee Effectiveness</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Vanessa Ewing-Blair, Head of Strategic Business Management</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

## PURPOSE

This report provides the Forensic Services Committee with the findings of a recent survey conducted with Board Members and stakeholders, seeking their feedback on the overall effectiveness of the committee.

The report is for Members consideration and seeks to inform overall evaluation of the committee's effectiveness during 2024/25, and subsequent assurance report to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee in May 2025.

The paper is presented in line with the Authority's Corporate Governance Framework and committee Terms of Reference.

## 1. Background

1.1 The Scottish Police Authority is committed to continuous improvement in the discharge of its responsibilities and its oversight and support for policing in Scotland. The [Authority's Corporate Governance Framework](#) is subject to regular review with the most recent reviews reported to and approved by the Authority in November 2024. In addition, the Authority conducts an annual self-assessment of the effectiveness of Committees.

1.2 The Authority enhanced the 2024/25 committee effectiveness process by inviting key stakeholders to offer their assessment and views on the effectiveness of each of the Authority's committees. Several stakeholders were invited to complete a survey and offer comments. All stakeholders consulted have contributed to and/or attended a committee in the last year:

- Police Scotland
- Forensic Services
- PIRC
- COSLA
- Crown Office
- Scottish Government
- HMICS
- Biometrics Commissioner
- National Crime Agency
- Internal/External Audit
- SCPOSA
- ASPS
- SPF
- Unison
- Unite

1.3 To encourage open and frank responses, Members and stakeholders were invited to complete the survey anonymously.

1.4 To support accountability and transparency, the Authority is reporting the survey findings and holding all committee effectiveness discussions in public sessions of committee meetings.

## 2. Further detail in relation to the report

2.1 There are no specific requirements or direction on how public bodies should undertake effectiveness reviews. The Authority considers a range of relevant documents including '[On Board](#)' guidance, the Scottish Government [Audit and Assurance Committee Handbook](#) and the CIPFA [Good Governance Standard for Public Services](#).

2.2 The committee effectiveness survey for 2024/25 sought feedback in four key areas:

- Reporting to committees
- Committee priorities and progress

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- Members’ capability and overall operation of the committee
- Delivery against the Terms of Reference

2.3 Five of the current six members of the Forensic Services Committee completed the survey. Three responses were submitted by stakeholders, however no feedback was specific or relevant to the Forensic Services Committee.

**3. Members survey findings**

3.1 The responses to questions in the survey used the scale set out below. The analytical tables show how many Members gave a particular response to each question.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Answered
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3.2 **Reporting to committee** - There is clear agreement among Members that the quality of committee papers is good and continues to improve.

3.3 There was a common view among Members that there could be a greater focus in papers on equality, human rights and/or community impacts.

The quality of committee papers allows Members to perform their roles effectively	3		2	
Overall, reports are clear and easy to understand, and suitable for a non-executive audience	4			1
Papers make clear what the committee is being asked to do	4			1
Equality, human rights or community impacts are increasingly reflected in reports to the committee	2	2		1
Overall, the quality of committee papers is improving	3		1	1

3.4 **Priorities and progress** - There is clear agreement among Members that the work of the Committee has a strong strategic focus, and is effectively tracking and following up on actions and their impact.

The committee ensures visibility on matters of significant public interest	3		2	
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Work plans reflect key strategic priorities	4		1
The committee's work has reflected the focus on organisational culture	2	2	1
The committee's work has reflected issues around capacity and capability	3		2
The committee has processes in place to allow members to track progress of ongoing work	3		2
Committees follow up on reports to seek evidence of implementation and impact	4		1
Decisions and actions are tracked and implemented in line with the timescale set out	1	4	

3.5 **Members and overall operation** - All Members agreed that they are confident, agree positions, provide genuine challenge, seek assurances, and have the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience.

Members are confident in agreeing a position on specific issues and in decision making	4		1
Members provide genuine challenge, as well as seek clarification and / or reassurance	4		1
Committee members have the right balance of experience, knowledge and skill to fulfil the committee's role	4		1

3.6 **Governance Support and Remit** - Members all agree that the Committee receives appropriate advice on taking certain agenda items in private, that minutes of meetings are of a high standard, and that the Committee's remit is fit for purpose.

The committee is advised and confident about when to consider items in private session	3	2	
Minutes of meetings are accurate, clear and contain an appropriate level of detail	4		1

The committee's remit remains relevant, manageable and fit for purpose	4	1
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- 3.7 **Terms of Reference** - All five Members indicated that the Committee is fully discharging its responsibilities in line with its terms of reference.
- 3.8 Overall, the results for the Forensic Services Committee are extremely positive, with very few areas of concern being raised, or areas for improvement identified.
- 3.9 Two areas where consideration might be given for improvement:
- Committee papers to take greater account of implications and impact regarding equalities, human rights and/or community wellbeing; and
  - Slippage in implementing actions is quite common, although it is recognised that an effective action tracking mechanism is in place.

#### 4. **Next Steps**

- 4.1 Findings from the committee effectiveness process, and Members' considerations will support continuous improvement and inform the committee workplan and priorities for the year ahead. It will also inform the overall evaluation of the committee's effectiveness during 2024/25 through assurance reporting to the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee in May 2025.

#### 5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

#### 6. **PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no financial implication arising directly from this report.

#### 7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

#### 8. **REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are reputational implications associated with this report. The Authority's committee effectiveness process supports the Authority to effectively discharge its core responsibilities to support, maintain and oversee policing. Effective governance enhances accountability and directly impacts on trust and confidence in policing.

## **9. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no social implications arising directly from this report.

## **10. COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no community implications arising directly from this report.

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are equality implications associated with this report. This committee effectiveness review supports the Authority's efforts to improve the accessibility of its governance of policing, and mainstream equality reporting into its governance processes.

## **12. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.