

**FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE  
03 FEBRUARY 2021**

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**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services  
Committee held by MS Teams on Wednesday 03 February 2021.**

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

In attendance: Scottish Police Authority (SPA)  
Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services  
Gary Holcroft, Scientific Head of Function  
Fiona Douglas, Scientific Head of Function  
Craig Donnachie, Head of Quality  
Derek Scrimger, Scientific Head of Function  
Amy McDonald, 2026 Forensics Strategic Programme  
Manager  
Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function  
Helen Haworth, Scientific Head of Function  
Jennifer Muir, Head of Strategy and Business Performance  
  
Deborah Christie, Governance Support Officer  
Jackie Kydd, Workforce Governance Lead  
Graham Stickle, Audit and Risk Lead  
  
Police Scotland (PS)  
Detective Chief Superintendent Gary Cunningham  
Liz Nimmo, Programme Manager (seconded to Forensic  
Services)  
Andrew Hendry, Chief Digital and Information Officer  
  
COPFS  
Kenny Donnelly

## **1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting of the SPA Forensics Services Committee.

The Chair noted no apologies.

## **1.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this stage of the meeting however Members discussed a potential conflict of interest for Kenny Donnelly in respect of agenda item 16 Morbid Toxicology – Proposed Service Transfer. Members agreed that it would be helpful for Kenny Donnelly to take part in the discussion and this would allow the Committee view to be reported back to his colleagues. It was agreed that if, at any point during that item he, or Members, believed a conflict had arisen, he would leave the meeting and take no further part in the discussion.

## **1.3 Forensics Services Committee minute of meeting held 26 October 2020 for approval**

Members agreed the Minute from the Forensics Services Committee on October 26<sup>th</sup> 2020 was an accurate record of the meeting.

## **1.4 Action Log and Matters Arising**

Members reviewed the action log and noted the written updates provided. Noting that some actions had been proposed for closure, but that some concern existed that the submitted papers did not provide Members with the necessary information to give sufficient assurances on each matter, it was agreed that Members would defer making their decision on whether to close actions until the end of the meeting and the action log would be updated accordingly.

There were no matters arising.

## **1.5 Decisions taken since last Committee**

It was confirmed there had been no decisions taken since the last committee meeting.

## **1.6 Decision on taking business in private (items 11 - 16)**

Members agreed, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, to consider items 11 – 16 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

## **2. Forensic Services Director's Report – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to update members on the recent key activities across Forensic Services. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

- Tom Nelson reported this was the first Director's Report to the Committee and invited Member feedback on the content.
- Members were provided with a summary of key highlights in the following areas: Covid response, Forensic Services Senior Management changes, Workload Management, the Strategy Refresh for Forensics Services and an Operational Update which outlined the areas in which Forensic Services were able to add value to a recent investigation. Members fully acknowledged that the preservation of the integrity of investigations must be of paramount importance when reporting publicly and were assured this would be considered going forward.
- The Committee welcomed the report which it was felt was a positive addition to the overall Forensics Services Committee reporting.

**Members noted the report.**

**3. Forensic Services Performance Report – Q3 – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the Forensic Services Performance Report, Q3 2020/21. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Tom Nelson provided an overview of the report highlighting the following areas as detailed in the executive summary; Performance, Engagement and Business Updates.
- Members were provided with an overview of the casework demand and casework output and heard that drugs workload had decreased and biology workload had increased. It was reported that Toxicology had seen increase in workload and also in aging of cases. Members heard that an external supplier had been utilised and the toxicology workload was being actively managed to an acceptable level.
- Members considered the performance in respect of Scene Examination and were updated on how the impacts from Covid were being seen in the data.
- Members noted the demand data performance across all business areas and were assured that effort was being made to flex resource as required to match demand.
- Tom Nelson updated Members in respect of staff absence and provided an assurance that staff wellbeing remains a priority within Forensics Services.
- An update was provided on the ongoing activity related to the accreditation assessment programme and details of how Covid restrictions had impacted on this work were noted. The Committee was updated on what was being done in partnership with UKAS to

mitigate the impacts of Covid restrictions on the accreditation programme for the coming year.

- In response to a question about the decreased demand in Finger Prints, Tom Nelson explained that this was a likely reduction as a result of fewer specific crime types during the pandemic and it was not yet clear if this downward trend would continue when lockdown restrictions were relaxed. It was agreed this would continue to be monitored.
- Noting the reported £554k revenue overspend as at end of Q3, Bob Hayes asked what action had been taken to address this and if the Accountable Officer was fully sighted on the forecast. Tom Nelson confirmed that the Accountable Officer was aware of the overspend and that this had arisen as a result of a significantly lower level of gapping throughout the year which had caused the pressure.
- The Committee explored the performance data relating to scene attendance and sought clarity on what impacts had been as a result of Covid. Vicki Morton advised that the performance was good in comparison to pre Covid albeit below the targets. The Committee were advised that a richer picture of the demand analysis would be possible with the roll out of mobile devices and this would be reflected in future performance reports to this Committee.

**Members noted the report.**

**4. Demonstrating Value of Forensic Services – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the paper which had been provided to update members on progress on work to assess the value of Forensic Science. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Members were provided with an overview diagram which sought to highlight the different levels of assessment of value and heard that the current focus was on level 1 'Scientific Value'. In particular to consider the recommendation from the 2017 HMICS Thematic Inspection of Forensic Services which recommended the Scottish Police Authority should work with Police Scotland and COPFS to develop capability and capacity within Forensic Services to systematically address failure demand.
- Members' attention was drawn to studies being carried out by the Home Office and Northern Ireland Forensic Science Service to develop an approach to measuring the impact of forensic science across the Criminal Justice System. It was noted that the SPA had provided some input to this work however it should be remembered these are altogether different funding and delivery models.

- Jane Ryder commented she would like to see some other dimensions of value which had not been drawn out in the paper for example non-crime areas of forensic science activity. Jane Ryder also invited colleagues to consider how the totality of the issue could be addressed and suggested this would require some external partnership working.
- Members agreed additional work was required and a further update should come back to a future committee meeting. It was agreed Jane Ryder would meet with Fiona Douglas to help develop a solution that would address Members' expectations in respect of an agreed approach to demonstrating the value of Forensic Service in the Justice System.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action update;**

**Reflected in existing action 20190725 –FS-003: Members agreed additional work was required and a further update should come back to a future committee meeting. It was agreed Jane Ryder would meet with Fiona Douglas to help develop a solution that would address Members' expectations in respect of an agreed approach to demonstrating the value of Forensic Service in the Justice System.**

## **5. Workforce Planning – Progress Update – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to update the Committee on progress to develop a Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- The committee considered a summary of the work done to progress the Forensic Services Workforce Plan and heard that it was the intention to seek to better understand what the Police Scotland Strategic Workforce Plan would mean for the future demand for forensic science. It was added that the methodology used by Police Scotland would be considered as part of the next steps.
- Members heard that demand planning was required and work was planned to explore what the future demand and expectation of Police Scotland, COPFS and PIRC would be in respect of Forensic Science provision as this would be key.
- Members welcomed the effort that had been put into developing this work and urged colleagues to be alert to the challenges that were experience by Police Scotland as they developed their first iteration of the Strategy Workforce Plan. Jane Ryder cautioned against using the same methodology as was used by Police Scotland given the smaller scale of and fewer resources within Forensic Services but agreed that

understanding demand was a key element to how this strategic workforce plan would develop.

- Fiona Douglas confirmed that as there was not the available capacity to develop the Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan using the same approach as Police Scotland, this could not be taken but the 6 step methodology would be reflected upon.
- Members agreed that whatever Workforce Plan was approved, the Plan would be dynamic and be refreshed as time progressed, however it was important to have a starting point to take the organisation forward.
- The Committee Chair welcomed the commitment to a working draft being considered by the Committee in July 2021 and thanked the team for their hard work on this matter.

**Members noted the report.**

**6. Forensic Services 2026 Update – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the paper which had been provided to update the Committee on progress on the Forensic Services 2026 Programme. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Members note the high level summary which was provided covering areas including: Continuous Improvement – Progressing HMICS Recommendations, Forensic 2026 Strategy Development, Infrastructure Development, addressing critical resource gaps, Process Improvement, Management Information Reporting and Demonstrating Value.
- In response to a request for an update on the MOU, Fiona Douglas reported that the Short Life Working Group met in January to review the 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of the revised MOU with Forensic Services having agreed to feed back their comments on this draft over the coming weeks. It was confirmed that a Sub-Group had been established to ensure that the underpinning procedures would be in place to support the MOU when implemented.
- Members welcomed the activity to progress the MOU and requested additional assurances in respect of when this project will land and when the MOU will be a final draft for which approval will be sought. It was confirmed that a draft MOU would be available for Members to consider at the next meeting of the Committee in April 2021.

**Members noted the report.**



## 7. Digital Forensics: next steps – verbal update

Craig Donnachie Members considered a verbal update which highlighted the following key areas;

- The Digital Forensics Project continues in Police Scotland with Forensic Services having supplied some support over the last quarter to provide an overview of the systems and processes used within Forensics Services.
- Feedback has been provided to Police Scotland on a draft Project Assessment Document and the draft has now been signed off and approved.
- Job descriptions are now being developed.
- Funding has now being requested and plans and a timeline have been developed to be implemented when funding is allocated.
- Members sought clarity on the timeline for this project to be implemented and it was confirmed that although challenging, the aim was to have accreditation in place by 2022.
- Members asked how this would fit with the overall Change Programme and the Cyber Strategy and agreed that the Committee would benefit from a presentation of how this project would be aligned to other ongoing and planned projects. It was agreed that an update would be provided to the next meeting and Detective Ch Supt Gary Cunningham would facilitate this update.
- The Committee requested that future updates to committee come as written reports to allow the oversight of the important matter to be suitably robust.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action update;**

**Reflected in existing action - 20201103-FS-001: Update paper to come to next Committee which provides Members with a timescale and clear understanding of how Digital Forensics fits into the overarching Cyber Strategy.**

## 8. HMICS Update - Vicki Morton

Members consider the report which provided an update on work to implement the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Service. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- It was reported of the 23 recommendations, Forensic Services has received confirmation from HMICS that 14 are now complete. Members noted there had been no significant movement since the

last report as feedback was awaited from HMICS on recommendations 11, 12, 14 and 16.

- Jane Ryder requested that future reports provide a distinction between which matters were within the control of the SPA or where this lay out with the SPA's control and it was agreed this additional information would be added.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action;**

**Action 20210203-FS-002: Future updates to provide additional narrative which highlights the distinction between where matters are with and out with the control of the SPA.**

**9. Drug Driving Update – Amy McDonald**

Members considered the report which had been submitted to provide the committee with an update on the Drug Driving Toxicology Service. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Amy McDonald provided Members with a summary of the paper outlining the key highlights and inviting Members to demand and to note the value of the forensic service being provided in respect of Drug Driving.
- Members noted external support had been contracted to remove the casework backlog and it was anticipated normal workload levels would be seen by the end of March 2021.
- Bob Hayes expressed disappointment that the report did not meet his expectation with regards to providing a proposal as to how the demand issues can be addressed longer term and the information provided did not give any assurance that a plan is in place to address the longer term demand and budget issues in a sustainable way, that ensures staff wellbeing is not compromised whilst delivering an effective service.
- The Committee Chair suggested to attendees the agreed way forward needed to be a collaborative solution and it was not for the SPA to own this problem but for the service's users to work with Forensic Services to find a sustainable solution.
- The Committee noted that the additional kit provided by Scottish Government to address increased demand had been done so on the understanding of c.200 cases per month and it was the view of the Committee that this should be revisited if the demand exceeded that agreed limit.
- It was reported that a Working Group was exploring the options to progress these issues and Police Scotland and the SPA were represented at this group.



- Members agreed that the MOU must incorporate this area of activity and if there was to be a request to carry out increased workload then a proposal must come from the customer.
- The Committee agreed that they would like to see some pace around the work to reach a sustainable solution which protected staff wellbeing whilst delivering a quality service.
- Amy McDonald recognized Members' frustrations and concerns and confirmed that there very much was a will between all parties to get this problem resolved with good joined up working in place. Members noted confidence was high that a resolution could be reached and that the position would be improved by the end of Q2.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action update;**

**Reflected in action 20201103-FS-003: Update on discussions from working group session to be circulated to Members between meetings. Update to give details of agreed resolution between partners.**

**10. Forensic Services Committee Workplan**

**Members noted the Forensic Services Committee Workplan and noted that this document would be refreshed thought the year as required.**

*The following items were taken in private.*

*End.*

**FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE**  
**19 APRIL 2021**

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**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services  
Committee held by MS Teams on Monday 19 April 2021.**

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Authority Members Present: Tom Halpin (Chair)  
Paul Edie  
Jane Ryder  
Caroline Stuart

In attendance: Scottish Police Authority (SPA)  
Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services  
Gary Holcroft, Scientific Head of Function  
Fiona Douglas, Scientific Head of Function  
Craig Donnachie, Head of Quality  
Derek Scrimger, Scientific Head of Function  
Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function  
Jennifer Muir, Head of Strategy and Business Performance  
Liz Nimmo, Programme Manager

John McNellis, Head of Finance, Audit and Risk  
Graham Stickle, Audit and Risk Lead  
Deborah Christie, Governance Support Officer

Police Scotland (PS)  
ACC Judi Heaton, ACC Major Crime and Public Protection  
Detective Ch Supt Gary Cunningham, Specialist Crime  
Division  
Chief Superintendent Stevie Dolan, Specialist Crime  
Division  
Andrew Hendry, Chief Digital and Information Officer

COPFS  
Kenny Donnelly

### **1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting of the SPA Forensics Services Committee. The Chair welcomed new Committee Members Paul Edie and Caroline Stuart and thanked Bob Hayes for his significant contribution to the Committee over his time as a member of the Authority.

The Chair noted no apologies.

### **1.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **1.3 Forensics Services Committee minute of meeting held 03 February 2021 for approval**

Members agreed the Minute from the Forensics Services Committee on 03 February 2021 was an accurate record of the meeting.

### **1.4 Action Log and Matters Arising**

Members reviewed the action log and noted the written updates provided. It was agreed that while it had been proposed for closure, action 20201103-FS-003 should remain on-going as Drug Driving would remain a priority area for the committee until an agreed way forward was determined by all involved parties.

There were no matters arising.

### **1.5 Decisions taken since last Committee**

It was confirmed there had been no decisions taken since the last committee meeting.

### **1.6 Decision on taking business in private (items 14 - 21)**

Members agreed, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, to consider items 14 – 21 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

## **2. Forensic Services Director's Report – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to update the Committee on the recent key activities across Forensic Services. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

- Members were provided with a summary of key highlights of the report in the following areas: Covid19 response, Forensic Services demand, workload management and staff training, staff engagement.

- Tom Nelson drew Members attention to the areas of the report through which he sought to demonstrate the significant value that forensic Services brings to Criminal Justice partners and to the public.
- Members noted that a short life working group was to be established which would oversee and manage transition as Covid restrictions change, for cases that have had extensions to their timelines and cases that have no agreed extension. It was noted that Forensic Services will work closely with representatives from Police Scotland and COPFS, to manage this and further updates will be provided to this committee when available.
- The Committee Chair thanked Tom Nelson and all of his staff in Forensic Services for their continued commitment and flexibility thought-out the pandemic.

**Members noted the report.**

**3. Forensic Services Performance Report – Q4 – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the Forensic Services Performance Report, Q4 2020/21. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Tom Nelson provided an overview of the report highlighting activity in the following key areas as detailed in the executive summary; Performance, Engagement and Business Updates.
- It was reported that demand continued to be strong throughout the year and that while demand had been high, output has also been high as was evidenced in the reported stability of casework ageing.
- Tom Nelson reported that positive feedback had been received from staff since the recent launch of MyCareer platform.
- Members considered an overview of the Laboratory performance data and scene examination performance data. Their attention was drawn to the drop in number of scenes attended however Tom Nelson advised that, in recent weeks, scene attendance has increased and this was likely to be due to lockdown restrictions easing with crimes of dishonesty increasing.
- A summary of staff absence was provided and peaks noted in April and October 2020. It was confirmed that a slight increase in staff absence had been identified in March 2021 and managers are monitoring this closely in the coming period.
- Members welcomed the update that evidence of actions taken to address the findings raised during the UKAS assessment period had been submitted to UKAS in January 2021, which was in line with the agreed timeline. While no formal confirmation had been received, a

verbal update had been provided that the current accreditation was to be maintained.

- In response to a question regarding how future demand could be accurately forecast for Drug Driving toxicology given the current low levels of travel across the country due to Covid restrictions, Tom Nelson explained that there are challenges in relation to calculating the future demand given the dynamic situation but work would continue to endeavour to forecast as accurately as possible.
- The committee further discussed how demand across all business areas would be managed as the impact of changed Covid restrictions was seen. It was explained that the future demand as the 'new normal' emerges remains uncertain but close links were in place with colleagues in England and Wales to share information and best assess the impact of relaxing current restrictions.
- The committee questioned the levels of absence during the past year and sought further clarity on the reasons behind the high levels in April and October. It was advised that there was no evidence of significant transmission of Covid in the workplace for Forensic Services staff however levels would continue to be benchmarked against Police Scotland and other public sector organisations. Members welcomed the offer to bring additional information in the next iteration of the report which would provide comparisons with other organisations.
- Members sought assurances on what actions were being taken to address the increase in the ageing of cases in some areas and heard that effort was being made to allocating work so that these ageing cases were targeted. The committee agreed to continue to monitor this in future reports.
- The underspend in capital was noted and an explanation was sought on why this underspend had occurred and what remedial actions were being taken to ensure the full allocation was spent. Tom Nelson explained that Covid had significantly impacted on the ability to spend as demand for equipment was high and some suppliers and stopped their manufacturing. It was confirmed that a significant amount of procurement activity had taken place in the last financial quarter of the year to bring the spend more in line with budget.
- Assurance was provided that effort was being made to ensure the 2021/22 capital spend would be managed effectively and Members welcomed the update that a Capital Working Group had been established with intention for the full capital spend to take place by the end of the calendar year 2021.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action.**

**20210419-FS-001:** Next performance report to include benchmarking data in respect of staff absence levels.

#### **4. COP26 - Forensic Services Preparedness – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the papers which had been submitted to provide the committee with an update on the engagement to date and potential Forensic Services resource requirements to support the COP26 climate change summit. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- It was noted that strong links existed between Forensic Services and Police Scotland to plan for this event. Members were updated that an initial proposal for Forensic Services COP26 resource requirements had been submitted to Police Scotland in December 2019 and this has now been updated and expanded into a Forensic Services Tactical Plan. Members heard that the resource requirements includes all scientific functions - Scene Examination, Physical Sciences and Biology resource- and included training and exercising prior to the event.
- Members welcomed the assurance that regular interaction between Forensic Services and the Operation Planning Team is established at strategic and tactical levels.
- It was reported that Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) continue to develop their expectations of Forensic Services for COP26 which will further inform the planning process.
- The Committee Chair explained that in addition to COP26 planning, there were 2 key areas of focus for the Authority and specifically this committee and that was the maintenance of BAU activity and the wellbeing of staff. He sought an assurance that work was underway to ensure both these matters were addressed and mitigating actions were being taken to ensure minimal impacts. Vicki Morton assured the committee that the planning was very much focused on what additional resource was going to be required to ensure processes were in place that mitigated against any impact on BAU activity across all areas. Members were assured that the ongoing planning was very much focused on staff wellbeing and the Forensic Services team was fully engaged with Police Scotland colleagues and embedded in that important planning work.
- The Committee Chair expressed concern that Forensics Services colleagues were not yet part of the Police Scotland work stream which focused on wellbeing matters during COP26 and requested that Forensics Services colleague ensure they are embedded in that work stream to ensure the necessary synergies across both staff groups.



**Members noted the report and agreed the following action;**

**20210419-FS-002:** Forensic Services colleague to provide assurance to committee that they are appropriately embedded in the Police Scotland wellbeing work stream for COP26 planning.

**5. Demonstrating Value of Forensic Services Progress Update (verbal update) – Fiona Douglas**

The committee was provided with a verbal update that Fiona Douglas had met with Jane Ryder to explore how best to progress the work to demonstrate the value of Forensic Science both across the wider Criminal Justice System and more broadly across communities in Scotland. This would seek to demonstrate the valued added to the justice system, safety and wellbeing of the public, crime prevention, public health and safety, looking after vulnerable people and other less visible areas to which Forensic Services contributes.

The committee was updated that a Short Life Working Group would be considered as part of the approach and this would involve key stakeholders.

Jane Ryder highlighted the need for this to be allocated the required resource to allow the work to progress in a meaningful way and at pace and members recognized this was a core element of how Forensics Services will be shaped going forward.

**Members noted the verbal update.**

**6. Workforce Planning – Progress Update (verbal update) – Fiona Douglas**

The committee were provided with an update which highlighted the following key points;

- Work was progressing well and workforce planning had been initiated as a project and a significant amount of work had already taken place as part of the 2026 Programme.
- A priority area of focus for the coming months was to be demand forecasting and this would involve input from key customers to inform the planning.
- It was recognised that lessons should be taken from Police Scotland's Workforce Planning but that this was a much smaller, less complex project so not all elements would link across to the Forensic Services workforce planning.

- It was confirmed that the draft plan would be tabled at the July meeting of this committee.

**Members noted the verbal update and the timeline for committee consideration.**

## **7. Forensic Services 2026 Update – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide a progress update on The Forensic Services 2026 Programme. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Significant progress had been made in relation to supporting business cases for each of the core projects.
- Members were taken through each of the updates for, progressing HMICS recommendations, 2026 Strategy development, infrastructure development, resourcing, process improvement, Management Information reporting and demonstrating value.
- Recognising the significant levels of change that were planned, the Committee Chair sought an assurance that appropriate engagement was underway with Trade Unions. Fiona Douglas confirmed that a number of engagements had taken place since the last meeting of the committee and trade Union representation was in place at each of the 3 sub-groups of the Project Board and this would be very useful going forward. It was confirmed that a number of meetings had taken place with TU representatives to explore the staff engagement process specifically for the FS Operating Model. It was confirmed that the project team would continue to work with Trade Union representatives to ensure they are fully sighted on the basis upon which directions have been made and noted that the intention is to work very closely with the Trade Unions on the impacts assessments to explore how impacts can be mitigated.
- Members sought an assurance that absence of a senior project lead would not adversely impact on the project. Fiona Douglas agreed that this was a risk for the project however it had come at a time when the gap was not as critical as it could have been. It was noted that the recruitment had commenced and while this was a difficult area to recruit to it was hoped an appointment could be made soon.
- It was agreed that the next update to committee would provide members with a diagram of the oversight and governance arrangements for this project.

**Members noted the report.**

**20210419-FS-003:** Future committee update to include a diagram which provides an understanding of the project governance structure.

#### **8. Digital Forensics Update - T/Chief Superintendent Stevie Dolan**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide the Committee with an update in relation to the progress of the Police Scotland Cyber Strategy and associated ongoing work in relation to Digital Forensics. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Digital forensics was recognised as a challenging area of activity for Police Scotland due to the significantly increasing demand and the complexity of examining an increased number of seized devices.
- Work was ongoing on 2 projects which will deliver outcomes to address the increasing demand, focusing on the provision of a new Case Management System (CMS) and ISO 17025 accreditation for Digital Forensics. Members welcomed the update that Police Scotland colleagues would take learning from Forensics Services teams who had a sound knowledge and experience of the approach to achieving accreditation.
- The committee took assurance that close links would be maintained with Forensic Services colleagues as these projects progressed and Craig Donnachie confirmed he continued to support Police Scotland in this area.
- The Committee Chair questioned if the proposed timelines were realistic. Craig Donnachie expressed the view that he believed the timelines would be very challenging but with the right resource in place he believed the planned progress could be in 3 years. The Committee Chair requested that a refined timeline come to the committee for consideration in due course and it was agreed this would be provided.
- Ch Supt Dolan assured the committee he would seek to progress this work as quickly as was reasonably possible and timescales would be shorted as and when possible but without compromise on quality.
- Recognising this was an area that would continue to grow, the Committee heard that discussions were taking place at a senior level within Police Scotland to establish how the current and future demand will be met by the organisations.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action;**

**20210419-FS-004:** More detailed project timeline and SPA Governance to be clarified and presented to committee when available.

## **9. Biometrics Update – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the paper which set out the current work to consolidate the SPA FS Biometrics Strategy. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Tom Nelson reported good progress have been made and close working was in place with ACC Heaton and Detective Ch Supt Gary Cunningham. It was noted that there was appropriate representation across the various Police Scotland oversight and governance groups.
- The Committee welcomed the update that a SPOC was in place on the Home Office Biometric Programme to ensure the needs of Scotland were fully understood and explored.
- Tom Nelson confirmed that he would continue to work closely with the Police Scotland Chief Data Officer, Denis Hamill as this work progressed.

**Members noted the report and noted further updates would come to the committee in due course.**

## **10. Update on HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide the Committee with an update on work to implement the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- The overall position remained unchanged since the last update to committee however evidence had been submitted to HMICS and dialogue had taken place with HMICS colleagues in relation to that evidence.
- The additional information requested by Members was now included to highlight where delays were within or out with the control of Forensic Services.
- With reference to recommendation 12 and 16, clarity was sought on the reason for delay as the evidence was submitted in 2020. It was explained that some technical issues had resulted in a delay but these had now been resolved and progress was expected soon.

**Members noted the report.**

### **11. Drug Driving Update – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide an update on the Drug Driving Toxicology Service. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Vicki Morton provided a summary of the paper and explained that external support has been used positively to reduce high casework levels during quarter 4 and development work was ongoing to grow required capacity over the coming 18 months.
- Members noted the update and agreed that the data clearly highlighted that Drug Driving demand has exceeded what was anticipated when the business case was originally considered.
- Recognising this was a matter of high public interest, and one which Forensics Services was only a part, it was agreed that it would be of merit for Police Scotland to engage with the COPFS to explore the prevalence of Drug Driving in Scotland as this would start to allow informed decision making by Scottish Government and Forensic Services in this area of work.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action;**

**20210419-FS-005:** Meeting to be arranged with COPFS and Police Scotland to explore the prevalence of Drug Driving in Scotland and the implications for Forensic Services capacity to meet demand.

### **12. Management Response to Internal Audit Report on Forensics Services Case Management – Jennifer Muir**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide an update on the management response to the Internal Audit on Forensic Services Case Management. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- The committee noted the scope of the Audit as included in the paper and noted the activity underway to address the recommendations of the audit with some already complete.
- Members agreed this update provided strong assurance that the audit recommendations were being addressed at pace.

**Members noted the report.**

### **13. Forensic Services Committee Workplan**

Members noted the Forensic Services Committee Workplan and noted that this document would be refreshed thought the year as required.

**FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE  
26 JULY 2021**

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**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services  
Committee held by MS Teams on Monday 26 July 2021.**

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Authority Members Present: Tom Halpin (Chair)  
Paul Edie  
Jane Ryder  
Caroline Stuart  
Martyn Evans  
Katharina Kasper

In attendance: Scottish Police Authority (SPA)  
Tom Nelson, Director of Forensic Services  
Gary Holcroft, Scientific Head of Function  
Fiona Douglas, Scientific Head of Function  
Craig Donnachie, Head of Quality  
Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function  
Helen Haworth, Scientific Head of Function  
Jennifer Muir, Head of Strategy and Business Performance  
Kevin O'Hare, Communications and Engagement  
Specialist

Colette Craig, Governance Support Officer  
John McNellis, Head of Finance Audit and Risk  
Graham Stickle, Audit and Risk Lead  
Eleanor Gaw, Governance and External Relations Lead

Police Scotland (PS)  
D/Chief Superintendent Laura McLuckie  
T/Chief Superintendent Stevie Dolan

COPFS  
Kenny Donnelly

Scottish Biometrics Commissioner  
Brian Plastow



### **1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting of the SPA Forensics Services Committee. The Chair welcomed John McNellis Head of Finance, Audit and Risk, SPA. Iain Harkness and Alastair Patience, Operations Manager from SPA Forensics and DCS Laura McLuckie T/CS Stevie Dolan from Police Scotland. The Chair also welcomed Dr Brian Plastow, Scottish Biometrics Commissioner.

Apologies were noted from CDIO Andrew Hendry and ACC Judi Heaton from Police Scotland.

### **1.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **1.3 Forensics Services Committee minute of meeting held 19 April 2021 for approval**

Members agreed the Minute from the Forensics Services Committee on 19 April 2021 was an accurate record of the meeting.

### **1.4 Action Log and Matters Arising**

Members reviewed the action log and noted and agreed the written updates provided.

There were no matters arising.

### **1.5 Decision on taking business in private (items 11 - 18)**

Members agreed, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, to consider items 11 – 18 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

## **2. Forensic Services Director's Report – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to update the Committee on the recent key activities across Forensic Services. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

Members were advised that following confirmation that Scottish Government would be investing £6m into the new Toxicology Service, this would be operational from the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and the project will be delivered by Gary Holcroft.

TNelson paid tribute to Carina Joannidis, for being awarded the Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining Materials World Medal for Money Talks - the best feature published during the year in the Institute's Materials World magazine. The award was for her contribution to a collaborative project about examination of the new polymer banknotes.

TNelson referred to MyCareer, the new appraisal system underpinned by the Competency & Values Framework and advised members that it completes its Proof of Concept pilot on 31 August 2021. A report will return to the committee on the outcome of that.

The Chair formally congratulated Carina Joannidis for her work on behalf of the committee and noted the further excellence being delivered by the Forensic Services.

**Members noted the report.**

**3. Forensic Services Performance Report – Q1 – Tom Nelson**

Members considered the Forensic Services Performance Report, Q1 2021/222. TNelson highlighted key areas within the report and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

Members sought clarity on where the newly established People, ICT and Change and Improvement Board would report into. TNelson advised that the boards currently report into the Forensic Services Planning and Performance Board, however, it would be proposed that they would report into the Forensics Services Committee along with other SPA Committees when required.

Members referred to the Scene Examination Unit and sought clarity on whether there were targets in place. TNelson advised that throughout Scotland there was a national target of 90%, however, separate reporting is carried out for the North, East and West due the West having higher complex crimes in terms of seriousness and frequency. Members were further advised that the increase of scenes attended for this quarter was a more normal figure and that the business is now returning to pre Covid figures.

D/Chief Superintendent Laura McLuckie referred to laboratory capacity and requested that toxicology figures were separated to provide a more accurate picture in order to monitor and address issues around that area of business.

Members noted the importance of demand response being consistent within each area and sought assurance that every mitigation or action was being taken to address this.

Members sought clarity on why there was such a variance around Evidence Recovery Rates between the East, North and West. TNelson advised he would ask Derek Scrimger to report back to the committee on that.

Finally members sought clarity around what stage accreditation was at for Crime Scene Examination. TNelson advised that following a visit earlier in the year a number of actions were being taken forward along with UKAS. At the management meeting scheduled for August 2021 an update will be provided on the next stages, however, there were no fundamental issues in preventing achieving that accreditation and the team continue to work towards that.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following actions.**

**20210726-FS-001:** Future performance reports to separate Toxicology data from Laboratory Capacity figures.

**20210726-FS-002:** Provide an update to the committee on the variance within Evidence Recovery Rates between the East, North and West.

#### **4. COP26 - Forensic Services Preparedness – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide the committee with an update on the engagement to date and potential Forensic Services resource requirements to support the COP26 climate change summit.

The Chair highlighted key issues in relation to full cost recovery being applied in terms of the day to day business of the Forensics Services budget along with the wellbeing and welfare of staff in terms of early notification around annual leave restrictions. The Chair noted that this was all being further scrutinised by the COP26 Oversight Group.

**Members noted the report.**

#### **5. Demonstrating Value of Forensic Services Progress Update– Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the report which had been submitted to provide the committee with an update on demonstrating the work to assess the value

of forensic science. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

Members welcomed and commended the progress made and welcomed the more holistic and comprehensive approach.

The Chair asked that the newer committee members were provided with an update on work that was ongoing around Demonstrating Value due to it being a strategic and complex area.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action.**

**20210726-FS-003:** Provide the newer committee members with an update on work that was ongoing around Demonstrating Value.

## **6. Workforce Planning – Progress Update – Fiona Douglas**

The committee were provided with an update on the development of a Forensic Services Strategic Workforce Plan. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

- Members sought clarity on how realistic the timeframe was in bringing a draft workforce plan to the October Committee. FDouglas agreed the timeline was ambitious however, could be achieved due to the progress around capacity forecasting and workforce analysis.
- Members sought clarity on whether Police Scotland's Demand and Productivity Unit would be assisting with the demand forecasting. FDouglas advised that unfortunately they have been unable to support the work to date, however, further discussion would take place with DCSLMcLuckie and team around how work can take place within Police Scotland to assess the data that had been gathered in order to bring it together with any known data from a policing perspective and how that would impact on Forensic Services.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

**20210726-FS-004:** Confirm whether or not the Draft Workforce Plan can be delivered to the October Committee following discussions with partners who have a role in undertaking demand forecasting.

## **7. Forensic Services 2026**

### **7.1 Forensic Services 2026 Update – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the report which provided a progress update on The Forensic Services 2026 Programme. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Members sought clarity on whether further personnel requirements were needed to deliver phase 2, despite the report advising that the programme was already well into phase 2. FDouglas advised members that phase 2 was around transitioning to the new operating model and the projects around that were well progressed, however, there were some resource challenges in terms of project management support which carried some risks. It is hoped that the impact of those risks would be clarified over the next 2 weeks.
- The Chair referred to the ongoing transformational change and the impact for key partners, and sought clarity that Police Scotland were fully involved in the transformational programme. FDouglas advised that there had been a number of engagements with Police Scotland and more recently to take the ACC's through the proposed new operating model and the benefits that would bring to Police Scotland. In addition, local area commanders would be briefed in more detail around the proposed changes and the benefits. DCSLMcLuckie advised that Police Scotland were encouraged by the direction of travel and advised that a good working relationship was in place and as the model develops, she and FDouglas are in regular contact with the relevant staff being kept up to date.

### **Members noted the report**

### **7.2 Forensics 2026 Strategy Refresh – Tom Nelson**

Members were provided with a report which detailed an overview of the draft Forensic Services Strategy seeking onward submission to the SPA Board for approval. In addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Members commended the enormous amount of work that had been carried out, however, suggested some editing in terms of the style and length to ensure that the strategy is accessible and readable to the general public.
- Members referred to the measuring of progress and assessing

Performance and noted that there were no specifics noted. Members added the need for measurements for performance or further detail around how that would be achieved to be included within the Strategy as a public facing document despite that information being within the Business Case.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

**20210726-FS-005:** Consider some editing of the Strategy in terms of style and length to ensure it becomes accessible and readable to the general public. In addition ensure that how progress would be measured and how performance would be assessed was included as part of the strategy.

**7.2 Environmental Strategy – Jennifer Muir**

Members were provided with a report which provided an overview of Forensic Services activities that would support and engage with the Police Scotland Environmental Strategy that was approved in March 2021. In addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Members welcomed the report and the comprehensive thinking that had gone into it and sought clarity on whether this would deliver “outstanding” environmental sustainability across the piece and asked for consideration to be given to some benchmarking. TNelson advised the need to identify what the targets should be. The Chair sought clarity on what staff involvement looked like. JMuir advised that a group had been established within the East with a lot of enthusiasm coming forward. There is also an intention to have the Green Leaders Network to drive forward their own initiatives, however, they would also be dovetailing into some of the work being led by Derek Scrimger around what the new normal would look like, addressing some creative solutions and looking to identify how smarter working could be supported.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

**20210726-FS-006:** Consider some benchmarking to assist in identifying what targets should be and measure against those targets.

**8. Update on HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services**

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide the Committee with an update on work to implement the improvements set out



in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- Recommendation 15 in relation to the Lean Six Sigma Review is also a recommendation within the Crime Audit Inspection. This recommendation is out with the control of SPA Forensic Services and Police Scotland Gateway, therefore a proposal has been put to HMICS in order to have it closed from the report and maintained through the Crime Audit Inspection.
- Members noted concerns and sought clarity around the delay on closing many of the recommendations that don't require any major capital or resource. VMorton advised that there had been a lot of activity when the report was initially received, with many of the recommendations closed off at those early stages. However, as areas progressed into the 2026 Programme of Change and in order to make a fundamental and sustainable difference this brought forward much of the delays. Delays with the MoU and Demand Management was key to much of the work, however, reassured members that there was a vast amount of activity ongoing with continuous improvement within lots of the factors mentioned within the report.
- Members noted concerns around the delays in achieving a MoU. TNelson agreed and advised that timings around developing and delivering a Forensics Strategy along with a review of the senior management structure, along with being tied in with the 2026 programme, had slowed areas of work down. It would be hoped that much of the recommendations would be closed within a short space of time once the operating model had been through the appropriate committees.

The Committee Chair noted that this area was a high priority for the committee however, when dealing with the transformational change of forensic services in Scotland the detailed work around demand, workforce strategy and other areas would all lead towards delivering the service going forward and that the committee would continue to provide focus in this area.

#### **Members noted the report.**

#### **9. Drug Driving Update – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the paper which provided an update on the Drug Driving Toxicology Service. During Discussion and in addition to the written paper the following points were discussed;

- VMorton advised the committee that improvements have been identified within recent months which was a result of the staff. There is no further funding for outsourcing available at this time and there was recognition that this was a collaborative challenge which would require partnership solutions.
- The Committee Chair referred to the business case for establishing capability around drug driving was a starting point based on the figures within England and Wales, however, the demand level is higher than first anticipated, despite efforts being made around efficiencies within the laboratories, flexibilities within the workforce, operational responsiveness to the reality, outsourcing and prosecution, there was a need for a discussion between SPA Forensic Services, Police Scotland and COPFS to bring forward a joint paper to go to Scottish Government around the reality and learning being gain from applying the new legislation.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

**20210726-FS-007:** SPA Forensic Services, Police Scotland and COPFS to bring forward a joint paper to go to Scottish Government around the reality and learning being gain from applying the new Drug Driving legislation.

**10. Forensic Services Committee Workplan**

Members noted the Forensic Services Committee Workplan and agreed that the Strategic Workforce Plan should be added.

The Committee Chair paid tribute to Tom Nelson, who would be retiring from his role, making this his final attendance to the SPA Forensic Services Committee. The Committee Chair advised that TNelson had been an outstanding Director of Forensic Services and public servant, putting public interest and the needs of those who use the service to the forefront. In addition, TNelson carries a fine balance to ensure that the interests and welfare of his workforce were also a high priority. His influence in forensic services are not only in Scotland but he was well regarded for his role within forensic services within Northern Ireland along as being recognised across the United Kingdom and internationally, with his views being frequently sought from other likeminded scientific professionals. The Committee Chair advised that TNelson had brought together forensic science within Scotland from legacy force arrangements into a cohesive national asset, which is world leading.

The Committee Chair thanked TNelson on behalf of the committee for all of this work. TNelson thanked his team and staff for their work and

support towards him over the years and advised the committee had taken SPA Forensic Services to a different level of scrutiny, engagement and support and thanked the SPA, the committee and partner agencies for all of their support.

*The remaining items were taken in private.*

APPROVED

**FORENSIC SERVICES COMMITTEE  
25 OCTOBER 2021**

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**Minute of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services  
Committee held by MS Teams on Monday 25 October 2021.**

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Authority Members Present: Tom Halpin (Chair)  
Paul Edie  
Jane Ryder  
Caroline Stuart

In attendance: Forensic Services (SPA)  
Fiona Douglas, Director of Forensic Services  
Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function  
Alastair Patience, Operations Manager  
Gary Holcroft, Scientific Head of Function  
Craig Donnachie, Head of Quality  
Vicki Morton, Scientific Head of Function  
Helen Haworth, Scientific Head of Function  
Derek Scrimger, Scientific Head of Function

Scottish Police Authority (SPA)  
Colette Craig, Governance Support Officer  
Graham Stickle, Audit and Risk Lead

Police Scotland (PS)  
T/Detective Chief Inspector Richy Taylor  
ACC Judi Heaton  
CDIO Andrew Hendry

COPFS  
Kenny Donnelly

**1.1 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed attendees to the meeting and welcomed T/Detective Chief Inspector Richy Taylor, noting that Police Scotland attendance was not as usual due to COP26.

There were no further apologies.

## **1.2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **1.3 Forensics Services Committee minute of meeting held 26 July 2021 for approval**

Members **AGREED** the Minute from the Forensics Services Committee on 26 July 2021 was an accurate record of the meeting.

## **1.4 Action Log and Matters Arising**

Members reviewed the action log and noted and agreed the written updates provided.

There were no matters arising.

## **1.5 Decision on taking business in private (items 9 - 16)**

Members agreed, in accordance with paragraph 20 of the SPA Standing Orders, to consider items 9 – 16 on the agenda in private for the reasons set out in the agenda.

## **2. Forensic Services Director's Report – Fiona Douglas**

The Chair noted this being the first meeting with Fiona Douglas (FDouglas) in her new role as Director of Forensic Services and further congratulated her on her new position. FDouglas extended her thanks to the senior management team in Forensic Services for their support during the transition into her new role and whilst working towards a new permanent structure for the senior management team over coming months.

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to update the Committee on the recent key activities across Forensic Services. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

- Members referred to UKAS and Accreditation and sought clarity on how Forensic Services were tracking the time and effort being placed into that. FDouglas advised that annual accreditation visits take place which are well planned in terms of the activity that is required to maintain the scope of accreditation. There is a need to make ongoing changes to that as technology and processes change. FDouglas advised that there was a strategic objective to ensure they are continuously improving their span of services which are accredited, such as scene examination. The amount of days that are taken are captured due to the significant amount of effort that is placed in this

area. Craig Donnachie (CDonnachie) added that this is monitored on an annual basis and confirmed that they have a good handle on the time that UKAS take, the costs associated and what is appropriate. CDonnachie advised that discussions have taken place with digital colleagues in relation to UKAS and practices are being shared as a training tool for work that is ongoing.

- Members noted the number of projects that were ongoing and asked how those projects would be monitored and presented in order to provide assurance to the committee on progress. FDouglas advised that within the 2026 update moving forward and overview of the critical path could be provided which would set out the milestones that are being aimed to achieve.
- Members sought clarity on when there would be a more permanent arrangement in place for the Forensic Services SPA Senior Management Team. FDouglas advised that she was currently progressing the SMT restructure and taking it through the appropriate meetings in order to progress through to conclusion. It is hoped that a permanent arrangement will be in place by spring 2022.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

20212510-FS-001: Fiona Douglas to provide a coherent and critical path update within the next Forensics 2026 update in relation to ongoing projects and their milestones.

**3. Forensic Services Performance Report – Q2 – Fiona Douglas**

Members considered the Forensic Services Performance Report, Q2 2021/222 and were advised that the format was slightly different in order for the report to dovetail into the Director's Report. FDouglas highlighted key areas within the report and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- Members sought clarity on what impact Covid was having on absence rates. FDouglas advised that the Covid absence rate was running at below 2% of the total sickness absence with approximately 1/3 being Covid related. Covid related sickness is not causing any significant disruption to business at the moment.
- Members referred to outsourcing some of the demand and sought clarity on whether this would be a business as usual approach in order to handle demand when there is an overspill. FDouglas advised that it was not the intention to outsource casework away from Forensic Services unless it became a critical issue. Across other areas with Forensic Services there is a hope to flex capacity and the new operating model will allow that to be done as a matter of



routine. At the current point in time support is provided to different areas from different parts of the organisation and although this is difficult, it is possible. FDouglas added that the Strategic Workforce Planning was looking at the future demand forecast and it is hoped that it will allow the organisation more proactive decisions to be made in terms of where capacity should be placed.

- Members referred to performance data within page 3 of the report and sought clarity on when charts on trending would come forward as it would be beneficial to see how this quarter compared to the previous 3 quarters. FDouglas advised that she would seek to update the performance report in alignment with a revised performance framework for the start of the next financial year, however, prior to that trending information could be supplied to put the data in context in order to show either an improving or deteriorating picture. FDouglas added that the feedback she had received it was an improving picture across most areas of forensic services.
- Members advised that a traffic light system would be helpful in order to identify changes and trends for each quarter. FDouglas agreed that she would seek to do that.
- The Chair referred to the broader point of performance, and noted previous non exec input that had been provided from the previous committee members which Forensic Services found helpful in gaining the external impact that helped refine performance reporting and translate better into outcomes. The Chair asked Paul Edie (PEdie) to provide assistance in terms of improving performance further.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following actions.**

20212510-FS-002: Fiona Douglas to engage with Paul Edie as external input in order to refine performance reporting for Forensic Services.

#### **4. Forensic Services 2026 Update – Vicki Morton**

Vicki Morton (VMorton) thanked FDouglas and the Change Team within Forensic Services and Police Scotland in supporting her with the transition into her new role as Interim Head of Strategic Change.

Members considered the paper which had been submitted to provide the committee with an update on the Forensic Services 2026 Programme.

- Members referred to page 4 of the report where is stated that the core operating system project was on hold pending the recruitment

of a project manager and sought clarity on when that would conclude. FDouglas advised that recruitment for the overall change programme was ongoing which was providing some challenges. It is hopeful that two project managers would be starting within the next few months which should all the progression of the core operating system project again.

- The Chair referred to the capacity to deliver change and sought reassurance that, although there were gaps within the change team, delivery would not be an issue. VMorton advised that the real priority for the change team was around the consultation and then looking to get ready for what could look like a new operating model for Forensic Services and a schedule of work in relation to that is already planned out. FDouglas provided further reassurance around capacity and prioritisation and advised that careful consideration had been taken around change capacity which had been very much prioritised. Forensic Services has a track record of delivering large scale organisational change and a lot of work had gone into getting Forensic Services to this point, ensuring readiness of staff and the management team.
- Members welcomed the fact that the ICT Programme had been paused until a new Project Manager was in place.
- Members asked for a traffic light system to be provided which informed whether areas were being delivered and where problems lay.

**Members noted the report and agreed the following action:**

20212510-FS-003: Vicki Morton to provide a traffic light system into the report which informs members on what areas were being delivered and where there were issues.

**5. Update on HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services – Vicki Morton**

Members considered the report which had been submitted to Forensic Services Committee members with an update on work to implement the improvements set out in the HMICS Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority Forensic Services. During discussion and in addition to the report the following points were raised and noted;

- VMorton referred particularly to recommendation 15 and 16 provided thanks to Jamie Picken from Police Scotland for his support around the provision for further evidence in relation to those over the last number of weeks.

**Members noted the report**

**6. Demonstrating Value – Fiona Douglas**

The committee were provided with a verbal update in relation to Demonstrating Value. In addition to the submitted report the following points were raised and discussed;

- FDouglas advised that a number of discussions had taken place on Demonstrating Value and noted that it was a challenging area to progress.
- FDouglas referred to a recent publication by Ulster University with regards to the study of value. Within that a framework had been generated which could be valuable for Forensic Services in progressing this area. FDouglas highlighted the four main areas within that report. FDouglas advised that a draft terms of reference has been progressed around how to set up a group in order to start to prioritise this work which would be circulated to members. FDouglas was keen to know how members would like to be involved in that group moving forward and how the learning from Ulster University can be used in order to establish a framework for progressing this importance piece of work.
- Members commended this way forward and advised that they would be keen to engage going forward.

**Members noted the report**

**7. Drug Driving Update – Alastair Patience**

Alastair Patience (APatience) provided thanks to colleagues and partner organisations for their assistance since taking over his in his interim role at the start of October.

Members considered the report which provided an update on progress on the Drug Driving Toxicology Service. APatience highlighted key points noted within the report and the following points were raised and discussed;

- The Chair noted that the fundamental point around the report was that when original estimates in demand were put forward it was based on experiences in other parts of the UK at that time, who have now revised their own estimates. The Chair added that Forensic Services were the providers of the analytical service, however, the actual demand starts at the policy and legal position, further upstream, therefore any approach to resource that needs to be a collaborative approach.

- Members sought clarity on when this stops being referred to as exceptional demand and becomes the norm or at least a medium term business as usual assumption. APatience agreed that this was at least in excess of the norm.
- Members referred to 1.7 of the report and sought clarity on how many staff would be required and was there funding available. FDouglas advised that additional staff had been accounted for within the business case for the Operating Model which provides additional but not sufficient capacity. FDouglas added that it was unclear what the full demand forecast could be at this stage. There is an issue that there is not sufficient space within the existing accommodation to grow the toxicology service, and there would be a need for additional accommodation which provide complex issues. FDouglas advised that the total number of staff required would be less than 40, however, that was still significantly over and above the accommodation constraint that would be experienced.
- The Chair noted that the Drug Driving position was an emerging position, and what we do know is that the demand is more than double what was envisaged at that early stage. FDouglas advised that the issue around capacity within this area was complex, with three broad areas of capacity in terms of the analytics, instrumentation and the reporting and gaining a careful balance between those three and doing further analytical work around this.

### **Members noted the report**

## **8. Forensic Services Committee Workplan**

The Chair noted that the workplan required the standing items to be placed into committee dates for 2022/23 when in place. No further items were brought forward to be placed onto the workplan.

### **Members noted the report**