



Agenda Item 5

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	26 September 2024
Location	COSLA, Edinburgh
Title of Paper	Chief Constable's Report
Presented By	Jo Farrell, Chief Constable
Recommendation to Members	For Noting
Appendix Attached	Appendix A – Chief Constable's Report August 2024

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

1.1 The attached Chief Constable's Report provides the Authority with information relating to the Police Service, policing and the state of crime.

2. FURTHER DETAIL ON THE REPORT TOPIC

2.1 There are no further details on this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications in this report. Any financial implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no direct personnel implications in this report. Any personnel implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications in this report. Any legal implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

6. REPUTATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Given the nature of the report there are reputational implications however all reputational implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

7. SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct social implications in this report. Any social implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

8. COMMUNITY IMPACT

8.1 Given the nature of the report there is potential community impact implications however community impact relating to subjects referenced have been fully considered at the time.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no direct equalities implications in this report. Any equalities implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

10. ENVIRONMENT IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no direct environment implications in this report. Any environment Implications relating to subjects referenced are fully considered at the time.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

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Chief Constable's Report

September 2024

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Chief Constable's Report September 2024

Overview

This month, we are outlining plans to evolve policing in Scotland to deliver a second phase of reform so that we can meet existing and emerging challenges within the funding available.

I've set a vision for what I want Police Scotland to deliver - safer communities, less crime, supported victims, and a thriving workforce.

We're also presenting our first three-year business plan covering the period 2024-25 until 2026-27 which details the steps we are taking to deliver for our communities and our workforce, relentlessly prioritising frontline services.

Key milestones already progressed include Police Scotland's role in the implementation of the Digital Evidence Sharing Capability, the contract award for a national roll out of Body Worn Video, and the establishment of a Mental Health Taskforce, all of which will support necessary system-wide efficiencies in the criminal justice system and in the care for people in mental health crisis.

As part of this, we'll review and redesign local policing to strengthen the community policing model and provide every local community with an identifiable officer.

We'll also take a strategic approach to which new police buildings we should invest in, which others should be improved or sold, and how they should be used to deliver co-location with partners, better working environments for officers and staff, financial savings and provide the policing service the public needs.

We are in the process of drafting a budget proposal for 2025-26 which will describe the investment needed to ensure policing is financially sustainable.

Police Scotland, with the support of the Scottish Police Authority, has a track record of delivering reform to maintain and improve services while reducing the annual cost base by £200m compared to legacy arrangements.

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This second phase of police reform is being co-ordinated by Operation Evolve, led by Deputy Chief Constable Jane Connors and we've been engaging and communicating with officers and staff, statutory and non-statutory staff associations, trade unions and partners ahead of presenting our vision and business plan to the Scottish Police Authority for endorsement.

As we prepare and implement plans for the short, medium and longer term, my report also highlights some of the fantastic policing our officers and staff are delivering for our communities right across Scotland every day.

This includes investigations resulting in convictions and sentencing for terrorism offences, serious and organised crime, human trafficking and sexual offending, as well as a number of significant drug recoveries. My report also outlines arrests in respect of investigations into the disappearance of Khasha Smith and in connection with the death of Brodie MacGregor.

We're also supporting campaigns aimed at reducing serious injuries and fatalities on our roads and to prevent online, email and phone based fraud as part of prevention work that's vital to get on top of demand.

I want to thank our officers and staff for everything they do for the public we serve. I know the demand placed on our workforce and earlier this month, I provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee, focused on how we can better support the wellbeing of our people.

As part of the evidence session, we outlined the combined health and wellbeing action plan which has been presented to the Scottish Police Authority and which outlines health and wellbeing actions, objectives and goals linked to the strategic objectives of our People Strategy for 2024-27.

I'm committed, through ongoing face-to-face engagement and through the survey which closed at the end of August, to continually listening to our workforce and acting on what they tell us to improve their experiences.

At the same time, we must work with partners to reset the parameters of policing's response to mental health incidents and to remove inefficiencies in the criminal

justice system which creates significant demand and intrudes on officers' rest days and personal lives.

My report outlines work with health colleagues and the Scottish Government to provide officers with a Mental Health Index which can help them ensure members of the public who are in mental health crisis get the care and support they need and deserve from the agency best able to provide it.

Last week, along with government, the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, Police Scotland outlined the successful pilot of a new approach to summary case management which provides quicker justice for victims and witnesses, a reduction in police officers attending court, and a substantial decrease in case backlogs.

Progress on these two key areas is welcome and absolutely necessary as we progress the next phase of policing reform and it is vital that, working with partners, further improvement is prioritised and accelerated.

Earlier this month, our latest intake of 129 probationary constables made their oath of office during events across the country, as part of our plan to recruit over 1300 officers in 2024-25.

Lastly, following the agreement that the 2026 Commonwealth Games will be held in Glasgow, initial planning is being taken forward to ensure a safe and secure event.

Tackling threat, harm and risk

Significant arrests

A 39-year-old man has been arrested and charged by detectives investigating the disappearance of Khasha Smith. Khasha, aged 35, of Edinburgh, was last seen to be safe and well on a FaceTime call on Tuesday, 10 October, 2023. Following extensive enquiries, Khasha is believed to be dead however her body is yet to be found.

A 52-year-old man was arrested in connection with the death of a woman in Glasgow at the end of last month. On Monday, 26 August, 2024, officers were called to a property in Elmvale Street, Glasgow. Brodie MacGregor was found within and pronounced dead at the scene.

Significant court outcomes

Sexual offending

Since the last meeting of the Scottish Police Authority Board, Police Scotland investigations have resulted in a number of significant court outcomes including -

- Connor Hagley, 26, was jailed for eight years for serious sexual offences in Edinburgh.
- Jamie Wilson, 34, was sentenced to more than nine years for violent and sexual offences against women in the Edinburgh and Midlothian between 2015 and 2022.
- Russell Gray, 63, was jailed for 11 years after being convicted of sexual offences in the Tayside and Fife.
- Sam Brown, 20, was jailed for seven years in connection with a series of serious sexual offences in Edinburgh, including the rape of four girls between March and December 2022.
- George McDonald, 43, was sentenced to 10 years in prison at the High Court in Edinburgh after being convicted of sexual and violent offences against three women in the Argyll and Bute area between 1998 and 2021.
- Lee Murray, 53, was jailed for five years after raping and sexually assaulting a young girl in the Inverness area between January 2021 and October 2022.

Human trafficking

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Mananchaya Wanitthanawet, 40 and Cameron Wilson, 30, were convicted at the High Court in Dundee on Thursday, 22 August, 2024 for human trafficking offences in Dundee, Aberdeen, Inverness and Edinburgh offences which took place between November, 2019 and December, 2020. They will be sentenced at a later date.

Terrorism and firearms

On Monday, 16 September, Alan Edward, 54, was convicted in connection with terrorism and firearms offences after officers seized weapons from his home in Falkirk in September 2022.

An investigation by officers from Police Scotland's Counter Terrorism Unit also found he posted and shared videos, memes and images online of a racist, homophobic and violent nature, including information associated with extreme right wing groups.

Serious and organised crime

At the end of August, James Stevenson, David Bilsland, Paul Bowes, Gerard Carbin, Ryan McPhee, and Lloyd Cross were convicted of serious organised crime and drug offences after they admitted conspiring to flood Scotland with cocaine with an estimated value of £100m which was smuggled to the UK from South America.

The convictions followed a joint operation by Police Scotland and the National Crime Agency (NCA) during which 119 packages of the Class A drug, weighing a tonne, were discovered within a consignment of bananas on a vessel from Ecuador. Searches were subsequently carried out at properties in Scotland and England and the men, aged between 32 and 68, were identified.

The multi-agency operation, including the National Crime Agency, prevented a significant quantity of drugs reaching our communities across Scotland and ruining lives. It underlines the value of working in partnership with our law enforcement colleagues in this country and abroad.

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On Friday, 6 September, three men were jailed for a total of over 13 years in connection with serious and organised crime and drugs offences in Ayrshire and Glasgow. Alan Stewart, 44, was sentenced to five years and four months imprisonment while Matthew Cullimore, 37, and Leslie Montgomery, 64, were each sentenced to four years and four months in prison having previously pleaded guilty.

The sentencing comes after officers from Police Scotland's Specialist Crime Division, supported by officers from the Operational Support Division, Ayrshire Division and Greater Glasgow Division, executed warrants at seven properties in Kilmarnock, Irvine and Glasgow in October last year recovering drugs, including cocaine and amphetamine with an estimated value of around £208,000. Officers also seized over £211,000 cash.

Drugs recoveries

Officers act every day, right across Scotland, to disrupt the supply of illegal drugs and since the last meeting of the Scottish Police Authority Board, this included -

- Drugs, including cocaine and cannabis, with an estimated street value of around £60,000 were recovered along with a number of firearms at an address in Glasgow on Sunday, 25 August. Firearms and ammunition were also seized and a 29-year-old man was arrested and charged.
- Three people were arrested and charged following the discovery of a cannabis cultivation with an estimated value of more than £200,000 in Glasgow on Wednesday, 28 August, 2024. A 30-year-old woman and two men, aged 29 and 34, were arrested and charged in connection.
- On Thursday, 29 August, drugs with an estimated street value of over £490,000 were recovered at an address in Buckie. A 36-year-old man was arrested and charged.
- On Friday, 30 August, 2024, two men, aged 33 and 18, were arrested and charged following the discovery of a cannabis cultivation with an estimated value of more than £379,000 in Coatbridge.

Prevention, problem solving and proactivity

Road safety campaign

We continue to prioritise road safety and this month, our road policing officers focused their enforcement activity and engagement work on speeding.

As part of the campaign Head of Road Policing Chief Superintendent Hilary Sloan joined Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Fiona Hyslop MSP to highlight the dangers of speeding. One in five road deaths in Scotland are caused by speeding.

The campaign's message, "you only have to lose control once", was shown in the form of a video which highlights the split-second moment before a collision from the driver's perspective. It ran across digital platforms including TV, radio and online.

We're asking all drivers to understand that speeding is always a risk. It only takes a split second to lose control and it only has to happen once.

Police Scotland continues to support the Scottish Government's Road Safety Framework to reduce road deaths and injuries. Our officers are out every day educating road users and carrying out enforcement.

Take Five

We are supporting the national Take Five campaign which aims to help everyone protect themselves from financial fraud. This includes email deception and phone-based scams as well as online fraud – particularly where criminals impersonate trusted organisations.

As part of this, our Cybercrime Harm Prevention team supported the Stop Inn in Glasgow - a physical space for people to stop and use mind-reading technology to pour a drink. To do so successfully, they must take a moment, clear their mind and focus on what's in front of them. This helps reinforce the "Stop, Challenge, Protect" message for those who visit.

The Stop Inn also provided an opportunity for officers to speak directly to members of the public about the importance of stopping and thinking when they are faced with a potential scam.

Student Safety

Since early September, universities and colleges across the country have re-opened with tens of thousands of students either commencing or returning to their studies.

We are committed to ensuring that students do not become easy targets for crime and officers and staff from our Policing Together Division and Public Protection Units have joined divisional colleagues at various student engagement events taking place at campuses all over Scotland.

Officers have met face-to-face with students to offer crime prevention advice and information in relation to offences such as acquisitive crime, violence, and domestic abuse, as well as encouraging them to follow our social media channels for more helpful advice on staying safe throughout the duration of their studies.

We're supporting this with a digital toolkit of safety information which we will be sharing on social media channels and with key partners to enhance our engagement with students for crime prevention.

Change to prioritise frontline policing

Criminal justice reform - summary case management

I have been clear that to improve the experiences of victims and witnesses, maximise frontline policing and tackle more crime, the criminal justice system must work more efficiently.

Last week, along with the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the Scottish Courts and Tribunal Service, domestic abuse advocacy service ASSIST and the

Scottish Government, we highlighted the success of a pilot summary case management process.

The summary case management pilot was launched in September 2022 at Dundee, Hamilton and Paisley Sheriff Courts, before being expanded to Glasgow and Perth earlier this year.

Evaluation shows more than 500 summary trials did not require to be fixed in the pilot courts over the 19-month period. The decision has been taken to roll it out to all courts in Scotland.

I have consistently underlined the impact that criminal justice inefficiencies has on Police Scotland's operational capacity, our overtime bill and the wellbeing of officers. More than 500 officers are called daily to court, but only a small proportion of them have to give evidence. The overtime cost of officers being cited for court is £3.4m and £2.1m of that is for citations of officers while on annual leave. This is not a sustainable position financially, or operationally. We must reduce cancelled rest days and leave and increase the time officers can spend in communities.

I greatly welcome the progress demonstrated during the summary case management process which has been built on strong collaboration and commitment from all partners. I remain clear though that further improvements and efficiencies must be prioritised and accelerated right across the criminal justice system.

Policing's role in mental health - mental health index

As previously reported, Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs is leading Police Scotland's work with partners including the Authority and the Scottish Government and we've established a mental health taskforce to drive work in this priority area at pace.

Earlier this month, working with health colleagues and the Scottish Government, our mental health taskforce made a mental health index designed to help officers connect with the right support in health board areas quickly and efficiently available of officers' mobile devices.

Officers can refer to the Index to speak to a clinician in their area at any time, to identify the correct course of action when dealing with a person who is experiencing high-level distress. The clinician will advise on the correct course of action and arrange access to the most appropriate services. This can take away the need to sit for long periods of time in emergency departments.

We have examples where the mental health index has been used during a 'concern for person' call which was concluded within an hour with a mental health assessment completed over the phone and the appropriate support arranged. In comparison, a similar incident resulted in attendance at the Emergency Department, where without the Index being utilised, it was concluded in six hours of officer resource time. The person was taken to the emergency department to be assessed before it was determined they were able to be left in their own care.

The launch of the Mental Health Index will act as a prompt, providing national clarity and consistency in approach when considering options towards community triage processes.

Supporting officers and staff

Parliamentary evidence session

On Wednesday, 11 September, along with Deputy Chief Constable Alan Speirs and Director of People and Development Katy Miller, I provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee on the subject of policing and mental health.

This was an important session to reflect on the rewarding but challenging public service officers and staff provide every day.

In addition to outlining work to develop a sustainable policing model which will better support frontline colleagues which includes progress in relation to criminal justice efficiencies and policing's role in responding to mental health incidents, I reaffirmed my commitment to providing better support to officers and staff in their times of need,

for example through our new Employee Assistance Programme and Occupational Health contracts.

Workforce survey

Our workforce survey closed on 26 August with more than 11,000 colleagues taking part, that's just over half of the entire workforce. We are in the process of analysing that data and will be able to provide the results at the end of autumn within the organisation, and then be able to act on them.

My plan is to carry out the survey on an annual basis as a means of evaluating the health and wellbeing of officers and staff. We will also conduct pulse surveys on a particular issue so we are continually monitoring not just the data, but how our people actually feel.

Recruitment

I have been clear I want to bring the frontline of policing to its strongest position possible. As part of plans to recruit more than 1,300 officers during 2024-25, we welcomed 129 probationers to Police Scotland earlier this month.

Our police officer recruitment marketing campaign, which supports outcomes in Police Scotland's Strategic Workforce Plan 2024-27, launched on 2 September, 2024. The campaign aims to encourage potential candidates to view Police Scotland as an employer of choice and apply to become a police officer.

The campaign, which will feature across social media channels, digital advertising, job boards, print and broadcast media, tells the stories of real officers, how they have been able to apply their life skills and experience to the role of police officer and why policing is a job like no other.

Scottish Police Memorial Trust Annual Service of Remembrance

On Wednesday, 4 September, I was joined by Cabinet Secretary for Justice Angela Constance MSP, Scottish Police Memorial Trustee Christine Fulton MBE and friends and families of policing in Scotland for the 20th Scottish Police Memorial Trust Annual Service of Remembrance at our Headquarters in Tulliallan.

This was the first time I have presided over this event since becoming Chief Constable and I was extremely honoured to oversee the addition of seven new names to the roll of honour and the memorial stones.

The Service of Remembrance is an important and poignant day within policing calendar since it was established in 2004. It allows us to remember and honour those no longer with us. The names that appear on our memorial were beloved family members, wonderful friends, and trusted colleagues.

This ceremony also allows us to acknowledge the sacrifices that families of police officers make and to thank them for their support. Each year, we invite the loved ones of those who died in service to come together and draw strength from our policing family.

The next UK National Police Memorial Day will take place in Glasgow on Sunday, 29 September, 2024.