



Agenda Item 5

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	22 August 2024
Location	Merchants House, Glasgow
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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**POLICE
SCOTLAND**

Keeping people safe

POILEAS ALBA

Chief Constable's Report

August 2024

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Chief Constable's Report August 2024

Overview

I want to thank our communities for their support and good sense during a challenging time which has seen appalling violence and disorder in parts of the United Kingdom.

Our thoughts are with the individuals and communities who have been affected in recent weeks and with our brave colleagues from across UK policing who have put themselves in harm's way to protect the public.

We continue to be closely in touch with other police services and have provided mutual aid support, a valuable principle in UK policing which is balanced against the needs of policing in Scotland.

During recent weeks, I met with the First Minister John Swinney MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice Angela Constance MSP, Community Safety Minister Siobhian Brown MSP and Secretary of State for Scotland Ian Murray MP to brief them on our response. Scottish Police Authority Chair Martyn Evans was also fully briefed by me and other Chief Officers on a regular basis.

As Chief Constable, my priority continues to be the safety and security of the people of Scotland, including our officers and staff.

Policing in Scotland has strong relationships with the public and we deeply value our role in contributing to the important social cohesion which has been evident here.

I encourage everyone to be responsible in their use of social media - please do not share speculation or inaccurate information. Think twice about what you read, share and believe from online sources.

We've increased our patrols and people may notice more officers in our towns and cities and we're engaging directly with communities to offer reassurance and support. As part of this, I was pleased to meet with community groups, including the

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Scottish Refugee Council, Interfaith Scotland, and various ethnic and faith groups and individuals in Glasgow to listen to their perspectives.

We are closely monitoring the situation to ensure any potential for violence or disorder in Scotland is identified quickly and responded to immediately.

Potential protests, and counter protests will be policed appropriately and our role is to ensure public safety while balancing the rights of protesters who wish to peacefully demonstrate.

But we have sent a clear and consistent message that violence and disorder are not legitimate protest. Anyone who engages in disorder will be dealt with swiftly and robustly.

The policing demand associated with the violence and disorder comes during a busy summer of events including festivals, sporting spectacles, music concerts and a general election.

I am grateful to the many officers and staff who have been involved in planning or providing the support required to allow our communities to go about their business and leisure or exercise their democratic and human rights.

A strong police service able to support law and order is therefore a pre-requisite for the social cohesion and economic development necessary for Scotland to thrive and flourish.

At the same time, Police Scotland continues to tackle threat, harm and risk and my report reflects significant court outcomes achieved following police investigations into murder and violent and sexual crimes, as well as convictions for drug dealing.

I've also highlighted a number of drug recoveries by officers since the last Scottish Police Authority Board - vital work to prevent illegal substances from entering our communities.

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Throughout the summer, we've continued our focus on road safety through education and enforcement and, working with partners, reducing the tragedy and harm of road deaths and injuries continues to be an absolute priority for policing.

Closer, more effective, work with partners is vital for the ongoing success of policing and the safety and wellbeing of our communities.

My report outlines important examples of such work which have been illustrated in recent weeks, including the 10 year anniversary event at the Scottish Crime Campus to tackle organised crime; the national roll-out of the Digital Evidence Sharing Capability to better serve victims and witnesses, improve criminal justice efficiency and reduce demand on officers; and fantastic work between Lanarkshire (Q) Division and health colleagues at NHS Lanarkshire to improve outcomes for people in mental health crisis while at the same time reducing officer attendance at emergency departments.

Such developments are a crucial part of the necessary changes to ensure Police Scotland can provide effective policing within the funding available. Working closely with the support and oversight of the Authority, we continue to make progress on a revised model of policing for Scotland so our Service is able to meet current and future challenges.

Of course, our workforce profile will be an important aspect of those discussions and my position on officer numbers remains clear that I want to bring the frontline of policing to its strongest possible position.

We are recruiting officers now and we welcomed over 250 probationary constables last month as part of plans to recruit over 1300 officers during 2024-25, the highest number in a single year for Police Scotland. Last Friday, I congratulated 115 probationary constables as they prepared to deploy to serve communities across Scotland following the completion of their initial training.

At the same time, it is important to be clear that the context of frontline strength goes beyond an overall officer headcount and it is important we continue to maximise experienced officers performing frontline, operational policing for our communities.

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My report highlights my thanks the Independent Review Group Chaired by Robin Iffla and the Authority for its oversight led by Tom Halpin for the closure report produced.

The IRG has provided important independent assurance on Police Scotland's ongoing commitment to become an anti-racist, anti-discriminatory Service which reflects, represents and serves all our communities.

I continue to greatly enjoy meeting officers, staff and partners around Scotland to hear directly from them and in recent weeks.

Last month, I met with officers on Shetland and Orkney, during which I was briefed on our work with Dogs Against Drugs on our joint work to deter and detect illegal drugs. I also met with MSP Beatrice Wishart, the Chief Executive of Orkney Islands Council Oliver Reid, NHS Orkney Chief Executive Laura Skaife-Knight as well as local councillors.

Last week, I met with officers at our Marine and Dive Unit and Air Support Unit in Glasgow.

During a visit to Glenrothes, I also had the opportunity to congratulate and thank six-year-old Anthony Green as he completed visits to over 50 police stations to raise almost £2000 for the Police Benevolent Fund.

Tackling threat, harm and risk

Significant court outcomes following police investigations

On Friday, 19 July, Dylan Brister, 27, and Cameron Allan, 20, were found guilty of the rape and murder of Calum Simpson, a 24-year-old man, whose body was discovered within a property on Herriot Crescent in Methil on 3 November, 2021. Both offenders will be sentenced later and my thoughts remain with Calum's family and loved ones.

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On Tuesday, 9 July, Ian Heddle, 61, was sentenced to four years in prison for the sexual assault of a child and possession of indecent images of children. He has also been placed on the sex offenders register for an indefinite period of time. Heddle, who lived in Thailand, was arrested and charged in Scotland following work with the National Crime Agency who liaised with the Royal Thai Police.

On Monday, 15 July, James Kelly, 43, was jailed for 10 years after being convicted of a series of violent and sexual crimes against women in the Edinburgh area.

On Friday, 19 July Alastair Nicolson, 55 was sentenced to 14 years in prison for violent and sexual offences against three woman and a child between January 1991 and April 2001 in the Highland and Argyll and Bute areas.

On Monday, 5 August, Tom Farquhar, 28, was convicted of drugs offences after around £1.5 million worth of cocaine was seized in Tayside. Farquhar was stopped on the A90 northbound near Dundee on Monday, 1 September, 2023, as part of an investigation led by Police Scotland's Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism Unit.

On Tuesday, 6 August, two men were sentenced having been convicted of drugs offences in Tayside following the recovery of drugs worth an estimated £945,000 during intelligence led raids in Monifieth and Dundee in September last year. Brandon Hayter, 24, was sentenced to 46 months in prison and David Henehan, 44, was given a 300 hours Community Payback Order.

Drugs recoveries

In July we updated that officers protected our communities by removing more than £22 million worth of illegal substances including heroin, cocaine and cannabis from Scotland's streets so far this year as part of our commitment to tackling the harm caused by the supply of illegal substances.

Significant seizures across the country from intelligence led operations or car stops include:

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- A 44-year-old man was arrested and charged as part of a County Lines operation in Aberdeenshire and Merseyside in June. The arrest followed searches at five properties across Aberdeen, Liverpool and Tarves, Aberdeenshire, on Tuesday, 25 June, 2024. Heroin with an estimated street value of around £9,000 and approximately £15,000 cash was recovered over the course of the joint investigation. This investigation underlines our commitment to the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce and the country's Serious Organised Crime Strategy.
- On Thursday, 27 June, drugs with a potential street value of £240,000 were recovered from a property in the Kirkhill Road area of Aberdeen. Officers from the Community Investigation Unit executed a warrant and recovered a quantity of cannabis plants. A 24-year-old man was arrested and charged in connection with drug offences.
- Police Dog Zoe assisted an operation on Orkney on Saturday, 13 July, where a quantity of drugs with an estimated street value of £3,000, and a four-figure sum of cash were recovered. A 19-year-old man was arrested and charged in connection with drugs offences.
- A man and a woman were arrested and charged after drugs, with an estimated street value of £250,000, were seized in Dundee on Wednesday, 17 July, 2024, and recovered quantities of heroin and cocaine.
- Cannabis plants with an estimated street value of up to £373,000 were discovered following a search in Thankerton, South Lanarkshire on Tuesday, 16 July, 2024.
- Cocaine worth an estimated £210,000 was recovered after the search of a car in Glasgow on Friday, 2 August and recovered the drugs. A 27-year-old man has been arrested and charged.

Response Policing Week of Action 2024 round-up

The National Police Chiefs' Council Response Policing Week of Action took place between 24 and 30 June as UK police forces celebrated and highlighted the work of response officers.

Just some of the examples highlighted included the arrest of a man who tried to rob an elderly woman in Falkirk; officers in South Lanarkshire who traced a man reported to have made inappropriate remarks to a schoolgirl; the arrest of drug dealer wanted on warrant; and life-saving intervention during mental health crisis.

During the week senior officers met response officers to express our deep gratitude for their work, which we know is ongoing throughout the year.

Prevention, problem solving and proactivity

I have been clear that a significant operational focus must be on prevention, problem solving and proactivity so that we successfully tackle new and emerging threats and get on top of demand.

Scottish Crime Campus - 10 year anniversary

On Wednesday, 14 August, along with Assistant Chief Constable Andy Freeburn, I joined Scottish Police Authority Chair Martyn Evans, the Cabinet Secretary for Justice Angela Constance, partner agencies and a range of political representatives during an event to mark 10 years since the Scottish Crime Campus, Gartcosh, was opened.

This significant milestone presented an opportunity to reflect on some high-profile successes joint working at the campus has achieved to tackle serious organised crime including murder; take down an encrypted criminal communication network and seize hundreds of millions of pounds worth of illegal drugs.

A key priority for our single national police service was to enhance and expand how we worked with other agencies to keep the communities of Scotland safe – which requires collaboration at international, UK and regional levels as well as a range of skills and powers which policing alone cannot deliver.

The Scottish Crime Campus is a world class hub for the joined-up working needed to smash serious organised crime and protect the public and the important outcomes outlined are evidence of its ongoing success.

Road safety

Our thoughts are with everyone affected by a high number of fatal and serious road traffic collisions across the country in recent weeks. Police Scotland is part of a crucial partnership approach to road safety and we will continue to focus on this vital priority.

Officers have been responding to concerns from road users on the A9 in Tayside and Highland areas. From Monday, 15 July, to Thursday, 25 July, officers patrolled in marked and unmarked vehicles between Perth and Inverness and worked alongside the Safety Camera Unit. 265 vehicles were stopped and 291 offences were detected.

Alongside road safety partners, we are holding Rider Refinement courses to help motorcyclists as part of a holistic approach, which also includes educating other drivers to reduce the number of collisions.

Rider Refinement East and West is a one-day course, with eight sessions between August 2024 and October 2024 in Glenrothes and Glasgow. These new courses build on a programme in the North of Scotland which is hosting 20 sessions Perth, Inverurie and Fortrose. Includes one for Shetland and one for Elgin.

Led by police motorcyclists and accompanied by an observer from the Institute of Advance Motorists, the course will look at key risk factors and provide riders with the knowledge and skills to be safer.

Policing alone can't improve road safety, and we will continue to work very closely with a range of partners to improve road safety for all users. We all have a responsibility to use our roads safely and to help save lives.

OCSAE campaign

Our latest Get Help or Get Caught campaign tackling online child sexual abuse and exploitation ended on 11 August after running for six weeks. As with previous campaigns our focus is on prevention, targeting perpetrators and signposting them to support to prevent offending.

We partnered with the Lucy Faithfull Foundation Scotland's Stop It Now service, in recognition of the vital work they do to divert potential offenders, and to support Police Scotland in our commitment to protect children and keep our communities safe.

The campaign advert featured on social media channels, digital advertising, print and broadcast media and has been supported by a number of partners. Early evaluation indicates a more than 1,500 per cent increase in visits to the Stop It Now! Scotland website since the start of the campaign. Over 700 users visited the 'Get Help and Self Support' section, an increase of over 80 per cent during the campaign period.

Police Scotland's role is to target offenders and potential offenders. Specialist and frontline officers work together at national and local levels to identify and prevent offending, to stop criminality and to prevent a child becoming a victim of abuse.

Police Cyber Alarms

Police Scotland is encouraging businesses to sign up to a free digital tool which monitors the threats from cybercriminals. The Police Cyber Alarm can help any public and private sector business with a computer network, including SMEs, organisations, charities, education establishments and local government.

Members of the scheme benefit from regular reports showing suspicious and potentially malicious attack activity on their firewall and internet gateway. The report also details how the business is being attacked and from where, in order that they can improve their cyber resilience.

The Police Cyber Alarm helps Police Scotland to identify current threats and take enforcement action against cybercriminals.

The scheme is funded by the Home Office and since its launch has identified over a billion potential suspicious events resulting in reports and advice being given to members, enabling them to take action to prevent a successful attack.

Policing Together and working with communities

Independent Review Group - closure report

Police Scotland's Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Human Rights Strategic Oversight Board (EDIHR SOB) – now Policing Together Strategic Oversight Board - was established in March 2021 to accelerate and embed progress towards mainstreaming equality, diversity and inclusion.

An Independent Review Group, chaired by Robin Iffla, was commissioned in response to recommendation 18 of Lady Elish Angiolini's Independent Review of Complaints Handling, Investigation and Misconduct Issues in relation to policing and was permitted access to all materials, documents, and data presented to Police Scotland's Policing Together Strategic Oversight Board. Additionally, the IRG had autonomy to request further information and consultation with officers and staff as necessary to fully understand, scrutinise and provide feedback on Police Scotland's EDI activity.

Our Policing Together strategy was published in September 2022. Policing Together co-ordinates and drives service wide action across four strategic pillars - leadership; training; professionalism and prevention; and communications. In May, I outlined progress across the pillars, including the Your Leadership Matters leadership course; a deep dive on each of the 10 standards of professional behaviour demanded of officers by law; improved EDI education and plans for further courses and support from co-ordinated communications.

In June, Assistant Chief Constable Catriona Paton took leadership of the Policing Together Division, which now includes officers and staff from the former Preventions, Partnerships and Community Wellbeing Division.

Policing with partners and communities to develop the understanding, relationships, early interventions and diversions that can prevent crime and harm and contribute to community wellbeing are key to improved service delivery. This can support policing to add additional external focus to the ambitions of the Policing Together programme.

I'm hugely grateful for the rigour of the IRG's work and for the constructive approach they have taken in providing practical steps that can continue this important work to which I, and all of Police Scotland, remain committed.

Change to prioritise frontline policing

Mental Health Taskforce - 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.

This month the taskforce has worked with the Scottish Government to provide frontline officers with a mental health index. The index, which is being made available on officers' mobile devices, provides up to date contact arrangements for relevant clinicians across the country which can identify the correct course of action when dealing with a person who is experiencing high-level distress.

The benefits of strengthened local arrangements for members of the public, for the health service and for policing have been powerfully illustrated in Lanarkshire (Q) Division where officers have worked closely with health colleagues at NHS Lanarkshire. Arrangements to enable 24/7 triage with a Psychiatric Liaison Nurse (PLN) saw potential officer attendance at emergency departments fall significantly.

We're sharing the insight of that experience with officers and staff as we look to embed the index in the coming weeks.

Digital Evidence Sharing Capability

Earlier this month we announced, alongside our criminal justice partners, the national roll out of the £33 million Digital Evidence Sharing Capability, following a pilot in Dundee.

It will support victims and witnesses to achieve faster justice outcomes and marks a significant step forward in modernising the collection, management and secure storage of digital evidence across Scotland.

This marks a significant step forward in modernising the collection, management and secure storage of digital evidence across Scotland. It will also support victims and witnesses to achieve faster justice outcomes.

Until now, police officers have relied on transferring digital evidence such as mobile phone images or CCTV onto USB sticks or discs, before delivering them to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.

Through DESC, officers can obtain and share digital evidence, such as photographs, CCTV or video footage securely and efficiently, saving them time and reducing delays. This will be expanded to include documents and recordings of police interviews.

The system means members of the public and businesses can submit digital evidence – such as material recorded on mobile phones – more easily by email when sent a link by a police officer.

DESC also saves on transport costs and cuts CO2 emissions by reducing the need for physical evidence to be collected in person and stored.

DESC's expansion in Tayside and now Forth Valley marks the start of a phased national roll-out that is expected to be completed by autumn 2025.

I welcome this development as part of the wider reform of the criminal justice system which I've consistently underlined must be prioritised and accelerated to achieve better outcomes for victims and improve efficiencies for witnesses, including police witnesses.

Vision for policing

Work continues to develop a long-term vision for policing in Scotland that can inform our strategic decision making and that everyone in Police Scotland can get behind, knowing that whatever role they perform, they play a part in keeping people safe.

As I have previously reported, we are listening to colleagues in Police Scotland, key partners and other important stakeholders as we develop our vision. I am grateful to colleagues at the Authority, who have taken part in engagement and provided helpful input and challenge.

To support this important work, we are also developing a new operating model and three-year plan that will outline how we will work towards our vision and evolve our Service so that it is better placed to meet current and future challenges that we will progress through normal governance channels and aim to bring to the September SPA Board.