



Agenda Item 7

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	23 May 2024
Location	Merchants House, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Forensic Services Director's report
Presented By	Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services
Recommendation to Members	For discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update members on the recent key activities across Forensic Services.

1. Updates

Budget

- 1.1. The budget of £44 million for revenue and £1 million for capital for 2024/25 approved by the SPA allows Forensic Services to consolidate our investment in our New Operating Model – which is predominately an investment in our people. This budget for the coming year now gives us the stability to continue to support this investment throughout the year.
- 1.2. As in the past financial year, Forensic Services will only move ahead with further changes when it is prudent and sustainable to do so. This approach meant we were able to start the roll out our New Operating Model during 2023/24 while remaining within budget.

Quarter 4 Performance

- 1.3. With the initial phases of our New Operating Model in place as of 1 April 2024, Forensic Services continue with a risk-based approach to managing performance as we move ahead embedding this change.
- 1.4. Using a balanced scorecard approach, we reported strong delivery for [Quarter 4 to the SPA Forensic Services Committee](#), with a continued focus on Criminal Toxicology capacity and demand, revision of our strategic workforce plan, demand forecasting, and the development of the Values and Behaviours Framework.

2024-26 Business Plan

- 1.5. The updated Forensic Services Business Plan was presented to the [SPA Forensic Services Committee on 7 May 2024](#) covers the two years 2024-26 and sets out our priorities and progress towards the delivery of our long-term strategic objectives as detailed in the [Forensic Strategy 2021](#) which was approved by the SPA on 29 September 2021.
- 1.6. The Business Plan highlights the current risks we are mitigating and tracks progress using a balance scorecard approach, measuring the impacts on our people, resources, processes, and partners. The business is intrinsically linked to: the [Forensic Services Performance Framework](#), approved by the SPA Forensic Services Committee on 30 October 2023; Risk management; the Forensic Services People Plan; and the priorities set out by the Director of Forensic Services.

SPA Committee reporting

- 1.7. In line with the [SPA Governance Review](#) approved at the Authority Meeting on 24 August 2023, Forensic Services have reported recently into the Audit Risk and Assurance Committee (as part of the [SPA Audit and Improvement Recommendations](#)) and to the People Committee ([Forensic Services People Update](#)).
- 1.8. We continue to work with colleagues in SPA Corporate to improve and refine the reporting to all committees, so these align and are and are consistent with reporting across all the SPA committees.

UKAS update

- 1.9 Forensic Services received positive feedback from UKAS after their visit to the Toxicology team in Howden Hall in April, where they recognised the progress and improvements made since their previous visit last year. UKAS have also confirmed that they had seen positive progress of Management System audit activity and have now agreed Forensic Services can submit Extension to Scope applications.
- 1.10 After discussions with UKAS regarding [GEN6 - Reference to accreditation and multilateral recognition signatory status by UKAS-accredited bodies](#) and the requirement to document on Forensic Services test reports what activity is accredited/unaccredited, a plan for compliance was shared with them. A collaborative short life working group with Police Scotland and COPFS is being set up with an indicative timeline of September 2024 for completion of this work ahead of the UKAS next surveillance inspection in November 2024.

New roof at Howden Hall

- 1.11 Thanks to support from Police Scotland's Estates, work to replace the roof on the Howden Hall laboratory has now been completed. The Estate's team project managed this work for Forensic Services – and it was carried out in stages, so the laboratory could remain open for business throughout the work.
- 1.12 This project benefits all staff working in Howden Hall as well as the service delivery and the lab roof is now compliant with modern building regulations. It will provide greater energy efficiency for the laboratory, which had suffered from regular and long-standing disruptions which were costly to repair.

National Tasking Unit

- 1.13 The National Tasking Unit, who are responsible for the triaging and subsequent deployment of Scene Requests from Police Scotland, have now been delivering this work for one year. Alongside the introduction of the new ways of working in Search & Recovery Scenes, these have together improved the use of Scene Examination resources across Forensic Services.
- 1.14 Police Scotland Portfolio Assurance colleagues have undertaken an independent post implementation review which is undergoing a final review before being submitted to Forensic Services. The resultant actions in response to this review will be taken forward as part of the response to the recommendations of the external review of our tasking and deployment processes which has been carried out by colleagues from the Metropolitan Police Service.

Forensic Service Excellence awards

- 1.15 After the success of our inaugural Forensic Services Excellence Awards, we have decided to make this an annual event so we can recognise the contributions our staff – who are our most important asset - make in supporting our vision of Scientific Excellence for Safer Communities. The awards will be presented at a ceremony in September.
- 1.16 The awards, which will be judged by our strategic partners in Police Scotland, COPFS, academia and members of SPA and Forensic Services. There are seven categories:
- Greatest Contribution to Forensic Science Award
 - Service Improvement Award
 - Team of the Year Award
 - Science and Innovation Award
 - Staff Member of the Year Award
 - Wellbeing Award
 - Director's Award

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 There are no financial implications in this report.

3. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no personnel implications in this report.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONSs

4.1 There are no legal implications in this report.

5. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no reputational implications in this report.

6. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no social implications in this report.

7. COMMUNITY IMPACT

7.1 There are no community implications in this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no equality implications in this report.

9. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications in this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to note the information contained within this report.