

Report To:	Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel	Date:	5 June 2025
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	P&F/03/25
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Subject:	Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel Update Report		

1.0 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 ☐ For Decision ☒ For Information/Noting
- 1.2 The report informs the panel of local and national initiatives, reviews, and consultations and, where appropriate, informs Members of potential future agenda items relevant to Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and local impacts.
- 1.3 This report is intended to draw these elements together with a view to informing and shaping future meeting agendas as appropriate and raising awareness of emerging issues.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the panel:
1. notes the current and emerging local and national issues relating to Police and Fire & Rescue matters;

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

3.0 THE SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY BOARD

3.1 The meeting of SPA Board was held on the 27 March 2025 <https://www.spa.police.uk/what-we-do/governance-meetings/board-meeting/27-march-2025/> and considered several updates, including: -

- Joint Equality Outcomes
- Community Confidence Action Research – Final Report
- Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL)
- Mental health taskforce update
- Criminal justice efficiencies
- Annual Police Plan 25-26

3.2 New Joint Equality Outcomes Published

Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) have introduced a new set of Joint Equality Outcomes for Policing (2025–2029) to ensure policing is more inclusive, representative, and trusted by all communities. These outcomes were shaped through extensive engagement and data analysis, aligning with broader strategic goals like the 2030 Vision and Policing Together Strategy.

The seven equality outcomes focus on both employment and service delivery:

1. Confidence in Reporting: Increase trust among minoritised communities to report crime and concerns.
2. Accessible Services: Improve access to information and communication tailored to diverse needs.
3. Community Engagement: Enhance engagement to shape services using community insights.
4. Violence Against Women and Girls: Support societal change and ensure responsive policing.
5. Representation and Voice: Improve representation and influence of minoritised groups in policing.
6. Inclusive Leadership: Strengthen leadership skills in equality, diversity, and inclusion.
7. Workplace Support: Better meet the needs of minoritised colleagues through improved resources and policies.

The report can be viewed at the following link <https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/equality-outcomes-for-policing-2025-2029/>

3.3 Community Confidence Action Research – Final Report

On 27 February 2025 the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and Police Scotland held an online event to mark the conclusion and launch the final report of the Community Confidence Action Research Project, which ran from 2021 to 2024. The project engaged with four communities across Scotland (Letham, Levenmouth, Irvine Fullarton, and Wick) to understand factors contributing to lower police confidence and to collaboratively develop local initiatives to improve it. Findings from surveys and community discussions across all four areas, despite a strong community spirit, highlighted concerns such as anti-social behaviour, a lack of visible policing, and a perceived decline in community facilities. The final report, considered by the Authority's Policing Performance Committee, offers valuable insights for shaping future local policing strategies. The Authority expressed gratitude to community groups, local authorities, and project officials for their contributions.

The final report can be viewed at the following link <https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/project-final-report-december-2024-community-confidence-action-research/>

3.4 Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL)

Supporting Opportunities for Life (SOL) is a partnership project between being delivered by our officers in partnership with charity Aid and Abet and the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit. Peer mentors will work with officers in West Lothian and engage with young people aged 10-25 in schools, colleges and in the community.

Through the use of early intervention inputs, SOL will help to build and support the young people to break that cycle of offending, encourage them to make positive life choices and identify pathways out of offending.

3.5 Mental health taskforce update

The taskforce has made progress in several areas: all Contact, Command and Control (C3) personnel are trained in the Mental Health Pathway (a collaboration with NHS24), which has led to over 2,000 more referrals and a reduction of over 41,932 officer hours spent on mental health calls since training began in September 2023. All officers have access to the Mental Health Index (MHI) since September 2024, enabling them to consult with clinicians for advice and appropriate service access for individuals in mental health crisis, receiving positive feedback and reducing incident times. Additionally, in February, 70 officers attended a "train the trainer" event for Distress Brief Intervention (DBI), which allows trained officers to refer individuals in distress to relevant support agencies; over 1,900 officers are now DBI trained, with over 4,600 referrals made since 2017.

3.6 Criminal justice efficiencies

Police Scotland is actively pursuing efficiencies within the criminal justice system to improve experiences for victims, witnesses, and offenders, ultimately aiming to prioritise frontline policing. The summary case management scheme is showing significant success, particularly in Dundee, with a substantial reduction in the initial and repeat citations of witnesses, including police officers. This streamlining benefits victims, especially those of domestic abuse, by reducing court time and speeding up case resolution. Consequently, officers have more time for community policing. Police Scotland is also improving its own processes through more efficient case reporting, better use of direct measures, and enhanced demand analytics. Furthermore, the police estate is being utilised for local investigations and suspect interviews, reducing travel time for officers and increasing their presence in communities.

3.7 Annual Police Plan 25/26

The Police Fire and Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 mandates the Chief Constable to create an Annual Police Plan (APP) each year. The APP is a vital part of Police Scotland's strategic planning, supporting the delivery of the Joint Strategy for Policing (2023): Policing for a Safe, Protected and Resilient Scotland. The APP has evolved annually since Police Scotland's inception, outlining operational and organizational goals for the upcoming 12 months to enhance policing services. In 2024, Police Scotland introduced its 2030 Vision, which is being implemented through two three-year business plans. The APP for 2025/26 represents the second year of the first three-year business plan.

The plan is available to view at the following link <https://www.spa.police.uk/spa-media/1vxi5ug3/item-9-annual-police-plan.pdf>

4.0 **NATIONAL ROLL OUT OF BODY WORN CAMERAS**

- 4.1 Police Scotland has begun its national rollout of body-worn video cameras, starting in Tayside where around 750 officers will be equipped in the weeks following the March launch. Over the next 18 months, more than 10,500 cameras will be issued to frontline officers and custody staff across Scotland. Chief Constable Jo Farrell prioritised this initiative, highlighting its potential to de-escalate incidents, improve public trust, reduce complaints, enhance safety, and benefit the justice system by providing transparent evidence and faster justice. The rollout follows strong

public support and a recommendation from an independent review. The Scottish Government and the Scottish Police Authority also welcome the move, emphasising its role in increasing public confidence and officer safety, supported by the Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) system. All frontline uniformed officers and custody staff will be expected to wear and activate the cameras when using police powers. The rollout will continue across Scotland, with the Highlands and Islands and Northeast next in summer 2025.

5.0 RETAIL CRIME TASK FORCE

- 5.1 Police Scotland has launched a national Retail Crime Taskforce to address a rise in shoplifting and related offences. Funded by £3 million from the Scottish Government, the taskforce employs a four-pronged approach: prevent, pursue, protect, and prepare. The team comprises 14 officers and detectives, along with four civilian specialists, including analysts and an Architectural Liaison Officer. Uniformed officers will primarily operate in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Lanarkshire, while the Taskforce's specialist resources can assist other divisions with prevention and security measures. The unit will target repeat offenders using data and intelligence for proactive enforcement. Initiatives like direct reporting in Fife and the use of the Digital Evidence Sharing Capability (DESC) aim to improve investigation speed and justice outcomes. The Architectural Liaison Officer will advise retailers on enhancing security. The funding will also support diversionary programs and focus on repeat and organised offenders. Assistant Chief Constable Tim Mairs emphasised the unacceptable impact of retail crime on workers and the Taskforce's commitment to prevention and enforcement through partnership working. Community Safety Minister Siobhian Brown and Employment and Investment Minister Tom Arthur also welcomed the initiative and its collaborative approach with the retail sector.

6.0 MOTORCYCLE SAFETY CAMPAIGN

- 6.1 Police Scotland and Transport Scotland have released a report revealing that 269 motorcyclists died on Scotland's roads between January 2015 and August 2024, accounting for 18% of all fatalities despite motorcycles making up less than 1% of traffic. In response, Police Scotland has launched a campaign urging all road users to help reduce these deaths. Chief Superintendent Hilary Sloan is calling on motorcyclists to be aware of high-risk situations like left-hand bends and overtaking, and for other drivers to be extra vigilant for motorcyclists, especially in rural areas on weekends. The campaign involves Rider Refinement classes and targeted patrols, but relies on all road users taking responsibility and caring for each other. The Highlands, Argyll and Bute, and the Scottish Borders recorded the highest number of fatal motorcycle collisions, with most victims being men aged 46-55.

7.0 PROPORTIONATE RESPONSE TO CRIME UPDATE

- 7.1 SPA published a paper in March which presented members of the Policing Performance Committee with an update on the national roll out of Proportionate Response to Crime. The paper discusses the implementation and evaluation of the Proportionate Response to Crime (PRTC) process within Police Scotland, which aims to enhance investigative efficiency by assessing crimes early to determine proportionate lines of enquiry. The phased rollout concluded in June 2024 across various divisions, with subsequent monitoring showing that a small percentage of reports are directly filed through this process. The initiative has the potential to free significant front-line police hours, although user experience survey responses suggest generally positive public perceptions of the process. Efforts were made to ensure transparency and manage public trust, with extensive engagement and communication strategies. The process operates alongside existing assessment models like THRIVE, emphasising a proportionate investigative approach for low-threat incidents, and includes ongoing research to monitor public confidence and experience. The report concludes that the PRTC process supports a more efficient, proportionate approach to crime investigation without compromising community safety or public trust.

The paper can be viewed at <https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/proportionate-response-to-crime-19-march-2025/national-rollout-update/#publication-parent>.

8.0 SFRS WILDFIRE CAMPAIGN 2025

- 8.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service has launched its 2025 Wildfire Campaign, highlighting spring as the most critical period for wildfires in Scotland. Data shows that nearly 80% of large outdoor fires since 2010 occurred between March and May. The campaign will use social media to educate the public on responsible outdoor behaviour and direct them to the SFRS website for information on wildfire causes, prevention, and safety measures.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The table below shows whether risks and implications apply if the recommendation(s) is(are) agreed:

SUBJECT	YES	NO
Financial		X
Legal/Risk		X
Human Resources		X
Strategic (Partnership Plan/Council Plan)		X
Equalities, Fairer Scotland Duty & Children/Young People's Rights & Wellbeing		X
Environmental & Sustainability		X
Data Protection		X

9.2 Finance

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

9.3 Legal/Risk

There are no legal/risk implications contained within this report.

9.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications contained within this report.

9.5 **Strategic**

There are no strategic implications contained within this report.

10.0 **CONSULTATION**

10.1 There were no consultations required outside those noted in the report.

11.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

11.1 None