

Report To: Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel **Date:** 2 February 2023

Report By: Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development **Report No:** P&F/01/23/HS

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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 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 notes the current and emerging 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 24 Nov 2022 <https://www.spa.police.uk/meetings/authority-meetings/24-november-2022/> and considered several updates, including: -

- Parliamentary evidence – pre-budget scrutiny
- Children in custody
- Regional engagement meetings
- Mental health in policing
- Drug driving update

3.2 Parliamentary evidence – pre-budget scrutiny

On Thursday 26 October 2022, Deputy Chief Officer David Page and Chief Financial Officer James Gray, along with SPA Chief Executive Lynn Brown, provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee as part of their pre-budget scrutiny. In written submission and during oral evidence, it was reiterated the significant implications for policing in Scotland, should the flat cash settlement approach from the Scottish Government's Resource Spending Review translate into a budget settlement for 2023-24 and beyond.

3.3 Children in custody

On 15 November 2022, the Authority and Police Scotland hosted a roundtable session with a range of key partners to discuss how they can work together to reduce the number of children held in police custody. There was overwhelming agreement that holding a child or young person in police custody was inappropriate. Throughout the day, delegates focused on the overarching objective of identifying how, by working in partnership, children could be taken to alternative and more appropriate places of safety while still allowing police officers and partner organisations to undertake their duties.

3.4 Regional engagement meetings

As part of the 'Local Government Engagement Plan 2021-23' the Authority and Police Scotland hosted the latest round of regional meetings with scrutiny conveners and officials representing the North, West and East of the country. The recent meetings provided a good introduction for many newly elected councillors. There was an operational focus to the discussions which was supported by the ACC and divisional presence.

3.5 Mental health in policing

The Authority co-hosted with Police Scotland a conference looking at mental health demand on policing on Friday 9 December 2022 in Edinburgh. The event sought to bring partners together to discuss the challenges faced by policing and by those experiencing mental health.

3.6 Drug driving update

Members were assured that the internal backlog in relation to drug driving was reducing with the new outsourcing contract being implemented and additional cases now being outsourced. The committee sought assurance around the real-time information in relation to the number of cases being time barred and were assured that it is an improving picture with zero cases for September 2022.

4.0 CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 The 14 December 2022 committee took evidence on the Bail and Release from Custody (Scotland) Bill at Stage 1. The Bill makes changes to the law in two main areas:
- decisions about granting bail to people accused of a crime
 - arrangements for the release of some prisoners and the support that is provided to those who leave prison.

5.0 SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-26 INITIAL CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The SPA has conducted a review exercise to inform proposed outcomes and activities for the Corporate Strategy for the period 2023-26. This included a review of existing outcomes, and delivery against these, a strategic horizon scanning exercise, and a light touch benchmarking exercise against similar oversight organisations. The Authority are initially seeking open-ended responses to test the conclusions, with a view to consulting more widely and in a more structured way when there is a final draft of the strategy. Council officers will prepare a written response by the deadline of Monday 16 January 2023.

6.0 LOCAL POLICE PLANS 2023 – 2026 CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Section 47 of Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 states that a local commander must prepare a local police plan. The planning cycle for the development of the Local Police Plans 2023-26 has commenced. Priorities have been established through the Your Police survey mechanism, which has allowed members of the public and private and third sector organisations to tell local divisions what is important to them, and what they want officers and staff to prioritise during the lifespan of the Local Police Plan.
- 6.2 The draft Inverclyde Local Policing Plan has identified the following priorities:
- Violence, disorder and Anti-Social Behaviour
 - Protecting Vulnerable People
 - Acquisitive, Cyber and Digital Crime
 - Serious and Organised Crime
 - Road Safety and Road Crime

The plan outlines key activities, milestones, and performance measures for achieving objectives.

- 6.3 The legislation also requires the local commander to consult on the local police plan with such other persons as they consider appropriate and subsequently an invitation was made to Inverclyde Council, as a community partner, to respond to the consultation.

Council Officers will prepare a response in consultation with the Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel. As the consultation closes on 12 Feb 2023 the response will be reported to this panel at the meeting following this date.

7.0 LOCAL POLICE PLANS – A FRAMEWORK FOR SCRUTINY

- 7.1 During 2022 the Scottish Police Authority and COSLA worked in partnership with local government representatives to develop new guidance for Elected Members to support their scrutiny of local police planning. The framework for scrutiny was endorsed in December at the COSLA Police Scrutiny Conveners' Forum, which represents scrutiny arrangements for all 32 Local Authority areas.

7.2 Council Officers will report on the new guidance at the next meeting of this panel.

8.0 THE SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE BOARD

8.1 The SFRS held a board meeting on the 15 Dec 2022 <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/about-us/sfrs-board/board-meetings>, which considered general business matters, including:

- Action and decision logs
- Chair's and Chief Officer's report
- Committee reports
- Budget reports
- Draft Corporate Parenting Plan and Action Plan 2023-26
- Health and Safety Annual Report 2021-22
- Budget Strategy 2023-24 (private session)

The minutes from this meeting were not yet published at the time of this report.

8.2 As a Corporate Parent, SFRS must prepare, publish and review a 'Corporate Parenting Plan', which details how they will exercise their Corporate Parenting responsibilities and Under Part 9 of Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. SFRS have prepared a draft Corporate Parenting Plan 2023-2026 for publication in January 2023. The plan was presented for noting to the SFRS board on 15 December 2022.

The six outcomes are:

- SFRS will have built relationships with organisations representing those who are care experienced. We will have listened to the voice of people who are Care Experienced and considered their needs in our policy, planning and performance' activities.
- SFRS services and opportunities are known and accessible to all care experienced individuals, including care leavers, with no barriers.
- We have consulted with SFRS employees who are Care Experienced and identified what can be done to build better formal and informal support mechanisms within the organisation.
- We have worked in partnership with other Corporate Parents and external organisations to improve opportunities for those who are Care Experienced to develop skills, experience and confidence to achieve their personal, employment and career ambitions.
- SFRS colleagues, volunteers and board members are aware of their role as a Corporate Parent and understand how to be a good Corporate Parent in practice.
- We will have developed measures to track our progress and determine if our outcomes are successful.

9.0 FIRE & RESCUE INCIDENT STATISTICS 2021-22

9.1 SFRS published their 2021-22 incident statistics on 31 October 2022. Inverclyde remained the local authority with the highest rate for total fires at 904 per 100,000 population and for secondary fires at 700 per 100,000 population. The rate of primary fires per 100,000 population decreased from 215 in 2020-21 to 198 in 2021-22, resulting in a move from fifth highest authority to seventh.

10.0 FBU STRIKE BALLOT

10.1 Firefighters and control staff are being balloted on potential strike action. The ballot opened on 5 December 2022 and closes on 30 January 2023.

11.0 SCOTTISH BUDGET 2023-24

11.1 On 19 December the Scottish Government published a statement on the 2023-24 budget “Recognising the crucial role Police Scotland officers and staff play keeping our communities safe, the service will receive substantial additional resource funding of £80 million in the next financial year, a 6.3% increase. Police capital funding has been maintained at £45.5 million for investment in assets including the estate, fleet, and technology. This brings the policing budget to £1.45 billion for 2023-24. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service will receive a £10 million increase to support service delivery”.

11.2 Chief constable Sir Iain Livingstone responded to the budget, saying “Hard choices lie ahead to deliver effective policing within the revenue budget available and our capital funding remains significantly lower than that needed to progress improvement to our technology, buildings and vehicles.

“However, the budget for 2023/24 is an improvement on the level indicated in the Scottish Government’s resource spending review and a welcome recognition of the significant transformation, saving and enhanced service delivered by Police Scotland”

11.3 The Chair of the Scottish Police Authority, Martyn Evans, has responded to the Scottish Government’s 2023/24 budget statement, saying:

“When the Scottish Government published its Resource Spending Review in May, setting out a flat cash revenue budget position for policing, we were clear that the implications would be extremely serious and we have worked hard to make the case for policing and forensic services.

“There are clearly very considerable constraints on public spending and policing is not immune to those. Today’s budget announcement represents an improved position from May’s Resource Spending Review and we acknowledge that support.

“Over the years, the Authority has consistently highlighted the need for significant investment to maintain, transform and improve policing. Today’s settlement is welcome, but it does not meet this ongoing requirement. Difficult choices remain to ensure a balanced budget position next year. We are already working closely with the Chief Constable and the Director of Forensic Services to consider what will need to be prioritised for the year ahead.”

12.0 IMPLICATIONS

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

SUBJECT	YES	NO	N/A
Financial		X	
Legal/Risk		X	
Human Resources		X	
Strategic (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X	
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty			X
Children & Young People’s Rights & Wellbeing			X
Environmental & Sustainability			X
Data Protection			X

12.2 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					

12.3 Legal/Risk

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

12.4 Human Resources

There are no human resource implications contained within this report.

12.5 Strategic

There are no strategic implications contained within this report.

13.0 CONSULTATION

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

14.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 There are no background papers associated with this report.