

FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE
3 February 2020

**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services
Committee held on Monday 3 February 2020 in Pacific Quay,
Glasgow.**

Board Members Present: Tom Halpin (Chair)
Bob Hayes
Jane Ryder

In attendance: Scottish Police Authority (SPA)
Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services
Gary Holcroft, Head of Physical Sciences
Vicki Morton, Head of Crime Scene Recovery
Fiona Douglas, Temporary Head of Forensic Services 2026
Programme
Derek Scrimger, Temporary Head of Biology
Amy McDonald, Forensic Services
Colette Craig, SPA Committee Co-ordinator

Police Scotland (PS)
Gary Cunningham, Detective Chief Superintendent
Liz Nimmo, Programme Manager (seconded to Forensic
Services)

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed attendees to the public session of the meeting and advised that SPA Board Member Gordon Dewar had resigned from the SPA Board due to other commitments. The Chair noted his appreciation to GDewar for his input in terms of performance and significant commercial awareness which had assisted in how forensics approached certain areas.

The Chair noted apologies the following apologies:

- Kenny Donnelly, COPFS
- ACC Duncan Sloan, Police Scotland

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTE FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2019

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

AGREE the minute from the Committee held on 31 October 2019.

4. ROLLING ACTION LOG AND MATTERS ARISING

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

APPROVE the action log from the Committee held on 31 October 2019.

There were no matters arising.

5. DECISION ON TAKING BUSINESS IN PRIVATE

The Committee **RESOLVED** to:

AGREE, in accordance with paragraphs 21 and 22 of the SPA Standing Orders, the Committee **AGREED** to consider items 14 - 21 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

6. FORENSIC SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT – Q3

Tom Nelson (TNelson) presented the report providing members with an update on activity conducted across SPA Forensics during Quarter 3 2019/20, highlighting:

- Average caseload ageing has decreased over the last year, however there has been an increase in demand which is forecast to continue.
- Laboratory output has increased over the same period.
- Engagement has taken place with Police Scotland in relation to drug intelligence and analysis. There has also been a focus on firearms cases which is bringing forward benefits. In relation to staff engagement, over 100 workshops have taken place where over 60% of staff have been engaged with.
- The workload reduction programme continues to run well, although the increase on demand is having an impact on the rate of reduction. Benefits are being shown through advanced analytics.
- All evidence has been provided back to UKAS following their assessment over the last three months. Results of that activity is expected in April 2020 regarding the accreditation, however, early feedback has been very positive.

Members sought clarity on a number of areas.

- Is there a record of how much time is taken up by the accreditation process to understand the lessons to be learned. Members were advised that there are dedicated quality lead staff and their time and the cost of the accreditation visits by UKAS staff can be interrogated. The additional staff time will also be captured within the new time recording system that will be put in place shortly.

The Chair advised that within Q1 2020 financial year there is an expectation that there will be reporting on the following:

- Enhancements for Biology
- Drug Driving Accreditation
- Work towards accreditation for Scene Examination
20200302 – FS- 001

Members noted concerns around the increase of demand across the piece and the impact that could have on staff, noting the importance of work needing to be taken forward around demand management. **20200302 – FS- 002**

Tom Nelson (TNelson) advised that the new operating business model for 2026 along with the Service Level Agreement (SLA) work would allow forensics to understand the demand and current organisational capacity to deliver. This will also assist a new workforce plan to identify future requirements.

Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) added that the legal advice was that this would be called a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and not an SLA. FDouglas advised that the content of the document would highlight the gap between demand and capacity which will inform the operating model work to assess where gaps could be closed in order to improve service delivery levels. Amy McDonald added that the new forecasting software to assist with forecasting will also assist. In addition there was a need to work with Police Scotland to understand why the demand and output is high this year and to understand what indicators they are using within their planning tools.

The Chair referred to continued engagement with SIPR and Leverhulme Research Centre and sought clarity on what the detail was around the projects being undertaken, how they are prioritised and how members could be assured where research was being supported to ensure the committee could provide broader future input and oversight of Forensic Service resource and direction.
20200302 – FS- 003

The Chair referred to Laboratory Casework and sought clarity on what the committee should expect in terms of comparators. FDouglas advised that future reports would map the KPI's that are adopted from the MoU which members should find useful as realistic targets. This will show a gap on what could currently be done against where forensics services want to reach in terms of timeliness and identifying benefits. The Chair further requested the interpretation of the demand from the partner's perspective.
20200302 – FS- 004

The Chair sought clarity on the low closure rate of closed complaints and feedback compared to the number being raised. AMcDonald advised that both diagrams were not comparable and this would be updated for the future report. **20200302 – FS- 005**

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.

7. HMICS Update

VMorton presented the report which informed on progress around the implementation of the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the SPA Forensic Services, highlighting:

- Recommendation 4 – Good progress being made with work incorporated into the FS 2026 Change Programme.
- Recommendation 10 and 15 – Both sitting with Police Scotland and completion dates dependant on the Digitally Enabled Policing Programme (DEPP), engagement is ongoing.
- Recommendation 12 – A significant amount has been completed with evidence submitted to HMICS to support the closure.
- Recommendation 16 – There has been a positive impact with the implementation across forensics services and sharing information across partners.

Good progress has been made over the last quarter with much evidence submitted to HMICS for review. Once feedback has been received it is expected that many of the recommendations will be closed in time for the next committee meeting.

VMorton advised members that Internal Audit had been in contact with Forensics Services around the Internal Audit of productions and that piece of work had been completed with them. VMorton advised members that internal audit had highlighted good engagement however, earlier engagement would have been more appropriate around certain projects. This audit and findings will be reviewed by the Committee in relation to audit findings and Forensic Services management responsss in due course.

Members sought clarity on what stage Recommendation 23 was at in terms of the delivery of corporate support services to Forensic Services. TNelson advised that although there would not be an SLA, there would be a People Plan and an ICT Plan. The ICT Plan will lay out the activity required for the next 12 months. FDouglas added that the People Plan would come forward to the April Committee Meeting, however, the ICT Plan was more complex and being delayed due to the challenge in getting a Project Manager in place. There has so far been no commitment to FS on a timescale in delivering a Project Manager, however, engagement was ongoing with Police Scotland. The Chair noted the importance of sharing the matter with the Resources Committee and for members to have some correspondence from Police Scotland on the matter.

20200302 – FS- 006

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

NOTE the report.

8. FORENSIC SERVICES 2026 UPDATE

Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) provided the report updating members on progress made around the Forensic Services 2026 Programme and the following areas were expanded on as significant areas of work:

- Development of the Operating Model
- Staff engagement sessions
- Denison Culture Survey and roadmap of actions

In discussion the following was raised:

Members referred to the Denison Survey and advised the questions required to be in line with the broader workforce survey. TNelson advised that he was engaging with HR Governance to identify whether there can be any flexibility with the questions.

Members referred to paragraph 2.3 of the report and sought clarity on projects the Digital Justice Transformation would be focusing on. FDouglas advised that it was 3 projects funded by the Scottish Government Digital Justice Transformation Fund this year:

- Mobile (development of the integration between Pronto App and the core operating system.
- Drug Strategy Development
- Job and Process Modelling

Members referred to the Digital Evidence Sharing Project and asked for Forensic Services, when available, to provide members their input on the matter. **20200302 – FS- 007**

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.

9. DRUG ANALYSIS

TNelson provided an overview of the report including the impact and depth drug use statistics produced by SPA FS. Detective Chief Superintendent Gary Cunningham (DCSGCunningham) provided information on Police Scotland's proposed Drug Strategy and Drug Strategy Board that will be chaired by ACC Ritchie and supported by a new sub-group, including the creation of a new substance harm prevention sub-group. These groups will have the

main overview for prevention, enforcement and intelligence which will support the divisions.

DCSGCunningham advised that the work with Forensic Services allowed Police Scotland to be more intelligence led in the approach to enforcement, prevention and intelligence. In turn this has assisted in the development of the strategy giving focus to more effective targeting around the available analysis of drugs toxicology.

In discussion the following was raised:

Members requested updates on tangible outcomes or activity expected leading to an operational outcome, resulting from toxicology analysis. **20200302 – FS- 008**

Members noted the importance of this information being fed into Strategy and Performance within the SPA and were reassured that it would be reported to the next SPA Authority Meeting and by Forensic Services Communications into Police Scotland.

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.

10. DRAFT SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

FDouglas advised members that work was ongoing and that the draft will be presented to the committee on the 20th April 2020.

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the verbal update.

11. BIOMETRICS COMMISSIONER BILL BRIEFING – IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TNelson provided the committee with a presentation on the impact of the Biometrics Bill. Members were informed on the following:

- Biometrics Bill has gone through parliament with stage 2 now underway.
- It is expected that there will be Biometrics Commissioner in place towards the end of the year.

- A Code of Practise will be reviewed and signed off by the Biometrics Commissioner before going out to further consultation.
- It is envisaged that an Ethics Advisory Group will be established which will report to the Biometrics Commissioner.
- IDENT1 improvements for the Fingerprint system will deliver real benefits.
- How the Scottish CHS and PNC Interact with IDENT1.
- That currently Scotland have limited permissions on PNC.
- That our work with the Home Office will result in Forensic Services having more control on the wedding of records from IDENT1.
- There is a need for a Scottish Data Subset within IDENT1- work is ongoing to achieve that.
- An understanding of risks around Scotland Data.

During discussions members highlighted the following:

The Chair referred to the standards used in DNA within Scotland and sought clarity on whether those standards would not be lost as a result of any changes in DNA.

TNelson advised that in relation to DNA databases it was still unclear on whether the enhancements on the national DNA Database which is being done in phases would have an impact on the Scotland's standards. FDouglas added that one of the challenges was that the enhancements being proposed in England and Wales may not be of the greatest benefit to Scotland, as adopting the new Biometrics Database would result in the loss of some additional information that is currently available in Scotland. In addition there are risks around compatibility with future DNA development work.

Members advised that before a briefing note was produced in order to update the Board, there was a need to gain full understanding and awareness of possible consequences before opting a preferred Biometrics model, ensuring a discussion takes place around data linkage in Scotland and the UK more widely. In addition, clarity on the desired outcome should be provided around data collection for presentation to the SPA Board for consideration prior to communicating those ambitions onto the Scottish Government.
(Ensuring PIRC and Crown Office involvement) **20200302 – FS- 009**

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.

12. DRUG DRIVING UPDATE

Gary Holcroft provided an update on the new Drug Driving Toxicology Service and highlighted the following points:

- The service has now been delivered with cases starting to be reported to Crown Office.
- A significant amount of work has been carried out between all partners; Police Scotland, COPFS and Scottish Government during the development of the process, enabling a smooth transition.
- Forensic Services received a recommendation for accreditation for the drug driving service from UKAS in December 2019.

Members highly commended the work that had been delivered.

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.

13. FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE WORKPLAN

The committee considered the workplan and agreed that the document would be circulated following committee verbal input for comment ahead of the next committee meeting.

There being no further matters raised by Members, the Committee resolved to:

- **NOTE** the report.