



<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Authority Meeting</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>27 June 2024</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>COSLA, Edinburgh</b>
<b>Title of Paper</b>	<b>SPA Chief Executive's Report</b>
<b>Presented By</b>	<b>Lynn Brown, Chief Executive</b>
<b>Recommendation to Members</b>	<b>For Discussion</b>
<b>Appendix Attached</b>	<b>No</b>

**PURPOSE**

To update Members on activities carried out by the Authority's Chief Executive since the last Authority meeting held on 23 May 2024.

Members are recommended to consider this report and to raise any matters for clarification or further detail with the Chief Executive.

## 1. Background

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update on key Authority business not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

## 2. Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill

- 2.1 I highlighted to the Board in May 2024 that the Authority attended the Criminal Justice Committee on Wednesday 22 May 2024 to give evidence on the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) Bill. The Authority was represented by Fiona McQueen, Vice Chair, Katharina Kasper, Chair of our Complaints and Conduct Committee and Robin Johnston, Head of Legal.
- 2.3 Since that evidence session, the Authority has provided further written information to the Committee in relation to two related areas of interest. These cover the Authority's oversight of Police Scotland's use on [Non-Disclosure Agreements](#), and information in relation to [criminal and misconduct proceedings running in parallel](#). Both updates have been published on the Authority's website at the links above.

## 3. HMICS Strategic Review of the Scottish Police Authority

- 3.1 His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland's (HMICS) published his [Strategic Review of the Scottish Police Authority](#) on 11 June 2024. The purpose of this review was to assess the state, efficiency and effectiveness of the Authority in fulfilling our core role and meeting statutory obligations.
- 3.2 I am delighted that the Review recognised the significant improvement delivered since our last inspection in 2019. The Authority embarked on a significant improvement journey in 2020 to strengthen its role and contribution across the policing system. HMICS has acknowledged and praised the progress that has been made to develop effective governance and scrutiny arrangements for policing.
- 3.3 I want to pay tribute to the Board for setting the strategic direction that has guided the organisation over the last 4-years. I also want to publicly thank my staff team who have delivered these improvements. The drive to build on this remains our focus. HMICS highlights several areas for further development which will be taken forward through our programme of continuous improvement.

#### **4. Best Value Review for Policing**

- 4.1 Following on from publication of the HMICS Review above, it has been indicated verbally that HMICS in conjunction with Audit Scotland will seek to undertake a Best Value Review for Policing in 2025.
- 4.2 The Best Value Review for Policing will consider Best Value across Police Scotland, Forensic Services and the Authority and I expect to receive further information in due course.
- 4.2 The statutory duty for best value in the Police Service of Scotland is the responsibility of the Chief Constable. The Authority role is to oversee the delivery of best value and the Authority's Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee has lead responsibility for this. An [Internal Audit report on Best Value Readiness](#) was reported to the Committee in May 2024. [Police Scotland provided an Update on Best Value](#) to the same meeting.

#### **5. Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24**

- 5.1 I am pleased to confirm that the Scottish Police Authority has submitted its accounts for 2023-24 to our Auditor. This has been submitted by the agreed deadline and marks an important milestone and aims to support laying the accounts in Parliament in the Autumn.

#### **6. Scottish Government Spend Approval Process**

- 6.1 The Scottish Government has put in place a process that requires all new contracts above £1m to be additionally approved by them. The Authority and all other public bodies must submit an Accountable Officer spend control template for any new contract to be approved by Scottish Government.
- 6.2 This process creates is an additional approval steps that is leading to contracts taking longer to be approved. This is having a particular impact on the delivery of the 2024-25 capital programme that Police Scotland have highlighted to me and has been discussed at the June Resources Committee.
- 6.3 The Committee has requested that I write to Scottish Government to outlines the challenges this additional process is creating. I will outline the challenges and need for the swift approval of contract to ensure we are able to spend our approved budget and so that the

service can deliver key capital projects that will modernise the estate and improve working conditions for police officers and staff.

## **7. Biometrics in Criminal Justice Conference**

- 7.1 On the 19 June 2024, the Authority together with the Biometrics Commissioner and Police Scotland hosted a Biometrics conference titled "Biometrics in Criminal Justice: Exploring and Understanding the use of Biometrics in Scotland".
- 7.2 The conference brought together practitioners, academics, and subject matter experts on biometrics within criminal justice and prompted evidence-based discussion and increased awareness of the Scottish Biometrics landscape. We were delighted to welcome a host of representatives from across policing, academia, and government from across the United Kingdom.
- 7.3 Panels and speaker presentations covered an array of topics, discussing the value of biometrics, taking into account human rights and ethical implications. These inputs considered the success of biometrics and how Scotland's criminal justice system can take forward learning from the implementation of biometrics in other jurisdictions.
- 7.4 I want to thank the Authority's corporate team who have worked closely with Police Scotland and the Biometrics Commissioner's Office to develop and deliver the conference.

## **8. Independent Custody Visiting Scotland (ICVS) Conference**

- 8.1 ICVS provides independent scrutiny of Police Scotland custody provision across the country. The ICVS Annual Conference was held on the 8 June 2024, during volunteer's week. The conference was attended by our volunteers, staff and representatives from Police Scotland, the Scottish Prisons Service, the Violence Reduction Unit. Our Vice Chair Fiona McQueen and ICVS Champion Catriona Stewart also attended to represent the board. I am very grateful to all the speakers who gave valuable inputs on the day.
- 8.2 The conference recognised the dedication and commitment from all Independent Custody visitors who volunteer for the scheme. Members of the Authority committed to ensuring visitors' voices and insights continue to be heard.
- 8.3 The ICVS Annual Report was presented to the Policing Performance Committee on 11 June 2024 and highlighted that during 2023/24,

ICVS carried out over 1,000 visits to custody centres and spoke to over 1,500 people in custody. Over this reporting period ICVs have not reported any breaches of human rights or highlighted any instances of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of arrested individuals, as described by United Nations Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

## **9. Who Cares? Scotland Corporate Parenting Awards 2024**

- 9.1 As a Corporate Parent, the Authority has specific duties and responsibilities to support those who are care experienced to ensure the rights of individuals are upheld.
- 9.2 The Authority published its first Corporate Parenting Plan in December 2021 and since then has made considerable progress to undertake our duties as a Corporate Parent. This has been through consistent collaboration and partnership with other Corporate Parents, such as Police Scotland, and through an established relationship with Who Cares? Scotland. This is a charity that supports the care experienced community and provides support to Corporate Parents fulfilling their duties.
- 9.3 We are delighted that our work as a Corporate Parent has been recognised by Who Cares? Scotland. The Authority has been shortlisted as a nominee in the Corporate Parenting Awards 2024 in the following categories:
- Care Conscious Employer
  - Creating Transformation Award
  - Positive Partnerships Award - for the Emergency Services Engagement Event
  - Sam Curran for the Equality, Respect & Love Award
- 9.4 I would like to thank all the team at the Authority in helping us to undertake our duties as Corporate Parents and to our partners in helping us in our delivery of these duties. We will provide an update following the awards ceremony, which is due to take place on Thursday 22 August 2024.

## **10. Scottish Railways Policing Committee**

- 10.1 A meeting of the Scottish Railway Policing Committee (SRPC) took place on Tuesday 4 June 2024 in the Authority's Glasgow office. Tom Halpin was in attendance and represented the Authority on this committee.

10.2 A report summarising the key issues covered at this meeting is included at Appendix A. Further detail can be found on the British Transport Police Authority website. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for Thursday 19 September 2024.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are invited to discuss the contents of this report.

## **Summary report from the Scottish Railway Policing Committee**

**Tuesday 4 June 2024**

**SPA Member – Tom Halpin**

### **Strategic Risks**

Committee was presented with a strategic risk update, noting that this was for BTP as a whole and that some risks – particularly partnership working – would have a more positive risk score in D Division (Scotland) if reported separately.

It was agreed that during the upcoming annual risk review, all risk owners will be asked if there are differences in D Division that need to be captured, and that while a single risk register across BTP would continue, these local differences will be presented alongside so they can be considered by the Committee.

### **Policing Plan Performance Q4 / Year End 2023-24**

The year end performance report noted an 18% increase in D Division crime volume in 2023-24, while recognising that this remains below the UK average. There were improvements in solve rates for violent and sexual offences, and solve rates across the different crime types remain higher in D Division than in the rest of BTP.

Members noted that disruption and delay remain the biggest concerns and have increased from 2022-23, driven by an increase in trespass and disruption on trains. An increase in fatalities on the rail network was also noted. A multi-agency approach is being taken to addressing these areas, looking at the full spectrum of causational factors, from criminal behaviour to level crossing misuse and vulnerable persons.

Members heard that BTP's Harm Reduction Team (HaRT) were working in D Division in relation to vulnerability. SPA Members advised of the work of the Authority and Police Scotland's Joint Research and Evidence Forum (JREF), and the possibility of research being carried out in this area. SPA staff will work with BTP to explore this potential opportunity.

Members discussed the challenges of the current courts system in Scotland and the impact on both police and victim experience, hearing an example of a single day when 10 BTP officers from D Division were all in court.



## **Joint working Police Scotland / BTP**

Members recognised the ongoing joint working between BTP and Police Scotland, particularly in relation to Operation Protector, which seeks to target those involved in Serious and Organised Crime and safeguard individuals and communities impacted by County Lines groups, and the National Human Trafficking Unit.

Members noted that Police Scotland are continuing to develop the technical infrastructure to allow BTP access to their Vulnerable Persons Database.

## **Industry Voice**

ScotRail's Head of Safety, Risk and Assurance presented to Committee on their Travel Safe Team. The team was introduced in October 2021, and since then have been working closely with BTP, sharing intelligence in order to support customers and colleagues in the promotion of a safe railway environment, both on trains and in stations.

Members heard that the team had primarily focused on the West of Scotland, where six hotspots for anti-social behaviour, theft and vandalism have been reduced to three. The team have also intervened in 12 suspected suicide incidents. ScotRail are now looking to expand the set-up to the East of the country, and aspire to covering the North at some point in the future.

Members recognised the positive impact the team had had and welcomed the joint working with BTP that was taking place.

## **BTP Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems Pilot**

A verbal update was provided on this pilot, noting that BTP did not foresee any use of RPAS (drones) in Scotland prior to early 2025, and that any use would only take place following appropriate consultation.

SPA Members advised that a Memorandum of Understanding is in place between the Authority and Police Scotland in relation to the introduction of new technology, and that this may be useful for BTP. This has since been shared.

## **Railway Mission**

A chaplain from the Railway Mission briefed Committee on the role of the Mission in Scotland in providing pastoral care to users of the railways, advising that they provide independent, confidential support to those who need it, with an overall focus on intervention and prevention.



Members welcomed the opportunity to be reminded of the role of the Mission in supporting both police officers and railway users, and recognised the value of the work carried out by the team and the wider third sector.

### **Public Consultation Survey**

The latest D Division results from BTP's ongoing Public Consultation Survey were presented to Committee. Respondents had been recruited from Glasgow City, West Dunbartonshire, Falkirk and Edinburgh City, as the main travel hubs. 65% said they agreed that BTP Officers keep passengers safe when travelling on the railway network, and 54% said BTP Officers understand the concerns of passengers.

Members heard that anti-social behaviour was the number one issue raised in the survey and noted that this qualitative data was particularly useful when analysed alongside the quarterly performance information.

### **Audit and Inspection Update**

BTP is currently tracking 24 open recommendations from force-wide Government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) audits and 42 from HMICFRS inspections. This is an improvement from the report presented at the previous Committee meeting, with 22 actions having been successfully closed in the last quarter.

Members recognised the positive results in D Division (Scotland) where all property stores have again achieved 100% compliance in property store audits. In relation to Crime and Incident Audits, it was noted that compliance ratings for BTP Scotland were higher than across BTP as a whole.

### **Annual Review of the Terms of Reference and Memorandum of Understanding**

Members reviewed and confirmed they were content with the Committee terms of reference and existing BTPA/SPA memorandum of understanding relating to the operation of the Committee.