

Meeting	Authority Meeting
Date	30 June 2020
Location	Video Conference
Title of Paper	Policing Response to COVID-19
Presented By	Chief Constable Iain Livingstone QPM
Recommendation to Members	For Discussion
Appendix Attached	No

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Scottish Police Authority on Operation TALLA.

Members are invited to discuss the content of this paper.

1. Background and Governance

- 1.1 Operation TALLA is Police Scotland's response to COVID-19. In February 2020, a command structure and operational capability was established. The Chief Constable appointed DCC Graham as the Strategic Lead for Police Scotland.
- 1.2 Police Scotland's response to the pandemic is under constant review to ensure it remains appropriate and comprehensive. Since the emergence of this crisis, there has continued to be considerable attention on the key and emerging issues arising, in what remains a very dynamic and changing set of circumstances.
- 1.3 The Chief Constable has placed a high priority on delivering appropriate leadership and oversight mechanisms for transition through the evolving phases of the crisis, whilst recognising the requirement for an ongoing focus on delivering effective policing across Scotland's communities, capturing learning, leading change and supporting our people towards a 'new normality' in time. Since the last Board Meeting, Scotland has moved from 'lockdown' to Phase One of the 'route-map through and out of the crisis'. Police Scotland has adapted to meet these new challenges, which are detailed throughout this paper. The Op TALLA command structure will continue to evolve through this and subsequent phases of the route-map.
- 1.4 The organisational governance structures ensure appropriate leadership, internal assurance, decision-making capability and information flow. External engagement is maintained through regular discussion with the Vice Chair of the SPA and the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, as well as active participation in many forums including Scottish Government Resilience Room meetings (chaired by the First Minister), the Strategic Coordinating Group and national, regional and local resilience partnership arrangements.
- 1.5 Police Scotland continues to prepare for the future and moving towards a 'new normality'. A Strategic Oversight Board (SOB) has been set up to oversee the long-term success of the three strategic outcomes communicated publicly by the Chief Constable in support of the Scottish Government aims in tackling the crisis:
 1. To support the reduction of deaths and harms caused directly by COVID-19;
 2. To enhance public confidence and trust in policing in Scotland;

3. To protect and improve the safety, health and wellbeing of our people.

The board will focus on Serving the Public, Supporting Our People and Informing and Shaping Change and Process, to enhance overall organisational efficiency and effectiveness and maintain public and partner trust and confidence in Police Scotland reflecting the scale and importance to the organisation of transition to the new normal.

2. Maintaining service delivery and critical service police functions

- 2.1 Operational policing activities have changed enormously since the implementation of Operation TALLA. Volume of calls, types of incidents and levels of recorded crime, while still markedly different to those experienced at comparable times in previous years, are beginning to stabilise into a recognisable pattern.
- 2.2 Police Scotland remains committed to the provision of an effective and responsive policing capability in all our local divisions and specialist support capabilities during this time of heightened concern and tension.
- 2.3 In recent weeks there have been highly publicised public protests, which brings a new dynamic given the incompatibility of these mass gatherings with the prevailing COVID-19 legislation and social distancing guidelines. Police Scotland continues to adopt a balance between the need to protect lives by enforcing these regulations against the enshrined rights to protest. The 4Es approach, which has been utilised so successfully by Police Scotland to date, continues to be the style and tone of policing these events, however Police Scotland does still maintain the capacity and capabilities to deal with any instances of disorder should they arise.
- 2.4 Throughout the organisational change caused by the pandemic there has not been, nor will there be, any change in Police Scotland's key priority to protect vulnerable individuals and reduce harm. The core functions of Local Policing and Specialised Divisions continue to operate effectively and Police Scotland continues to record and investigate crime, work to prevent harm and maintain order. Whilst the demands on Police Scotland have changed and the organisation shape and structure has flexed to adapt to absence and home-working, the resolve and ability to keep the people and communities of Scotland safe has remained undiminished.

3. Protecting and supporting our workforce

- 3.1 After the initial increased levels of absence in Police Scotland which peaked on 29 March reflecting those requiring to self-isolate, shield, or displaying COVID-19 symptoms, absence is now similar to the numbers seen pre COVID-19. There may however be a rise in the coming weeks as the Scottish Government Test and Protect strategy is implemented. As of 11 June, the number of people reporting absent is 900.
- 3.2 A Short Life Working Group (SLWG) has been established to look at the impact of Test & Protect and further explore the physical distancing practices in place across Police Scotland sites. This is in order to maximise the protection of our workforce and to mitigate, as far as possible, the risk of our people being traced as a close contact.
- 3.3 The findings from the SLWG will continue to be presented via the Operation Talla Silver and Gold Groups for relevant policy decisions to be made and any necessary review and implementation of revised working practices.
- 3.4 A Data Protection Impact Assessment has been prepared and signed off by Police Scotland's Data Protection Officer that provides confirmation and reassurance to our officers and staff that they are able to provide personal contact details to NHS Scotland of individuals they have been in close contact with, even where the contacts may be members of the public. Operational Guidance was issued on Friday 5 June that provides clarity to officers and staff on what to do if they are contacted by the NHS as a result of Test & Protect.
- 3.5 Police Scotland continues to be forward thinking, considering what preparations need to be made to keep our people safe at work as we transition from the current crisis towards a 'new normal'. Over the last month a comprehensive Risk Assessment, "Working Safely – Adapting & working within your premises during COVID-19", and related guidance has been developed that provides staff and supervisors with important information around keeping themselves and their teams safe within the workplace.
- 3.6 In April 2020, the Scottish Police Federation issued an improvement notice to Police Scotland regarding concerns surrounding the control measures to be followed when police officers carry out breath testing procedures which later resulted in a report sent to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in May 2020. The HSE duly

investigated the levels of PPE and guidance afforded to officers in these circumstances and deemed that current procedures are proportionate and fully reflective of the risk assessed. HSE have confirmed they will be taking no further action on this matter. Police Scotland will continue to review all instructions and guidelines surrounding interactions with the public throughout this evolving and dynamic situation.

- 3.7 Securing suitable PPE is ongoing and the dedicated Logistics cell has continued to provide extensive training, equipping and resupply, operating on a 24/7 basis. At present, over 14,000 frontline police officers and staff have been trained and equipped or re-supplied with the necessary PPE. Recent protest activity across the country and the resulting resourcing implications have led to an uplift in PPE usage. Current stocks are adequate to absorb this and moving forward it is factored into our calculations for restocking. Supply lines remain fragile and this will be a consistent challenge.
- 3.8 The Police Scotland COVID-19 testing regime continues to provide reassurance to officers and staff who are symptomatic and to assist in returning them to work as soon as possible. As of 11 June Police Scotland has arranged for over 1100 employees to be tested. In addition, and in recognition of some of the unique challenges faced by officers and staff, since 14 May Police Scotland secured testing for asymptomatic officers and staff who have been exposed or potentially exposed to COVID-19 and over 200 tests have been arranged. The total number positive results since testing was instigated is approximately 200. Advice is available through our People Direct facility to supervisors and staff to provide additional guidance and reassurance around testing, and further work continues to establish if such testing could become more available as the Scottish Government Test and Protect strategy is implemented.
- 3.9 Police Scotland continues to be engaged in discussions about the opportunities to introduce workplace antibody testing should a valid test become available in Scotland.
- 3.10 There have been approximately 600 COVID-19 related near-miss forms since Op TALLA commenced and in the most recent reported week (2 - 8 June) the figures have dropped from a peak of over 90 in the middle of May to around 50. This initial peak was attributable to a newly introduced process for requesting an asymptomatic COVID-19 screening test due to an occupational risk requiring the submission of a 'near-miss form. The number of incidents where a lack of PPE is identified has not risen.

3.11 Police Scotland continues to support home working to protect our staff. There remains a focus on increased procurement and distribution of laptops, other ICT products and ongoing technical support in relation to the software required to facilitate this. In addition a range of supportive agile working options and facilities have been introduced with greater flexibility in the application of key employment policy provisions.

4. Wellbeing

4.1 The wellbeing of all officers and staff continues to be a priority which underpins all approaches through this crisis. The organisation has adopted critical workforce strategies, interventions and actions to protect wellbeing.

4.2 An agile and focused communications strategy is in place delivering high quality information to officers and staff on an ongoing basis. The dissemination of accurate, up to date and relevant guidance and advice is critical to the workforce as the COVID-19 situation evolves. The service will continue to build its channels, routes and resources ensuring the workforce remains informed, educated and reassured.

4.3 In addition to a range of supportive and agile working options and facilities, greater flexibility is being deployed in the application of key employment policy provisions. These include payment options, leave, medical certification, training and retiral. The Service continues to explore all avenues to support its officers and staff and the management of personal and organisational demands that the current situation places on them.

4.4 In recognition of the wider personal, social and societal implications and restrictions that COVID-19 and current Government advice places on our officers and staff, a range of interventions are already in place. These include promotion and encouragement of all flexible resourcing solutions and the creation of a new 'COVID-19 special leave' option to address caring responsibilities created by the pandemic.

4.5 Work is ongoing to optimise social distancing and infection control within the workplace through a variety of means including home working (as discussed above), identification of non-critical roles and creation of a 'cleaning portal' to enhance existing organisational regimes.

- 4.6 A collective agreement has been established between the SPA/PSoS and trade unions (both Unite and Unison) to ensure that the service is able to maintain public safety, whilst appropriately supporting staff health and wellbeing, in response to COVID-19.
- 4.7 It is recognised that our workforce is full of dedicated and extraordinary people who are truly committed to making a difference. It is immensely frustrating for staff who are at home, due to their role being considered non-business critical at this time as previously referred to. As a result an Operation Talla Service Delivery Support Pool has been created, providing our staff with the opportunity to volunteer and be a part of our critical response to COVID-19.
- 4.8 A working group of key stakeholders, staff associations and unions has been established to develop the investment in wellbeing for the current financial year. This group will identify wellbeing issues across the service, agree priority areas, desired outcomes and develop an implementation plan which will be delivered by the central wellbeing team. The group will collaborate with the Survey Actions SLWG, which is running in tandem, to ensure cohesion with respective outputs and action planning. Two meetings have already taken place during May; an inaugural meeting followed by a longer 'board-blasting' session where representatives shared their thoughts and ideas on where investment could be 'spent to save' in the longer term. The SLWG work will be concluded by the next quarterly wellbeing update and progress will be shared on the decisions made and delivery against the implementation plan.

5. Providing an appropriate policing response

- 5.1 On the 27 March 2020, emergency legislation in the form of the Health Protection (Coronavirus) (Restrictions) (Scotland) Regulations 2020 and Coronavirus Act 2020 came into effect in Scotland. Policing has a crucial role to play to ensure the public cooperate with these new regulations to limit the spread of the virus.
- 5.2 From the outset, the Chief Constable and Gold Commander have both outlined a clear and consistent policing style, posture and deployment methodology. Officers and staff continue to apply common sense and engage in a friendly and courteous manner and enforcement action is only taken where efforts to engage, explain and encourage have been exhausted (the 4Es). From the

introduction and in relation to the new legislation, through to 11 June 2020, police officers across Scotland have engaged with individuals approximately 51,000 times. Over 92% of all these interactions result in no enforcement action being taken with the remaining interventions resulting in some form of enforcement, the vast majority of these being a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). Since the move to 'Phase One' the volume of enforcement activity has dropped even further, with the issue of an FPN or arrest becoming a rarity. It has been assessed that the biggest contributory factor to the volume of intervention activity has been the weather. Daily peaks coincide with warm, sunny days and this also drives call volume into the organisation as incidents relating to lack of adherence to the guidelines increase.

- 5.3 Further legislative obligations were placed on Police Scotland on the 8 June 2020 with the introduction of The Health Protection (Coronavirus, International Travel) (Scotland) Regulations 2020, designed to mitigate the risk posed by persons entering the country who may be infectious. While Police Scotland officers will have the powers to enforce these regulations, UK Border Force will be the lead agency to enforce this particular provision and detailed guidance has been issued to officers alongside procedures to limit the burden on local policing resources.
- 5.4 Police Scotland continues to monitor hate crime and community tensions working closely with partners and stakeholders developing and enhancing existing working relationships since the initial stages of this crisis. Police Scotland continues to work with potentially targeted communities and engage with our established group of Community Advisors in order to promote reporting of such incidents.
- 5.5 As lockdown measures gradually ease, Police Scotland is seeing an increase in demand in terms of non COVID-19 related incidents and crime trends. This is not an increase in annual levels, rather levels are beginning to return towards those seen pre-COVID-19.
- 5.6 Highly publicised protests have occurred in many areas of the country in the last few weeks, particularly over the weekend of 6-7th June. These protests may continue over the coming weeks creating a new level of demand on the organisation. These pose challenges in terms of public perception and policing as they breach current social distancing guidelines however consist of members of the public who wish to exercise their fundamental right to assemble and protest.

6. Maintaining trust and confidence

- 6.1 The changing demands on Police Scotland, the adoption of new methods to meet these and the unprecedented legislative powers afforded to officers, means maintaining trust and confidence of the populace has never been more important. Police Scotland continues to use a range of measures to monitor this impact, notably two public surveys: the 'Your Police Survey' and the 'User Experience Survey'.
- 6.2 The continuous Your Police survey was launched on 9th April, 2020 on Police Scotland's Citizen Space platform. It was the first of its kind in the UK to involve the public in a conversation about policing the pandemic. As at 25th May, 2020 the survey had received a total of 20,177 responses from communities across all policing divisions. This makes it the largest public engagement by Police Scotland and relies on proactive communication from all divisions and our local partners.
- 6.3 Overall, there remains a high level of public confidence in Scottish policing and satisfaction in our services during the health crisis. Confidence in policing has increased significantly – by 20% - compared to pre-Covid-19. Over the 8 week reporting period an average of 63% of respondents have confirmed they have confidence in their local police. In the latest reporting week, confidence levels reached 68%. Survey activity is being reported weekly to ORM, as part of a composite national report, designed to ensure any changes in levels of public confidence are identified quickly, mitigating actions are developed and delivered, with activity tracked and outcomes reported.
- 6.4 Looking towards the future and as the Force returns to business as usual, retaining a clear focus on public confidence and providing longer term governance of this activity, will be crucial to maintain and develop current high levels of public confidence in policing. Therefore, a recommendation was approved at the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) on 10 June, 2020 to instigate a Public Confidence Governance Board, to be chaired by ACC Hawkins. The Board will focus on oversight of public confidence in policing at a Force level, while also scrutinising divisional levels of performance. The inaugural Board meeting will take place in July, 2020 and will report monthly to SLB.
- 6.5 Innovative and open data sharing alongside pro-active publication of information for the duration of the pandemic response had provided unparalleled insight into Police Scotland's activities, when

compared to other UK police services. The dedicated Operation TALLA Information Cell continues to support this purpose. Police Scotland continues to provide a daily bulletin internally and to partners to report good practice, challenges and better inform readers of the contemporary policing picture. Police Scotland continues to provide information to the UK and Scottish governments on issues such as PPE levels, absence and the co-operation of the public with physical distancing measures. Intelligence is also shared with forces in England & Wales to identify emerging threats or trends. Police Scotland also releases a weekly bulletin which is provided to the SPA and published on the internet to provide the public with information on the current policing landscape.

- 6.6 The national Community Impact Assessment continues to be updated on a daily basis. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EqHRIA) processes continue to be refined to ensure that they reflect the changing nature of Police Scotland's response to COVID-19 and how that impacts on certain sectors and communities. This includes the ongoing work with the Scotland's Children's Commissioner on a specific Children and Young People's Rights Impact Assessment.
- 6.7 The Independent Advisory Group (IAG) chaired by Mr John Scott QC, continues to be strongly supported by Police Scotland in its efforts to provide rigorous and impartial advice and guidance on the use of the new police powers during this crisis. Relevant data has been shared with the group and a series of interviews facilitated by HMICS have been conducted with officers and staff. These interviews have been well received by participants, who have freely provided information to the interviewers. The feedback from officers and staff has been positive regarding Police Scotland's response to COVID-19. Further data sharing has already been planned and is currently being progressed.

7. Supporting partners

- 7.1 Police Scotland continues to play its part in what is a collaborative multi-agency response to the Coronavirus crisis. Police Scotland continues as a key member of the Strategic Coordination Group, which has moved from being police led to being Local Authority led as focus shifts from immediate crisis response to a renewal phase.
- 7.2 Engagement continues with national and local governments, representatives from the SPA, HMICS, COSLA and SOLACE and wider engagement with UK policing colleagues through the National

Police Chief's Council and Strategic Capabilities Board. There are many layers to this engagement as we support the response and drive collaboration, providing detailed operational context and explore the high level cross sector strategic issues.

- 7.3 We continue to provide regular briefings to Scottish Government ministers, the SGoRR ministerial meetings and to the First Minister's daily briefings.
- 7.4 There has been extensive consultation and collaboration with stakeholders and Scottish Government departments as the current COVID-19 guidance is reviewed and new legislation is considered.
- 7.5 Local partnerships continue to be effective with Resilience Partnerships building on the already strong local relationships. This has provided valuable support to local policing and wider public service delivery as Scotland has progressed into 'Phase One' against the challenging backdrop of good weather.
- 7.6 Reporting to the SPA on a weekly basis continues, providing a quick time picture of emerging issues and addressing the evolving circumstances and impact of COVID-19 on the policing landscape.

8. Post COVID Planning

- 8.1 In a climate of continued global uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, Police Scotland is preparing for the medium and longer term implications of the pandemic and possible impacts of a number of scenarios. To plan and prepare for returning to a new normality, a Renewal & Continuous Improvement Group has been developed. The renewal strategy will focus on three key areas: Supporting Our People, External Service Delivery and Shaping Processes/Managing Change.
- 8.2 Tactical policing options, consistent with the current policing style and tone used throughout the policing operational response to COVID-19, have been developed. The options focus on maintaining the '4Es' communication and engagement throughout the phases of easing lockdown restrictions. An assessment to capture the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation has been compiled. The assessment will capture the current position within each business area in relation to their critical functions and understand what recovery work has been undertaken to date.
- 8.3 An Organisational Learning Group has been established which will support the ability to identify, capture, communicate and action

organisational learning in relation to our planning for, response to and recovery from COVID-19.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 The finance team continues to work closely with all tiers of the Operation TALLA command structure to monitor spending in relation to COVID-19.
- 9.2 The incremental costs of Operation Talla are being recorded using a specific job code in the financial ledger. Using this data and information from Procurement, a weekly report on the incremental Operation Talla spend incurred and committed to since the response to COVID-19 commenced in February /March 2020 has been produced. As at 1 June 2020, the total cost of £6.09m had been incurred on goods received such as PPE and hygiene supplies, overtime and TOIL specifically in relation of Operation Talla.
- 9.3 Costs are on the basis of actual orders receipted. Of this headline figure, supplies such as PPE and hygiene products accounts for £3.61m of the total spend. Please note, this figure is based on orders received, where as in previous reports it was based on orders placed (total commitment: £11.06m). This change has been made due to the risk that not all orders will be fulfilled and on the basis that Procurement also actively cancel orders to manage the stock position.
- 9.4 Focus has begun to shift towards the full financial impact of operating in a COVID-19 environment over a longer period across the full SPA budget, both the direct incremental costs of COVID-19, noted above, as well as all other indirect costs, savings and financial impacts that cannot be readily or easily identified. The Finance Team have produced an initial top down financial assessment of the full year impact based on a high level assessment using the best available information. This has been submitted separately to the Resources Committee.
- 9.5 Moving forward, in alignment with continuing to focus on the full organisational financial position, rather than producing a standalone Operation Talla report, the impact of COVID-19 will be incorporated into monthly period end finance reports. The next step thereafter is to complete a bottom up, detailed forecast, which will be carried out as part of the quarter one forecasting process with the full involvement of budget holders and which will be maintained as a dynamic rolling forecast thereafter. Subsequent long term financial

planning will consider the impact of the 'new normal' on the service including our workforce, ICT, estate and fleet.

- 9.6 Along with the focus on the longer terms budgetary impact of operating in a COVID-19 environment, Finance will be providing ongoing support and challenge to ensure that financial control, governance and discipline are maintained.

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Police Scotland remains committed to providing essential policing services which will help to save lives and support the NHS through this public health crisis. The importance of ensuring co-operation with the social distancing measures throughout the phased easing of lockdown restrictions is paramount, however Police Scotland recognises the responsibility to use the unprecedented legislative powers in a manner that is compatible with the organisational values and the principle of policing by consent.
- 10.2 Police Scotland will continue to be open and transparent with the sharing of data and information. On that basis weekly updates are provided to the public, detailing the operational demands, resource availability and the numbers of Coronavirus legislation interventions that have occurred.
- 10.3 In response to the phased changes to Scottish Government regulations and guidance, the service will maintain the approach to policing in Scotland that has gained wide support from the public to date. This will include dynamic changes to the many physical distancing measures in place across Scotland and may also therefore require the development of guidance and messaging internally and externally reflecting different approaches in Scotland than in other parts of the UK.
- 10.4 The police role in enforcement of the COVID-19 regulations is likely to continue diminishing, but the demands placed on policing as a result of the pandemic will be no less as a result. In addition, other existing, routine and suppressed demands are returning, along with many of the exceptional demands arising due to COVID-19. Whilst the specific responsibilities and role of the service in policing the public health measures continue to change and evolve, the focus on saving lives, maintaining public support and confidence and protecting the safety and wellbeing of our people will remain central to our approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are invited to discuss the content of this report.