



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>20 February 2025</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Merchants House, Glasgow</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>SPA Chief Executive's Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Lynn Brown, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>Appendix A – Summary Report for Scottish Railway Policing Committee Meeting – 26 November 2024</b>

**PURPOSE**

To update Members on activities carried out by the Authority's Chief Executive since the last Authority meeting held on 28 November 2024.

Members are recommended to consider this report and to raise any matters for clarification or further detail with the Chief Executive.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on key Authority business not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## **2. Assistant Chief Constable Recruitment**

- 2.1 Due to recent retirements, the Authority launched a recruitment process in January 2025, advertising for two Assistant Chief Constables (ACC) to join Police Scotland's leadership team. The roles were promoted across the UK between 17 January and 7 February 2025.
- 2.2 The Selection Panel will be Chaired by Fiona McQueen CBE, Interim Chair, supported by Chief Constable Jo Farrell, Alasdair Hay, Authority Member and David Robertson, Chief Executive of Scottish Borders Council as the Independent Member. Interviews will take place in March 2025, and we expect to announce the successful candidates shortly thereafter.

## **3. Board Member Recruitment**

- 3.1 The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, allows for the appointment of up to 15 Board members, including the Chair at any one time to the Authority. Three Board Members, Grant Macrae, Catriona Stewart and Caroline Stuart, will complete their appointment terms on 31 March 2025. With vacancies in mind, I wrote to the Scottish Government at the start of the year, asking that a recruitment process was initiated as soon as practicable. The Scottish Government has responded confirming that preparations are underway to launch a public appointments process in the coming months.

## **4. Budget 2025-2026**

- 4.1 At the request of the Chief Constable and the Chair of the SPA I and the Chief Financial Officer, James Gray were asked to write to the Scottish Government for clarity on how the additional employer national insurance contributions would be funded.
- 4.2 We asked that at any consideration on the funding of this additional cost is viewed in the following context. Policing is an essential public service that underpins the safety, security, and well-being of our communities. Since the establishment of Police Scotland in 2013, the service has undergone extensive reform and modernisation, achieving a level of efficiency and transformation yet

to be achieved by many other public sector bodies in Scotland. Full funding for these additional costs is therefore critical to ensuring that the transformative progress already achieved by Police Scotland is not undermined, and that we can deliver the next phase of Scottish policing reform that will see us re-shape Police Scotland to move to our revised model of policing and realise our 2030 Vision. We asked that it be noted that the organisation has already committed to making efficiencies to balance the 2025-26 budget, and simply cannot absorb any additional costs without impacting on pay, workforce and officer numbers.

- 4.3 The unique nature of policing in Scotland, a service that cannot reduce demand or hold reserves to support multi-year financial planning, means that if these increased costs are not fully funded, corresponding savings could only be achieved via workforce reductions. As a result, the service would be unable to fund the 16,600-officer establishment highlighted in the budget announcement on 4 December 2024, and this would inevitably lead to a reduction to services which could undermine public confidence and diminish the police's ability to deliver effective services at a time when there is heightening demand.
- 4.4 At this time, the Authority has not requested additional funds from Scottish Government, for emergent costs associated with meeting a growth in demand for drug driving associated testing seen over recent months. These additional tests have been managed by an increase in the use of outsourcing. However, as reported to the Forensic Services Committee recently, if this rise in demand for testing is sustained or further increases, there may be a financial pressure arising in 2025-2026. The Authority will keep this situation under close monitoring.

## **5. Relocation of the Authority's Principal Office from Pacific Quay to Clyde Gateway, Dalmarnock**

- 5.1 From 31 March 2025, the Authority's principal office will move from Pacific Quay in Glasgow to Clyde Gateway, French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH, where the Authority will be co-located with Police Scotland.
- 5.2 The Authority has now received formal Ministerial approval for this relocation. In granting approval, Ministers have recognised that while this co-location with Police Scotland supports the Police Scotland Estate Strategy, it also supports the Scottish Government's Single Scottish Estate (SSE) programme through

delivering a more efficient approach to public sector property management.

- 5.3 With the advent of hybrid working, the office at Pacific Quay is too large for current requirements. The end of our current lease arrangements has provided an opportunity to move to more appropriate accommodation and generate revenue savings of around £300,000 a year.
- 5.4 Trades Unions have been formally engaged on the move at JNCC. They supported the Authority's proposals for staff engagement and raised no concerns on the relocation. Authority staff have been engaged through group and individual consultations, with no counter proposals received. Staff have been largely accepting of the rationale for relocation, and many have indicated they are very positive about the move.
- 5.5 The Authority will have its own discrete space on the first floor of the Clyde Gateway with a secure entry system, while benefiting from co-location with the 60% of staff in the building who deliver corporate services.

## **6. Police Scotland review of Sex and Gender**

- 6.1 Police Scotland is undertaking a review of its policy and practice in relation to the recording of sex and gender in policing. The Authority's [Policing Performance Committee received an update on this work on 10 December 2024](#). The Committee were given assurance on the wide scope of the review, timescales of delivery, extent of stakeholder engagement and mechanisms for ensuring legal and policy compliance.
- 6.2 The Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee has asked to be kept informed of this work. I [wrote to the Committee on 12 December 2024](#) providing an update on the Authority's considerations. I have also since responded to correspondence from Murray, Blackburn and Mackenzie, who queried the scope of the review. In my response I confirm that the review will include examining a number of operational practices and policies including, but not limited to, the Stop and Search and Custody Standard Operating procedures.

## **7. Best Value Review for Policing**

- 7.1 His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) and Audit Scotland will undertake a joint Best Value audit and

inspection of policing in Scotland during 2025. In November 2024, I wrote to HMICS and the Auditor General for Scotland seeking clarity on the start date and timeline including the scope and terms of reference. I received a response confirming that work is expected to commence in April/May 2025, with detailed work to be undertaken prior to this to determine the scope, approach and timeline.

- 7.2 I continue to discuss the arrangements for securing and demonstrating Best Value with Police Scotland. This included the Authority's staff presenting our experiences and lessons learned from the Authority's Best Value journey, self-assessment process and recent HMICS inspection of the Authority.
- 7.3 I will continue to consider the arrangements in place across policing, as well as the findings from the self-assessment work undertaken in preparation for the audit and inspection. I will also continue to liaise with HMICS and the Auditor General for Scotland on the development of the terms of reference.

## **8. Scottish Railway Policing Committee**

- 8.1 A meeting of the Scottish Railway Policing Committee took place on Tuesday 26 November 2024. Tom Halpin was in attendance and represented the Authority at this committee.
- 8.2 A report summarising the key issues covered at this meeting is included at Appendix A. Further detail can be found on the [British Transport Police Authority website](#). The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Wednesday 5 March 2025.

## **9. Scottish LGBTI Police Association**

- 9.1 On 9 December 2024, the former Chair and I met with the Scottish LGBTI Police Association as part of our regular engagement with the Association and discussed a range of issues. I am grateful to the Association's representatives for their continued and constructive engagement.

## **10. Retirement**

- 10.1 At the Authority Meeting in August 2024, I intimated that I would be retiring in 2025. I have since written to the Interim Chair confirming my intended retirement date of Tuesday 30 September 2025. This date will allow me to conclude several key strategic issues before a new Chief Executive takes post. These include the

induction of a new Chair and onboarding of new Board Members; the completion of the Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/2025; the completion of the self-evaluation and oversight of the best value review and the development of the budget requirements for 2026/2027. It is intended to launch recruitment in early April 2025 with a closing date of early May 2025 with interview and appointment in early June 2025.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

## Summary report from the Scottish Railway Policing Committee

Tuesday 26 November 2024

SPA Members – Tom Halpin and Mary Pitcaithly

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### Policing Plan Performance 2024-25 Quarter 2

Members welcomed a reduction in recorded crime during the quarter, down 5.8% from quarter 1, also noting a decrease in violence (-17%) and in injury (-34%). The solve rate of 46% in D Division (Scotland) remains the strongest across all British Transport Police (BTP) divisions and was commended by members.

Members noted that violence remains an area of focus and challenge across the country, including violence against women and girls. Partnership working with Police Scotland, educational establishments, and other organisations such as football clubs continues in the prevention space.

Members explored performance in relation to shoplifting, with the volume of crimes having reduced by 52% in the quarter despite this remaining a significant issue for the public and retail outlets, and one of particular public and media interest. Members heard about work to design out shoplifting from railway stations and surrounding areas, including joint working with retailers, particularly in the run up to the festive period.

### Joint working Police Scotland / British Transport Police

Members recognised ongoing joint working between BTP and Police Scotland, particularly in relation to major events such as the 152<sup>nd</sup> Open Golf at Troon, Safer Shores, Pavilion Music Festival, and the Scottish Air Show. Members also heard about BTP's involvement in Police Scotland's Summer Youth Disorder Action Plan in Lanarkshire, aimed at tackling youth disorder during the summer holidays. Members commended the 95% reduction achieved in relation to youth related violence, antisocial behaviour, and disorder incidents.



An update was provided in relation to BTP being given access to the Police Scotland Interim Vulnerable Persons Database, with testing underway and good progress being made. Members welcomed this positive step forward.

### **Industry Voice / Rail Staff & Passenger Surveys**

Members welcomed the increased levels of participation in Scotland in the most recent Rail Staff and Passenger Surveys. It was also recognised that safety and confidence measures were generally higher in Scotland compared to the rest of the UK.

Rail staff reported that their number one priority was work-related violence and aggression. The top three crimes impacting staff at work were antisocial behaviour, fare evasion, and alcohol-related disorder. 41% stated that they felt confident in BTP's policing in their place of work, which is significantly improved from 29% last year. Low visibility of officers was the top concern, which Members noted was a similar challenge for Police Scotland in relation to local policing. It was agreed that sharing of good practice could be explored in this area.

Overall passenger safety perception was 73%, which has remained fairly consistent over the last year. 64% of passengers provided a positive performance score for BTP. Antisocial behaviour was selected as the number one concern of passengers.

### **Thematic: BTP Disruption Review**

Members received a presentation regarding BTP's Disruption Review. While this was a national review and not Scotland specific, Members heard that disruption continues to be a challenge for D Division, particularly around efforts to secure satisfactory hand back times. It was noted that the most common reason for disruption was trespass, but others include damage, theft, and fatalities.

The presentation highlighted the partnership response approach taken to disruption across BTP, local Home Office forces, Police Scotland, and Network Rail. It was noted that the review had found that BTP could be better joined up with industry to ensure passenger welfare during disruption events, and that this learning would be taken forward. The response to the Stonehaven derailment was identified as having shown evidence of best practice.



BTP confirmed they remain committed to using drones in Scotland and are working within the parameters set out in the Police Scotland code of practice.

### **Policing Plan Review and Annual Report**

The Committee received an update on the Policing Plan for 2025-27, noting that this included cross-referencing with the Scottish Government's policing priorities, the Joint Strategy for Policing, and Police Scotland's 2030 Vision, to ensure all are well-aligned. Members recognised the positive approach and methodology used, including the focus on performance.

Members also considered an Annual Report regarding Best Value, noting that BTPA had consulted with the Scottish Police Authority when developing their approach to Best Value to ensure alignment. Members heard that HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) would be carrying out a BV review of Police Scotland and the SPA next year, and agreed that it may be beneficial to seek external assurance in relation to BTP/BTPA's self-assessment at some point in the future.

### **Audit and Inspection Update**

BTP is currently tracking 38 open recommendations from force-wide Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) audits and 67 from HMICFRS inspections. It was noted that in the previous quarter there had been minimal standalone audit and inspection to report in D Division (Scotland) specifically.

Members recognised the positive results in D Division, and in particular Edinburgh Waverley's property store where a 100% audit of over 1000 items was conducted and the team highlighted Store Management and Governance as excellent.