

Meeting	SPA Board Meeting
Date	30 September 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 Keeping People Safe. This paper is intended to provide Members with an update on key activity and events.

2. TACKLING THREAT AND RISK

SERIOUS VIOLENCE INCLUDING HOMICIDE

Murder of Graham Williamson – Lanarkshire Division

On Monday 17 August 2020, a 26 year old man died after being shot within his garden in Blantyre. Following investigation led by detective officers from the Police Scotland Major Incident Team, two males aged 23 and 24 were subsequently arrested and charged with murder. Both appeared at Hamilton Sheriff Court and were remanded in custody.

This serious crime, which is believed to have been a targeted attack, caused significant impact in the local community. In conjunction with the intensive criminal investigation, in the days following the incident, officers from Lanarkshire Division delivered additional high visibility patrols to provide community reassurance.

SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

Firearms Seizures – West of Scotland

Police Scotland is committed to targeting those who cause greatest harm in our communities and pose a threat to public safety and wellbeing, including those involved in the criminal use of firearms

On Saturday 22 August, as part of an intelligence led operation, a 55-year old male was arrested and charged with firearms offences following the recovery of eight firearms and a quantity of ammunition during a property search in Erskine, Renfrewshire. The male appeared at Glasgow Sheriff Court on Monday 24 August, where he was remanded in custody.

On Tuesday 1 September, in a separate intelligence led operation, officers recovered five firearms and a quantity of ammunition following a proactive vehicle stop in Largs, North Ayrshire. Two males aged 42 and 37 were arrested and charged with firearms offences. Both appeared at Kilmarnock Sheriff Court where they were remanded in custody.

Operation BOOST - Tayside Division

On Thursday 3 September, a 55 year old female was sentenced to 5 years 11 months imprisonment at Glasgow High Court for offences in relation to the sale and supply of heroin and cocaine, and being involved in serious organised crime. The sentence was the culmination of a joint investigation carried out by officers from Tayside Division and Police Scotland's Organised Crime Unit into the supply of controlled drugs in Dundee in 2018.

Following conviction in 2019, the female fled to Bulgaria having been released on bail pending a sentencing hearing. Police Scotland successfully applied for a European Arrest Warrant leading to her arrest and extradition to Scotland in July 2020.

DRUGS SUPPLY AND HARM

County Lines Day of Action

As previously reported, 'county lines' is the name given to the practice of drug dealers from larger cities expanding their activities into smaller towns and rural areas, exploiting young and vulnerable people to sell controlled drugs, often using violence and coercion. On Wednesday 16 September, as part of a national day of action, Police Scotland carried out intelligence led activity across Scotland, targeting those involved in county lines criminality.

Officers from local policing divisions were supported by Police Scotland specialist resources and colleagues from British Transport Police. Policing activity in Scotland resulted in over 20 arrests, and the seizure of controlled drugs including heroin, cocaine and amphetamine, tens of thousands of pounds of cash, and a number of weapons. In addition, the operation identified over 80 vulnerable people who were referred for additional safeguarding support.

Our officers will continue to target county lines operations which have an impact in Scotland, working with partners in the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce to pursue offenders and safeguard individuals who may be at risk of harm.

ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

Police Scotland continues to prioritise visibility on the road network to positively influence driver behaviour and enhance road safety throughout Scotland. In the period to Monday 7 September, there were 48 road fatalities compared to 76 in the same period in the previous year.

In conjunction with partner agencies, national road safety and enforcement campaigns continue, prioritising areas of particular risk and concern. Our Motorcycle Safety Campaign took place over two weekends in August and September, with officers attending locations frequented by motorcyclists to engage with riders and provide advice and guidance to promote safe and responsible motorcycling.

In partnership with Road Safety Scotland, Police Scotland developed a video on the dangers of driving while fatigued, which was screened on national television during a week long road safety campaign which commenced on Monday 24 August.

During a day of action on Tuesday 8 September, officers from Police Scotland Road Policing Unit, in partnership with the Safety Camera Unit, targeted inappropriate and reckless driver behaviour relating to excessive speed. Enforcement activity in various locations across Scotland resulted in motorists being reported for over 300 offences.

3. DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

International Human Trafficking – Enforcement Activity

On Wednesday 9 September, following a year-long investigation, Police Scotland led an international operation targeting an organised crime gang suspected of human trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Enforcement activity was carried out at over 30 locations in Scotland, England and Romania, leading to 10 arrests in the United Kingdom and 14 suspects being detained by Romanian police. A number of potential victims of human trafficking were also identified. The operation was co-ordinated by Police Scotland's National Human Trafficking Unit, supported by colleagues from the National Crime Agency, Romanian Police's Directorate for Countering Organised Crime, and officers from Leicestershire, West Midlands and Northamptonshire Police.

Human trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery crosses national and international boundaries and causes significant harm. It has no place in Scotland. Our response to safeguard victims and target offenders will continue to be co-ordinated across agencies and borders, based on international co-operation.

Mental Health Demand

Protecting vulnerable people is a priority for Police Scotland and a significant proportion of calls requesting our assistance involve an element of mental health and distress. We recognise that people with mental health vulnerabilities may often be better assisted by agencies outwith policing, and we continue to work with partner agencies to ensure individuals receive the most appropriate support.

As reported in May, work is ongoing to embed a system of referral of relevant calls to the NHS24 Mental Health Hub, a service which is staffed by suitably qualified mental health practitioners. This integrated approach is designed to deliver better outcomes, ensuring vulnerable individuals secure swift access to appropriate services and receive the support they need. The 'Mental Health Pathway' was introduced within Police Scotland on Wednesday 26 August, with progress being closely monitored via the Mental Health Strategic Steering Group.

SUPPORT FOR OPERATIONAL POLICING

Call Handling

Police Scotland receives approximately three and a half million calls each year, and around 80% of these calls do not result in a crime being recorded. As has been previously reported, the introduction of our new approach to call handling has improved service to the public, by using an enhanced assessment and decision making model based on threat, harm and risk.

In recent weeks, there has been a significant increase in call demand, with 999 calls remaining our highest priority for handling. In the six month period until the end of August, we received over 300,000 calls via our 999 emergency routes, maintaining an average speed of answer of 9 seconds. This performance has been maintained in an operating environment which is significantly impacted by the ongoing pandemic, generating increased public call demand from those seeking information on coronavirus related issues. On occasion, callers using the 101 non-emergency number have had to wait longer than normal to have their call answered. This has been an unavoidable consequence of the unique global health emergency, including the requirement to introduce physical distancing across the police estate to protect officers and staff. During this time, Police Scotland service advisors have continued to deliver their critical role with dedication and professionalism, in support of those citizens who need help and assistance.

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES**Police Scotland Student Safety Campaign**

This month, Police Scotland launched its annual Student Safety Campaign, designed to support student communities across Scotland as further education courses recommence. In conjunction with student bodies, colleges and universities, the Campaign will run until the end of October, offering safety and wellbeing advice across a number of digital platforms. Key themes include home safety, personal safety, online safety and party safety, with additional advice and guidance provided in respect of COVID-19.

To coincide with this Campaign, we have reinvigorated our 'getconsent' message, emphasising that whatever the circumstances, sex without consent is rape. Utilising the hashtag '#getconsent', information has been distributed to universities and colleges, and across social media channels, with signposting to a dedicated public facing website www.wecanstopit.co.uk.

4. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT**PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT**

On Thursday 27 August, I provided evidence on policing during the coronavirus pandemic to the Scottish Parliament's Justice Sub-Committee on Policing. I reflected on the strong bond of trust which exists between communities and the police in Scotland and reaffirmed my view as Chief Constable, that during the public health emergency, the Service has responded quickly, consistently and with composure to support the broader national response. In addition, on Monday 21 September, I had an extremely productive meeting with the Convener of the Justice Committee, Mr Adam Tomkins MSP, during which we discussed a range of issues pertinent to policing.

On Thursday 17 September, Deputy Chief Officer David Page and Chief Financial Officer James Gray, along with the SPA Interim-Chief Executive, provided evidence to the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing in respect of its pre-budget scrutiny of the policing budget for 2021-22. On the same date, Director Jude Helliker and Assistant Chief Constable Gary Ritchie, together with colleagues from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Revenue Scotland, provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee in a session which focused on race, equality, employment and skills.

These engagement sessions provided further opportunities to discuss the benefits, opportunities and challenges experienced by the Service. The level of interest, oversight and scrutiny reflects the unique nature of policing in Scottish public life.

COSLA SCRUTINY CONVENOR'S FORUM

On Tuesday 8 September, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr, accompanied by senior officers from Police Scotland, attended a virtual meeting of the COSLA Police Scrutiny Convener's Forum, along with the Interim Chair and Interim Chief Executive of the Scottish Police Authority. The Forum consists of Local Authority Police Scrutiny Committee Conveners from across Scotland and representatives from COSLA. Positive discussions focussed on key strategic issues affecting our local communities, including domestic abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, and anti-social behaviour. Conveners were also updated on our response to COVID-19 and EU-Exit planning.

Local Policing is at the heart of Police Scotland's relationship with our citizens, and this forum enables us to further strengthen the relationships developed by Local Police Commanders with locally elected members.

REVIEW OF POLICE COMPLAINTS HANDLING, INVESTIGATIONS AND MISCONDUCT ISSUES

On Tuesday 15 September, along with Assistant Chief Constable Alan Speirs, I met with the Rt Hon Dame Elish Angiolini who is conducting the Independent Review of Police Complaints Handling, Investigations and Misconduct Issues in relation to policing in Scotland. Police Scotland has supported and engaged with the work of the review team throughout the period of review, and this constructive meeting continued that ongoing engagement.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

On Friday 18 September, along with Deputy Chief Constables Fiona Taylor, Malcolm Graham and Deputy Chief Officer David Page, I met with Dr Vic Olisa QPM, who has extensive experience in diversity and inclusion, particularly in the area of policing. The discussion, which covered a wide range of diversity related matters, provided an opportunity to test and challenge our approach and ambition in respect of diversity and inclusion within Police Scotland. Areas of focus included recruitment and retention, support for officers and staff, and the service we provide in our communities across Scotland.

STRATEGIC CAPABILITIES BOARD

On Friday 25 September, Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr represented Police Scotland at a virtual meeting of the Home Office Strategic Capabilities Board (SCB), chaired by Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft. The SCB provides a valuable opportunity to engage with colleagues from policing and other agencies, and consider matters of strategic importance to the UK.

5. SIGNIFICANT OPERATIONAL EVENTS**POLICING RESPONSE TO COVID-19 – OPERATION TALLA**

Police Scotland continues to respond to the evolving circumstances and impact of COVID-19, and remains prepared to meet the associated policing challenges whenever or wherever they emerge. We have worked closely with partners in particular regions where local restrictions have been imposed, and continue to support Public Health Scotland and all other agencies involved in the national response.

On Tuesday 22 September, the Scottish Government announced further measures to tackle coronavirus, including national restrictions on visiting other households in private homes, and the introduction of curfew measures in the hospitality sector. Following the announcement, on Friday 25 September I participated in the First Minister’s Daily Briefing at St. Andrew’s House. Police Scotland recognises that restrictions will continue to have a major impact on the way we live our lives. As we respond to these new measures, the policing style and tone will remain consistent, engaging with people in our communities and adopting a common sense approach.

Towards the end of August, legislation was introduced which is designed to address concerns over the potential for coronavirus transmission as a result of large house gatherings. The legislation grants officers power of entry to private premises in certain circumstances. In line with our overall policing approach, enforcement action is considered only as a last resort where clear breaches of the legislation occur. In the first weekend following introduction of this legislation, officers responded to reports of a large house gathering in Gorebridge, Midlothian, where approximately 300 people were present. After dispersal of the gathering, an investigation commenced which resulted in two males aged 20 and 29 being arrested and charged. In subsequent weekends, officers attended a significant number of house gatherings throughout Scotland, with a range of proportionate interventions required, from advice to arrest.

In the period from the introduction of initial legislation in respect of coronavirus until Wednesday 16 September, police officers across Scotland engaged with individuals in respect of coronavirus legislation on more than 72,000 occasions. In approximately 94% of these interactions, no formal enforcement action was required.

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP26)

Police Scotland continues to work with partners to develop and review the planning assumptions which inform the scope of the policing operation in respect of COP26. Financial re-planning work is ongoing to inform a revised budget which will be presented to the Authority upon completion. Engagement continues with National Police Operations and Coordination Centre and the Regional Information and Coordination Centres to ensure colleagues across the UK are fully aware of the size and scale of anticipated mutual aid requirements. In addition, Police Scotland remains heavily involved in broader strategic preparations for the conference, most recently at the COP26 Delivery Board which met on Thursday 17 September.

As previously reported, the Metropolitan Police Service will conduct a peer review of Police Scotland's planning for the event. The peer review is beginning in November and will supplement assurance activity to be undertaken by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland and ongoing oversight by the Scottish Police Authority in respect of COP26.

EU EXIT PLANNING

Based on the potential outcomes of EU Exit negotiations, Police Scotland consequential planning activity is ongoing, including the review and revision of the Police Scotland EU Exit Risk Assessment to ensure appropriate risks are identified and priority mitigation measures implemented. Together with key partners, officers and staff from our International Bureau continue to prepare for the potential loss of justice and home affairs measures.

It is anticipated that Police Scotland will require to co-ordinate and monitor response activity from a civil contingencies perspective for a period of 12 weeks following the end of the transition period on Thursday 31 December.

6. OUR PEOPLE

SWDF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

On Friday 28 August, I participated in the Scottish Women's Development Forum (SWDF) Annual Conference, which was attended on a virtual basis by almost 200 attendees from Police Scotland, the Scottish Police Authority and partner organisations. Based on a 'dare to' theme, the Conference heard from two keynote speakers and involved a number of workshops. During a video address, I commended the SWDF for their continued encouragement and the positive challenge that it offers to Police Scotland, helping to ensure that we remain an inclusive employer of choice, where everyone has equal access to opportunities.

SCOTTISH POLICE MEMORIAL TRUST - MEMORIAL SERVICE

On Wednesday 2 September, I had the privilege of hosting a virtual Memorial Service to commemorate police officers who have died on duty in Scotland. Accompanied by Christine Fulton MBE from the Scottish Police Memorial Trust, wreaths were laid at the Memorial in the grounds of Police Scotland Headquarters, Tulliallan, to remember and honour those who are no longer with us. Through video message, we recognised the importance of continuing to mark this poignant day in a new way during these unprecedented times.

NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL DAY

The National Police Memorial Day remembers police officers from across the UK who have been killed or died on duty. This year, the Memorial Day is being marked virtually by means of video release on Sunday 27 September. The Memorial Day unites police forces, colleagues, friends and relatives from across the United Kingdom, as we pay our respects and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

PROBATIONER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

On Monday 7 September, 125 new recruits commenced their career with Police Scotland. On Wednesday 9 September, while maintaining physical distancing, I conducted the Oath of Office Ceremony on the parade square at the Scottish Police College, Tulliallan. I welcomed each of the officers to Police Scotland and thanked them for their commitment to public service, reinforcing the crucial role they now have to serve and protect the citizens of Scotland. Following initial training, the Probationary Constables will be deployed to serve in communities across the country, with a number taking up roles in areas which are recognised

as hard to fill, including island postings.

CHIEF CONSTABLE'S FORUM

On Wednesday 9 September, the latest Chief Constable's Forum was held, where officers and staff have the opportunity to put questions directly to me and members of the Force Executive.

The Forum provides an excellent opportunity to engage widely across the organisation, and a number of questions were received on a variety of topics relating to people, equipment, technology, strategy, finance, operational policing and specialist policing. Questions were considered during the Strategic Leadership Board, with responses provided via the Force Intranet. As has been the case in previous Forums, I was encouraged by the depth and breadth of questions posed, demonstrating the genuine interest that officers and staff have in the current and future direction of the Service.

WINTER FLU VACCINE

Between Monday 14 September and Thursday 31 December, Police Scotland will again provide assistance to officers and staff to enable them to obtain the winter flu vaccine. We have simplified and expanded the scheme to ensure as many officers and staff as possible are able to access this benefit. In the context of the coronavirus public health emergency, it is more important than ever that we maximise take up of the vaccine within the Service, to protect the health of officers and staff, protect others, and reduce pressure on the health and social care system this winter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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