

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	20 May 2020
Location	Video-conference
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached:	No

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

The purpose of Police Scotland is 'to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland' and our focus is on Keeping People Safe. This paper is intended to provide Members with an update on key policing activity and events.

2. TACKLING THREAT AND RISK

SERIOUS VIOLENCE (INCLUDING HOMICIDE)

Homicide Investigations

Between Wednesday 1 April and Tuesday 28 April 2020, Police Scotland carried out investigations into six murders which were committed across Scotland. Every murder is a tragedy, impacting on individuals, families and wider communities.

Our professional investigative response ensured that an accused person for each murder has been detected in every case. This highlights the value of the national Service, with resources from Specialist Crime Division Major Investigation Teams, in combination with officers and staff from Local Policing Divisions, deploying swiftly on each occasion to conduct thorough investigations, offer support to the families of victims, and provide reassurance to affected local communities. To respond to the challenges associated with COVID-19, homicide investigation has been refined, including changes to procedures in door to door enquiries and post mortem examination.

FRAUD

Fraudulent Investment Scheme Investigation

On 15 April at Edinburgh High Court, a 66 year old male was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment for fraud and breaches of the Financial Services and Markets Act and Proceeds of Crime Act. This related to a fraudulent investment scheme which defrauded 182 investors of nearly £13 million.

The conviction and sentence followed a lengthy and complex Police Scotland investigation, conducted between 2014 and 2016, led by specialist officers and staff from the Economic Crime and Financial Investigation Unit in partnership with the Financial Conduct Authority and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The fraud, which was one of the largest involving an individual accused in Scotland, involved financial transactions across Scotland, England and other European countries. It required meticulous examination of financial records and extensive

engagement with numerous victims, some of whom had lost their life savings.

Police Scotland recognises that the impact of such crimes can be devastating and remains committed to working with partners to prevent fraud, and professionally investigate where fraud does occur.

DRUGS SUPPLY AND HARM

Serious and Organised Crime – Drug Seizures

During April 2020, officers from Police Scotland’s Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit carried out a number of intelligence led proactive operations in the west of Scotland, including Glasgow, Lenzie, Hamilton, East Kilbride and Gartcosh. The operations led to the recovery of controlled drugs with an estimated street value of around £2.6 million, and in excess of £1 million cash. A total of 64kg of controlled drugs including cocaine, cannabis and etizolam tablets were seized, in addition to firearms, stolen vehicles and jewellery. Nine men and three women, aged between 23 and 60, were arrested and charged in respect of a variety of offences.

This proactive enforcement activity illustrates Police Scotland’s ongoing commitment and determination to tackle those involved in serious and organised crime who cause greatest harm in our communities.

ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

Road Traffic Offences

Throughout the period of COVID-19 restrictions, Road Policing officers have supported Local Policing Divisions, maintaining a high visibility presence on the road network in order to keep people safe. Following increased reporting of inappropriate and reckless driver behaviour, often involving excessive speed, targeted patrols continue to take place in identified hotspots areas to deter and detect those responsible.

One such period of focused activity took place over the Easter weekend in April, when our Road Policing officers charged a number of motorists who were detected committing road traffic offences at a variety of locations across Scotland. This included 10 drivers detected for notable speeding offences, three of whom were driving in excess of 100mph, and 16 drivers detected for drink or drug driving offences.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Domestic Abuse and Child Protection

Tackling domestic abuse remains a key priority for Police Scotland. We are engaged with partners to ensure services remain accessible to those who need them, particularly during the COVID-19 restrictions. A national campaign to tackle domestic abuse was relaunched by the Scottish Government on Friday 10 April. As part of the campaign, on Monday 4 May, Assistant Chief Constable Duncan Sloan who holds portfolio responsibility for Major Crime and Public Protection, released a video message highlighting our continued commitment to tackling domestic abuse, to support and reach out to victims.

Levels of reporting in respect of domestic abuse have marginally decreased during the period of COVID-19 restrictions. However we consider that these figures conceal some suppressed vulnerability and risk. Applications to the Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse in Scotland have increased, with the majority of applications submitted by police officers and other professionals. There has been a reduction in the number of child concern reports, which may have been caused by reduced interaction between children and support professionals.

Police Scotland continues to proactively tackle domestic abuse and ensure the critical protection of children. Working closely with Scottish and Local Government and third sector partners such as Scottish Women's Aid and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, we seek to identify and address emerging risks to those who are most vulnerable during this unprecedented national emergency.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

Your Police 2020/21 Survey

Police Scotland recognises the importance of listening to Scotland's diverse communities and understanding their views and priorities. On Thursday 9 April, we launched our annual public survey which aims to capture information relating to public confidence in the police, experience of our service, feelings of safety and public concerns. Due to the significant responsibilities placed on policing to support the national effort to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey includes specific questions about our policing approach during this situation.

There has been a very high level of public engagement in the Police

Scotland survey, with over 13,000 responses received in the first four weeks. Initial indications demonstrate sustained levels of public confidence in policing in Scotland. The information received, in combination with additional feedback from communities, partners and key stakeholders, will help to shape our current and future operational activity.

TACKLING CRIME IN THE DIGITAL AGE

National 'Get Help or Get Caught' Campaign

On Tuesday 14 April, Police Scotland launched a national 'Get Help or Get Caught' campaign, targeting predators who pose a risk to children online. The campaign, which was conducted across various social media platforms, was supported by Stop It Now! Scotland and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children Scotland. Its key aim was to identify and deter perpetrators who pose a risk to children online, challenge their behaviour and signpost them to relevant support pathways through partners, in order to prevent offending.

The campaign ran for a period of four weeks, commencing at a critical time during the current COVID-19 pandemic, when children could be at increased risk as a result of having more time at home to access the internet.

SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONAL POLICING

Contact Assessment Model (CAM)

As previously reported, CAM improves the way we triage and respond to contact from the public by using an enhanced assessment and decision-making model, based on threat, harm and risk. This supports the most vulnerable and aims to ensure that every individual gets the appropriate response when they contact Police Scotland.

On Tuesday 21 April, the roll out of CAM across every Local Policing Division in Scotland was completed, with the inclusion of Highland and Islands, North East and Tayside Divisions within the model. The accelerated introduction of CAM ahead of schedule enables Police Scotland to better respond to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic. The introduction of CAM across the Service has enabled us to optimise our operational response and deliver on our policing purpose to improve the safety and wellbeing of people, places and communities in Scotland.

Mental Health Pathway

It is widely recognised that people with mental health vulnerabilities who contact the police would often be better assisted and supported by agencies outwith policing. Incremental system testing is ongoing, which will permit relevant calls received by Police Scotland, assessed as suitable, to be referred to the NHS24 Mental Health Hub (MHH). The MHH is staffed by suitably qualified mental health practitioners and will operate on a 24/7 basis from June. This proposed integrated approach is designed to deliver better outcomes, ensuring vulnerable individuals secure swift access to appropriate services and receive the support they need, while at the same time improving the police response.

Mobile Working

Following completion of the roll out of mobile working to all Local Policing Divisions in March, the issuing of mobile devices to Forensics Services staff has been brought forward to support the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional functionality continues to be added, including the facility to issue Fixed Penalty Notices in respect of non-compliance with COVID-19 restrictions. Feedback in respect of mobile devices continues to be extremely positive.

Development of ICT Capability

As previously reported, the ADEL and Nat Net Projects are critical enablers within the Digital Data and ICT strategy, providing the foundation for the implementation of modern technical solutions in policing. The ADEL Project enables officers and staff throughout Police Scotland to log on to systems from anywhere in the police estate, allowing them to work more effectively. The Nat Net Project delivers increased performance, stability and security across our ICT network, including increased bandwidth to support faster system access.

The work previously completed through the ADEL and Nat Net Projects has underpinned the ICT delivery which has been required to support the Police Scotland operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

ICT support has enabled and supported a significant increase in remote and home working capability; the provision of virtual courts; the reprogramming of systems and mobile devices to accommodate changes in legislation; the expansion of a C3 Service Centre and the provision of increased audio/video conferencing capability to facilitate physical distancing. The implementation of audio/video collaboration platforms will deliver sustainable benefits, including a reduction in travel which positively impacts on our immediate carbon footprint and supports

wellbeing, and wider engagement opportunities for public contact. The ability to deliver flexible and innovative solutions in a compressed timeframe, which support the continuation of policing throughout the country during a time of significant challenge for the citizens of Scotland, further demonstrates the benefit of a single national Service.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

OPERATION TALLA

During the co-ordinated national response to the COVID-19 pandemic, I, along with senior colleagues, have led the police response and contributed to broader national co-ordination. There is ongoing engagement with national and local governments, representatives from the SPA, HMICS, COSLA and SOLACE, and wider engagement with UK policing colleagues through the National Police Chief's Council and Strategic Capabilities Board. We have also provided regular briefings to Scottish Government ministers and contributed to SGoRR ministerial meetings and to the First Minister's daily briefings.

The positive professional relationships with key national and local partners, developed and nurtured in advance of the current situation, have supported the flow of information, which is vital to the delivery of an effective and co-ordinated operational response during this critical period.

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP26)

As previously reported, COP26 has been postponed due to the ongoing disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has resulted in a number of officers and staff from the planning team being stood down at present. However, Police Scotland continues to be represented at the COP26 Operations Board, and Assistant Chief Constable Higgins and I have participated in two Cabinet Office chaired Board meetings, held in April and May.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS

POLICING RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Police Scotland's contingency planning and response measures continue to address the evolving circumstances and impact of COVID-19. Officers and staff have actively engaged, explained, encouraged and directed citizens across Scotland in respect of government advice and guidance. The vast majority have adhered to the restrictions imposed to help

protect the National Health Service and save lives, with enforcement action only used as a last resort where engagement, explanation and encouragement has been unsuccessful.

As previously reported, in addition to existing oversight and scrutiny arrangements, on Thursday 9 April, I commissioned an independent and external assurance review, led by Mr John Scott QC. Mr Scott chairs an Independent Advisory Group (IAG) which is considering Police Scotland's use of the emergency legislation, seeking to ensure that its application has been, and continues to be, proportionate and ethical.

EU EXIT PLANNING

As previously reported, on 31 January, the UK left the EU with a negotiated transition deal which enabled UK law enforcement agencies to continue to operate with minimal changes to existing arrangements. The transition arrangement is due to end on 31 December. Within this challenging timeframe, Police Scotland continues to prepare contingency measures and engage with law enforcement and other key partners, both nationally and internationally, to prepare for the potential outcomes for policing at the conclusion of the transition period.

6. OUR PEOPLE

HEALTH, SAFETY and WELLBEING

Officer and staff safety is paramount to Police Scotland. We follow the advice and direction of Health Protection Scotland (HPS), the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), and have applied a comprehensive Risk Assessment when developing guidance for officers and staff. Police Scotland is meeting, and often exceeding, the relevant guidelines and we have sought to assist HPS, HSE and NPCC to clarify guidance, with a focus on policing scenarios. The Risk Assessment and operational guidance remain under review, with continual developments including increased access to testing. As Chief Constable, I have a moral, ethical and legal duty to the safety and welfare of our officers and staff. We will continue to work with Staff Associations and Trade Unions as policing continues to play its vital role in the national effort to combat coronavirus.

To further support officers and staff, a range of measures have been introduced and developed in response to the wider personal, social and societal implications and restrictions which have resulted as a consequence of COVID-19 guidance. Measures to support physical distancing include enhancement of flexibility in working arrangements, access to remoted and home working, and increased use of special leave

for those with childcare and other caring responsibilities.

YOUR SAFETY MATTERS

As I have previously stated at different times, no police officer or member of staff should expect to be assaulted or abused in the course of their work. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Police Scotland's officers and staff have played a vital role in communities, continuing to support and serve the citizens of Scotland. While there has been high levels of understanding and co-operation, on occasion, officers and staff have been subject to abusive behaviour and assault, including threats of deliberate transmission, spitting and coughing.

Between 24 March and 18 April there were over 100 crimes committed in Scotland where police officers and staff were recorded as victims. Such attacks are completely unacceptable, will not be tolerated, and those committing crimes of this nature will be arrested. The Lord Advocate has also confirmed that offenders will be dealt with robustly by COPFS. In one specific case in May, a 48 year old male was sentenced at Inverness Sheriff Court to four months imprisonment, having admitted assaulting two police officers by coughing in their faces to the danger of their lives.

RECRUITMENT - PROBATIONER INTAKE

During March, 351 Probationary Constables commenced initial training at the Scottish Police College, Tulliallan, which was the largest intake ever to join Police Scotland. I conducted the Oath of Office ceremony, where I welcomed the cohort of Probationary Constables along with 22 Special Constables. Recognising that they had joined the Service at a time of national significance, I thanked each of them for their commitment to public service and reinforced their crucial role in serving and protecting the people of Scotland.

To maximise physical distancing during training and to provide additional support to operational policing, after the delivery of essential training, over 170 probationary constables were deployed in local communities, under the supervision of experienced officers and supervisors. Those officers who were operationally deployed will return to complete their initial training in June.

POLICE SCOTLAND FORCE EXECUTIVE

A recruitment process for Police Scotland Assistant Chief Constables has been conducted, with interviews concluding on Friday 15 May. The

strength and quality of candidates who applied from across the UK, demonstrates the attractiveness of the professional challenge associated with senior leadership roles within Police Scotland. Following the rigorous selection process, successful candidates will join a strong, stable and effective Force Executive.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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