



Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	22 August 2024
Location	Merchants House, Glasgow
Title of Paper	Chair's Report
Presented By	Martyn Evans
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

To update Authority Members on activities carried out by the Chair since the last Authority meeting held on 27 June 2024.

1. Policing visit to Highlands and Islands

- 1.1 On 7 August, I visited N Division meeting Divisional Commander Rob Shepherd and the leadership team in Inverness. I had the opportunity to hear first-hand about the priorities and issues affecting the Highlands and Islands and the challenges of policing 1/6 of the landmass of the UK with just over 500 police officers.
- 1.2 I am grateful to Chief Superintendent Shepherd, Superintendent Mark Czerniakiewicz and Superintendent Dave Ross for their time, efforts and insights. I also took the opportunity to meet virtually with Chief Inspector Jane Mackenzie and Inspector Samantha Greshon who cover Shetland, Orkney and the Western Isles and are working hard within their island communities to address the policing issues affecting these areas and engage with local scrutiny committees.
- 1.3 During the visit I travelled to Dingwall Police Station and met Inspector Kay MacCrae and her team where we discussed resilience, wellbeing and effective collaboration with partners to deliver better outcomes to communities.
- 1.4 While in Dingwall, I also met Chief Inspector Richard Ross and Inspector Donnie Mackinnon of the Road Policing Team covering the A9 and the extensive road network in the Highlands and Islands. Road policing is a significant issue in the division for road death and injury, and we discussed the efforts being made to engage with car rental companies to build visitor awareness of the dangers and common mistakes made on the roads. Road Policing is an area of policing where officers can face some of the most gruelling of incidents and are exposed to trauma. We discussed wellbeing initiatives in place to support this exposure and innovations being implemented locally to allow officers to debrief and process that exposure.

2. Lanarkshire collaboration on mental health response

- 2.1 On 13 August 2024, I was joined by Fiona McQueen, Vice Chair and Lynn Brown, Chief Executive on a visit to Police Scotland's Q divisional team in Motherwell. The purpose of the visit was to learn more about how officers are working closely with NHS professionals to deliver a better service for the public while reducing office attendance at hospital emergency departments in Lanarkshire. Effective policing responses to calls for services for those in mental health crisis has been a Board priority for 3-years.
- 2.2 The 24/7 triage approach offers a route to officers to engage with a professional Psychiatric Liaison Nurse (PLN) when they encounter an

individual who presents in some form of mental health distress. The psychiatric nurse can consider the individual's needs and quickly determine the best course of action where previously, they would need to be accompanied to an NHS A&E department and wait for an assessment. The triage approach being used in Lanarkshire has seen potential police attendances at A&E departments reduced by over 80 per cent. This is benefiting the individual who is now getting swifter support and the professional interventions they need to meet their needs. It is also saving police officers' time with less waiting for individuals to be assessed at A&E departments.

- 2.3 The approach in Lanarkshire highlights how effective collaboration between the police and NHS can lead to better outcomes for everyone. I expect learning from this initiative will now be applied across Scotland and local services consider the approach and how it could be tailored to fit other Division and Health Board areas.

3. Launch of Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC)

- 3.1 On 1 August, I attended an event in Stirling police station to mark the roll out of new digital evidence sharing software (DESC). The software allows police officers, prosecutors, defence lawyers, court staff and judges to access a secure, unified system to collect, store and manage evidence digitally.
- 3.2 The national roll out of this software is an important milestone for the entire justice system. It offers a platform to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and the provision of policing services. Importantly, it will also ensure that we all better serve the needs of victims and communities in the effective pursuit of criminals. The evidence from the pilot was that there were considerable police officer and court time savings as a result the earlier guilty pleas due to early supply of evidence.
- 3.3 Importantly, the national roll out will also provide the groundwork for further modernisation of the criminal justice process; including supporting the introduction of body worn video for frontline police officers.

4. Scottish Crime Campus – 10th Anniversary

- 4.1 On 14 August 2024 I attended an event to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Scottish Crime Campus alongside the Director of Forensic Services. Also in attendance were Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, and Chair of the Serious Organised Crime Taskforce Angela Constance, Chief Constable Jo Farrall, Deputy Crown Agent for specialist casework at the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service Kenny Donnelly.

4.2 Opened in 2014 by the Princess Royal, the Scottish Crime Campus is a world class hub with approximately 1,100 people working at the building which enables over 20 agencies to work together to tackle organised crime and seize illegal drugs and firearms. It is also home to world-leading SPA Forensic Services laboratories and Police Scotland's Serious and Organised Crime Taskforce (SOCT), which drives activity across four identifiable strands to tackle Serious Organised Crime – Detect, Disrupt, Divert and Deter. Other key agencies working from the building include the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the National Crime Agency the Security Industry Authority and the Department for Work and Pensions.

5. Workforce Wellbeing

- 5.1 The policing workforce is our greatest asset and I have had the benefit of seeing first-hand how officers and staff deliver an outstanding service in challenging circumstances day in and day out.
- 5.2 Supporting our people and maintaining the wellbeing of our workforce is a commitment set out in the Strategic Police Plan. We want our entire workforce to feel supported and empowered to seek help from colleagues and support services no matter the situation. We are also aware of the need to address wider organisational factors where demands are impacting on the ability of our people to take daily or weekly rest days. Providing effective and accessible wellbeing support and advice is not a luxury, it is a necessity. Policing is a unique environment; our people are more likely than most other professions to be repeatedly exposed to challenging circumstances and trauma. We can't eliminate that exposure, but we can and should mitigate it.
- 5.3 In 2023, the Authority hosted a conference and brought together a range of insights and perspectives to explore the impact of repeated exposure to trauma on individuals. The conference was an opportunity to hear and learn from those who have experienced this and from other services and jurisdictions about the measures that can help mitigate this impact. This was a positive event with the insights influencing Police Scotland's wellbeing action plan due to be considered by the Authority's People Committee on 29 August 2024.
- 5.4 In addition to the Authority's oversight, the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee has been considering the effectiveness of the advice and support available to police officers and staff who request assistance with their mental health and wellbeing. The committee has also heard that there may be a correlation between

officer and staff wellbeing and suicides. The Authority, Police Scotland and stakeholders including the staff associations and trade unions have all contributed to the Committees' considerations so far. The next session will take place on 11 September to provide an update on the work to strengthen the advice and support available to police officers and staff who request assistance with their mental health and wellbeing. I will attend to represent the Authority alongside the Vice Chair Fiona McQueen and the Authority's Chief Executive Lynn Brown.

6. Rose Fitzpatrick CBE QPM

- 6.1 Related to the work on workforce wellbeing above, I recently met with Rose Fitzpatrick CBE QPM, former Deputy Chief Constable at Police Scotland and now Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Advisory Group, established to champion and drive suicide prevention in Scotland.
- 6.2 We discussed her insights as Chair of this national group and as a former police officer. Suicide can often be oversimplified - the Samaritans regularly reminds commentators and the public that the majority of deaths by suicide are extremely complex, where no single event or factor has led someone to take their own life. Rose highlighted the work of Police Scotland Sergeant Laura Gibson for the Churchill Fellowship on [Wellbeing and Resilience in law enforcement](#). Sergeant Gibson's research focuses on the concept of police officer resilience and explores US police service training programmes that exist to provide officers with the required skills, techniques and support to allow them to cope with the demands of their role. It looks at the awareness of wellbeing and resilience at the start of an officer's career, and the impact of trauma, stress and burnout throughout an officer's journey through policing. Supporting officers to improve their personal resilience, as a preventative measure, a de-escalation tool and perhaps as an alternative for those reluctant to seek therapy, we will provide a healthy buffer that protects against the long-term influences of stress and trauma. I will be meeting with Sergeant Gibson to discuss her work further.

7. His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland

- 7.1 Lynn Brown, Chief Executive of the Authority and I meet regularly with His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), Craig Naylor, to discuss key issues for policing. Earlier this month we met and discussed Police Scotland's development of a revised model for policing; the HMICS Review on the Authority; HMICS's planned Reviews on Conduct; Best Value in Policing and Workforce Wellbeing.

7.2 HMICS offers important insight and assurance to the oversight and improvement of policing in Scotland. Mr Naylor will attend the Authority's September meeting to offer his thoughts and insights.

8. Scottish Police Chief Officers Staff Association (SCPOSA)

8.1 As part of our regular engagement arrangements, the Chief Executive and I met with SCPOSA representatives in July to discuss a range of issues including Police Scotland's development of a revised model for policing; the health and wellbeing of Chief Officers; Policing Together; and feedback on recent promotions processes. I am grateful to SCPOSA for their continued efforts and constructive dialogue on key issues.

9. SEMPER Scotland

9.1 SEMPER Scotland is the staff association that exists to support and represent all minority ethnic officers and staff in policing on issues of equality in race.

9.2 As part of our regular engagement arrangements, the Chief Executive and I met with SEMPER in July to discuss a range of issues including data on the demographics of our workforce and feedback on recent promotions processes. I am grateful to SEMPER for their continued efforts and constructive dialogue on these important issues.

10. Artificial Intelligence and technology in policing

10.1 Earlier this month, I met with Andrew Hendry, Police Scotland's Chief Data and Information Officer to discuss the use of technology in policing. It was clear from the meeting that there are a number of shorter-term efficiencies that could be achieved by introducing automation technologies within Police Scotland's corporate support services.

10.2 We also discussed the use of Artificial Intelligence and specifically Live Facial Recognition in policing. The Authority continues to work in partnership with Police Scotland and the Biometrics Commissioner to develop a national conversation on the use of Live Facial Recognition in policing. This seeks to build understanding and awareness of how the technology could help keep people safe, and the ethical and human rights checks and balances that should underpin its potential use if it was adopted. Any introduction of AI and new technology would require public consultation and engagement prior to any formal decisions regarding implementation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

