

**Report To:** Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel  
**Date:** 8 February 2024

**Report By:** Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development  
**Report No:** P&F/01/2024/HS

**Contact Officer:** Hugh Scott, Service Manager, Community Learning Development, Community Safety & Resilience and Sport  
**Contact No:** 01475 715450

**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 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 INVERCLYDE POLICE & FIRE SCRUTINY PANEL LETTER TO CABINET SECRETARY**

- 3.1 At the 21 September meeting of this panel a motion was passed for the chair of the panel to write to the Cabinet Secretary to raise concerns around the proposed cuts to Police Scotland K Division, which covers the Inverclyde area. A letter was issued by the Chair of Inverclyde Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel on the 24 October 2023 to the Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs, Angela Constance MSP, setting out the panels concerns.
- 3.2 A response, dated 21 November 2023, was received from the Cabinet Secretary reiterating Police Scotland's operational independence. The Scottish Government assures Inverclyde Council that local needs are met through flexible resource deployment, increased funding, and the UK's best-paid police force. For specific concerns, the Council is encouraged to contact the Chief Superintendent for the area.
- 3.3 A copy of the initial letter and response is included in the appendices to this report.

### **4.0 POLICE SCOTLAND ESTATE STRATEGY CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Police Scotland are undertaking engagement activity to listen to the feedback and views of local communities about their future estate changes and progress they have made so far towards their Estate Strategy, published in 2019. The strategy seeks to move towards more police stations co-located with partners where possible, to ensure services are delivered in the most efficient and effective way. There are currently over 60 such co-locations, providing sustainable, modern, and secure workspaces for Police Scotland personnel. The strategy reinforces the notion that co-location with partners is not only the best way to deliver savings to the public purse, but it also facilitates more integrated and effective public services with better outcomes, particularly for the vulnerable in our society.
- 4.2 Public Consultation – National Conversation

Police Scotland have launched a National Conversation about their estate, to gather public feedback on the experience of communities since the launch of the Estate Strategy four years ago in 2019. The consultation opened on the 14 December 2023 and closes on the 31 July 2024. The Estate Strategy, consultation, and frequently asked questions can be accessed online at the following link <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/52e22ece/>

- 4.3 Public Consultation – local consultation on each building

There will also be a local consultation on each building where there is a proposed change. The consultation will provide some information on each building and why they are consulting on it.

The consultation will seek the public's views on how the buildings are used:

- by the public for engaging with police
- by police officers and staff for operational policing
- by members of the public as a safe space
- other (please specify)

It will also look for views on the overall impressions of the building in the value it brings to the local community and to what extent do you agree or disagree with the proposal to dispose of this building for the reasons stated. The local building consultations list can be accessed from following this link <https://consult.scotland.police.uk/strategy-insight-and-innovation/b47b9a36/>

- 4.4 Both Port Glasgow and Greenock Police Stations have been included within the local consultations on potential closures. There has been a significant degree of public confusion around these consultations with conflicting messages around release dates, response timescales, pre-determined outcomes, and future police estate presence within Inverclyde. Specifically, the reported timescales for consultation proved inaccurate, causing confusion and concern.
- 4.5 Both consultations were released on 21 December 2023, just prior to the Christmas break, with the Port Glasgow station consultation deadline of 31 January 2024 and Greenock Station consultation deadline of 31 March 2024. Given the quick turnaround for the Port Glasgow consultation a special meeting of the Local Police & Fire Scrutiny Panel was arranged for 25 January to consider and approve a response to both the national and local consultations. The deadline for the Port Glasgow Station consultation subsequently changed to 18 February 2024.

## **5.0 SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT BUDGET 2024-25**

- 5.1 The Scottish Government has published proposed spending and tax plans for 2024 to 2025, as presented to the Scottish Parliament. The supporting documents can be accessed from the following link <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-budget-2024-25/documents/>.

### **5.2 Police Scotland**

The Scottish Government are investing £1.55 billion in policing in 2024-25, increasing the Scottish Police Authority resource budget by 5.6 per cent – an additional £75.7 million, and providing the resources needed to support frontline service delivery – including key investment priorities including body-worn video. The budget also states there will be an increase police core capital funding to £64.6 million, a rise of 12.5 per cent, for investment in the police asset base including its estate, technology and fleet.

In her December 20 address, Chief Constable (CC) Farrell welcomed the Scottish Government's budget while urging focus on adapting Police Scotland for future challenges. The budget announcement provided an overall £104m uplift over and above flat cash funding for policing. CC Farrell commended the service's achievements and outlined a new operating model prioritising frontline services, removing redundancies, and tackling online threats. Building trust, optimising resources, and ensuring officer well-being are key priorities. Challenges like court delays and mental health crises will be addressed with a focus on efficient resource allocation and core duties. CC Farrell presented a vision for a future-proof Police Scotland, committed to public safety within budgetary constraints.

The full statement is available from the following link <https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2023/december/scottish-budget-2024-25-chief-constable-statement/>

Prior to the budget announcement Police Scotland had presented 'Supporting Police Scotland's journey to a new and affordable Operating Model - Budget proposal 2024-25' to the Scottish Police Authority Board at their meeting on 30 November 2023. This document set out what would have been the consequences of a flat-cash budget and also the benefits of the requested additional investment of £128 million. This document is contained within the appendices to this report.

### **5.3 Scottish Fire & Rescue**

The Scottish Government have said they will support Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) deliver with a resource uplift of £13.6 million and increasing capital investment by £10.3 million to £43 million, an uplift of 32% – allowing the SFRS to address priorities around decontamination, dignified facilities and bring its estate up to modern standards.

## **6.0 PROPORTIONATE RESPONSE TO CRIME PILOT**

6.1 Aberdeenshire police are testing a new approach to responding to certain incidents. This approach will involve not investigating certain reported crimes. Crimes are often reported where there is no associated threat, risk, harm or vulnerability and no proportionate lines of enquiry for local police officers to investigate. This approach will respond to such calls with confirmation that the crime has been recorded and a crime reference number, but no further action will be taken. Police Scotland offer the example of theft from a garden; if there are no proportionate lines of enquiry such as CCTV or eyewitnesses, then the caller may be informed that the report has been filed but no further action taken. This is intended to give police officers more time to focus on proportionate lines of enquiry, emergencies and keeping people safe from harm. Police Scotland statement:

<https://www.scotland.police.uk/what-s-happening/news/2023/september/proportionate-response-to-crime/>

6.2 Police Scotland provided information on this test of change in relation to proportionate response to crime at a series of online engagement sessions with Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel conveners during November 2023. The west of Scotland session was held on 30 November 2023.

## **7.0 HMICS THEMATIC INSPECTION OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IN POLICE SCOTLAND**

7.1 The aim of this inspection is to make an assessment as to whether Police Scotland has a healthy organisational culture, ethical framework and whether the appropriate values and behaviours are consistent across the organisation.

Key findings included:

- Although on a journey of change and improvement, the police service still feels the legacy effect of police reform and earlier leadership styles, with the residual impact of cuts to core areas such as training, reticence regarding performance management, and a lack of value placed on police staff still evident.
- Many respondents felt the service had been slow to react to wider societal change and to policing-specific events in both the UK and worldwide.
- Frontline local police officers are feeling the pressure of increasing and shifting demand and feelings of being less valued.
- Significant degree of organisational frustration about lack of decision-making and prioritisation by the Executive.
- It was found to be unclear to many what the aspirational culture of Police Scotland should be.
- The Joint Strategy for Policing aims to achieve a positive working environment for its workforce, and includes a number of cultural aspirations, however there is a lack of effective performance reporting on how well these are being achieved.

The report is available from: <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/hmics-thematic-inspection-organisational-culture-police-scotland>

The press release is available following this link <https://www.hmics.scot/news/police-culture-scotland-needs-improve>.

## **8.0 SFRS MAKE THE CALL CAMPAIGN**

8.1 Scotland's firefighters are struggling to reach those who are most at risk of fire in homes. SFRS is appealing to communities across Scotland to help it reach the most isolated and vulnerable people this Winter. The "Make the Call" campaign is tasking families, friends, and carers to make a ten-minute phone call to book a free Home Fire Safety Visit. SFRS report that they do

not know who is vulnerable, where they are or how to contact them, so are appealing to the public to put them in touch with anyone they know who could be vulnerable to fires at home. The full statement is available from: <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/scotland-s-firefighters-are-struggling-to-reach-those-who-are-most-at-risk-of-fire-in-homes/>

## **9.0 SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – FIRE SKILLS COURSE**

9.1 Inverclyde Council are providing funding and support to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS) to run a 5-day Fire Skills Course for ten young people in Port Glasgow during March 2024. This follows on from SFRS delivering a successful course in East Renfrewshire Council during November 2023. The course was delivered by the East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire, and Inverclyde (ERRI) Community Action Team with support from Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service. The aims of the project are for the young people to learn important life skills which includes safety, discipline, respect, CPR, communication, and teamwork. The success of the East Renfrewshire project was highlighted as a new item on the SFRS website <https://www.firescotland.gov.uk/news/fire-skills-course-in-east-renfrewshire/>.

## **10.0 LOCAL POLICE AND FIRE PLANS UPDATE**

10.1 Inverclyde's Local Policing Plan 2023-26 was approved at the Inverclyde Local Police & Fire Scrutiny Panel on 23 March 2023. It is expected that an annual update on progress by Police Scotland on delivering the objectives in the plan will be reported at a future meeting of this panel during 2024-25.

10.2 Local Fire & Rescue Plans are recommended for review at least once every three years. Inverclyde's 2021 Local Plan is currently under review by SFRS and an update will be reported at a future meeting of this panel during 2024-25.

## **11.0 INVITE TO DEMONSTRATE THE 'JOURNEY OF A CALL'**

11.1 Chief Superintendent (CS) Gordon McCready has made a commitment to invite members of the Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel to a broader familiarisation and awareness of how the Police receive, triage and respond to calls for service from the public. In terms of content, the session will explore the following areas:

- Contact, Command and Control Division – site visit to the main centre at Helen Street, Glasgow where attendees will see and discuss the ways in which calls for service are received, assessed and dispatched. This will also include an explanation of how the 'Service Overview' function manages national assets e.g. Armed Response Vehicles and Air assets, to support local policing.
- Greenock Police Station – overview of Local Policing including Estates, Divisional assets and some discussion with local officers in respect of their experiences.
- Site visit to Greenock Police Cells to provide an overview of the complexities and limitations of legislation as well as an awareness of the custody provision.

11.2 CS McCready initially proposed a date of 12 March 2024 for this session, however due to commitment clashes for members of the Panel a new date will be rearranged in due course.

## 12.0 IMPLICATIONS

12.1 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 (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 Police & Fire Scrutiny Panel meeting - Police Scotland Estate Strategy Consultations (25 Jan 2024); Police & Fire Scrutiny Panel Meeting - Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel Update Report (23 Nov 2023)



# Finance



Supporting Police Scotland's journey to a new and affordable Operating Model

Budget proposal 2024-25

**Version 1.3**  
**30 November 2023**



# Our proposition

## Investing in Police Scotland will enable us to re-shape and re-size the organisation and to re-invest the benefits in fulfilling the Chief Constable's commitment to strengthening the service

- A properly funded police service is critical to the achievement of the Scottish Government's commitments and vision for Justice and wider society. Our ask to the Scottish Government is to fund our pay and non-pay pressures to the value of **£74.5m in 2024-25**.
- This additional investment will **buy us time** to develop a plan for a **3-year efficiency programme by Autumn 2024** to feed into the 2025-26 budget cycle and the years beyond.
- This plan will drive the change to a new operating model for Police Scotland which will enable Chief Constable Farrell's stated priorities for the service:
  - The prioritisation of service delivery against areas of greatest threat, harm and risk;
  - The strengthening of our community policing model to enhance proactivity, problem solving and the prevention of crime and harm; and
  - Appropriate support for the wellbeing of our officers and staff.
- The plan will also maximise efficiency within the service to ensure ongoing sustainability and balanced budgets, and opportunities for the re-investment into new areas of capability. To support this, in addition to the £74.5m uplift in our resource budget for 2024-25, we would seek;
  - A capital allocation of £76.5m to support the roll out of new capabilities such as body worn video and for spend to save initiatives;
  - A re-instatement of our reform funding to £25m to allow us extra capacity to bring in resources to drive the changes in our operating model; and
  - A non-recurring resource allocation of £23m (for VR/VER) in 2024-25 to allow us to begin to reshape and re-size the organisation to generate efficiency/capacity between years 2025-26 – 2027-28 and to support reinvestment into priority areas of policing and new capabilities.
- This investment in our national police service will enable us to embark on the next stage of reform, whereby we can re-shape and re-size the organisation to meet the challenges of the next 10 years of Police Scotland.
- The above request is inclusive of SPA and Forensic Services. It is assumed that there will be a pause in the roll out of the Forensic Services operating model.

# 2024-25 funding requirement

We can **move in a planned way** from our current operating model towards a **new affordable operating model** (delivering enhanced operational capacity and leaner support & corporate services) with **additional budget support in 2024-25**.

Our ask to Scottish Government is that the anticipated £74.5m pressure in 2024-25 is fully funded to buy us time to establish an efficiency programme to reshape and re-size the organisation.

**Revenue**  
£1,402.7m  
**+£74.5m**

**Capital**  
£76.5m  
**+£26.4m**

We need £76.5m to deliver our basic rolling replacement programme, and key digital capability such as Body Worn Video.  
*Capital plans indicate that we will require ~£100m p.a. in future years..*

**Reform**  
£25m  
**+£5.0m**

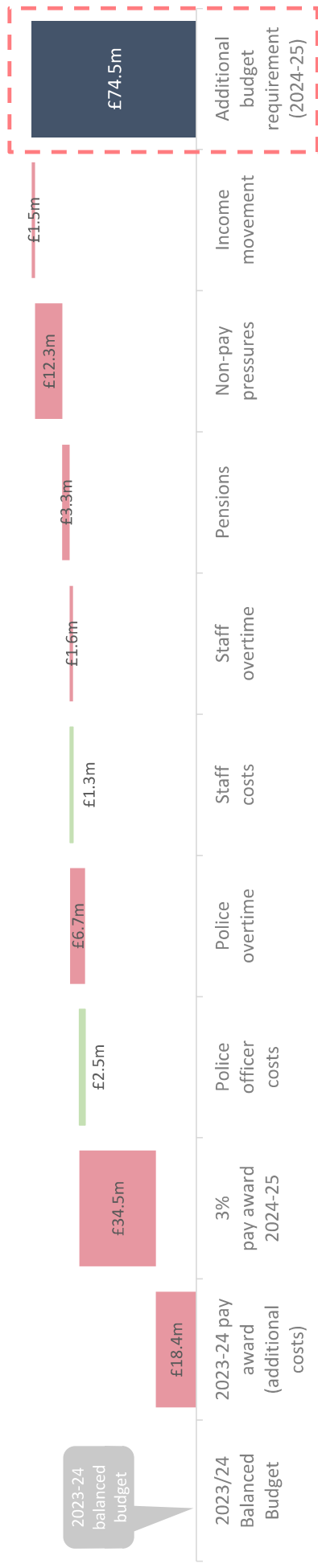
**VR/VER funding**  
**+£22.6m**

We seek full re-instatement of our reform funding to £25m to increase capacity to drive the changes in our operating model.

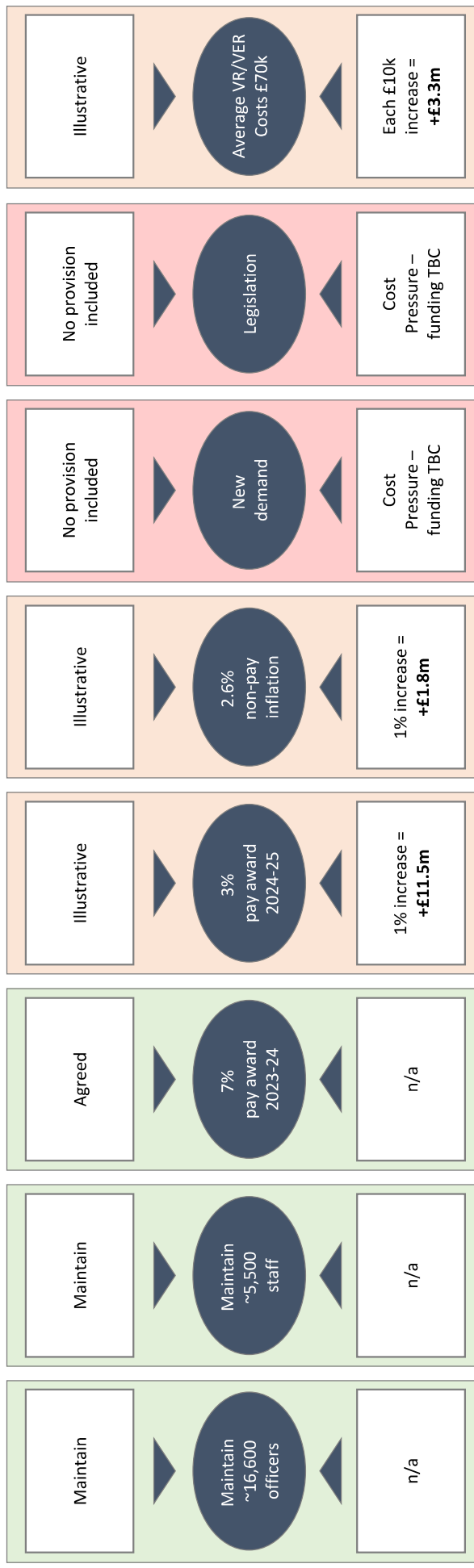
VR/VER funding up to £23m is required to implement the initial 3.7% reduction required as part of the 2023-24 settlement, and to enable us to begin to re-shape and re-size the organisation in 2024-25.

# 2024-25 revenue budget – assumptions and sensitivity

We require an enhancement to our core revenue budget of approximately £75m next year, along with VR/VER funding up to £23m, to enable us to embark on the next stage of reform, and to begin to significantly re-shape and re-size the organisation.



**Key planning assumptions:**



# Benefits - what will investment in Police Scotland buy?

Investing in Police Scotland will enable us to re-shape and re-size the organisation and to re-invest the benefits in fulfilling the Chief Constable's commitment to strengthening the service

- Investment in Police Scotland will allow us to **continue our journey of transformation and service improvement**. This means realising the ambitions that underpinned the creation of the national service and **strengthening our ability to protect our communities** from increasingly complex threat, harm and risk.
- Investment in 2024-25 will **enable us to continue to focus on driving efficiency** and then **re-invest the benefits** of change to build and **enhance our capabilities**. This will include 'spend to save' initiatives which can deliver sustainable efficiencies for re-investment in frontline policing.
  - We need to design, develop and implement a new model of response and community policing which builds public trust and confidence while tackling threat, harm and risk
  - We need to equip our officers with Body Worn Video
  - We need to deliver essential improvements in critical national infrastructure such as 999/101 service centres and technology
  - We need to drive change and improvement in how Police Scotland engages with the public and its partners and in particular enhance the quality and accessibility of our response and resolution function.
  - We need to improve standards of service through Police Scotland's response to vulnerability, risk and public need at the earliest opportunity; maximising opportunities for remote engagement and resolution; reducing local policing demand and directing appropriate incidents to the right agency through pathway referrals and enhanced collaborative working.
  - We need to further enhance the mobile capability of our officers
  - We need to offer a better response to cyber-crime
  - We need to offer a better response to public protection and to better protect children from harm and sexual exploitation
  - We need to be a much more digitally enabled and engaged service
  - We need to be a catalyst for system wide change and improvement across the CJ system and wider public sector
  - We need to realise further opportunities for enhanced collaboration across blue light services
  - We need to better harness the potential of our data and improve the insights we can use to inform tactical and strategic decision making
  - We need to be more visible and to build public confidence
  - We need to protect the wellbeing of our workforce
  - We need to invest in driving culture change and becoming a wholly anti-discriminatory service to ensure that we increase public trust and confidence in policing

# Consequences of Flat cash in 2024-25

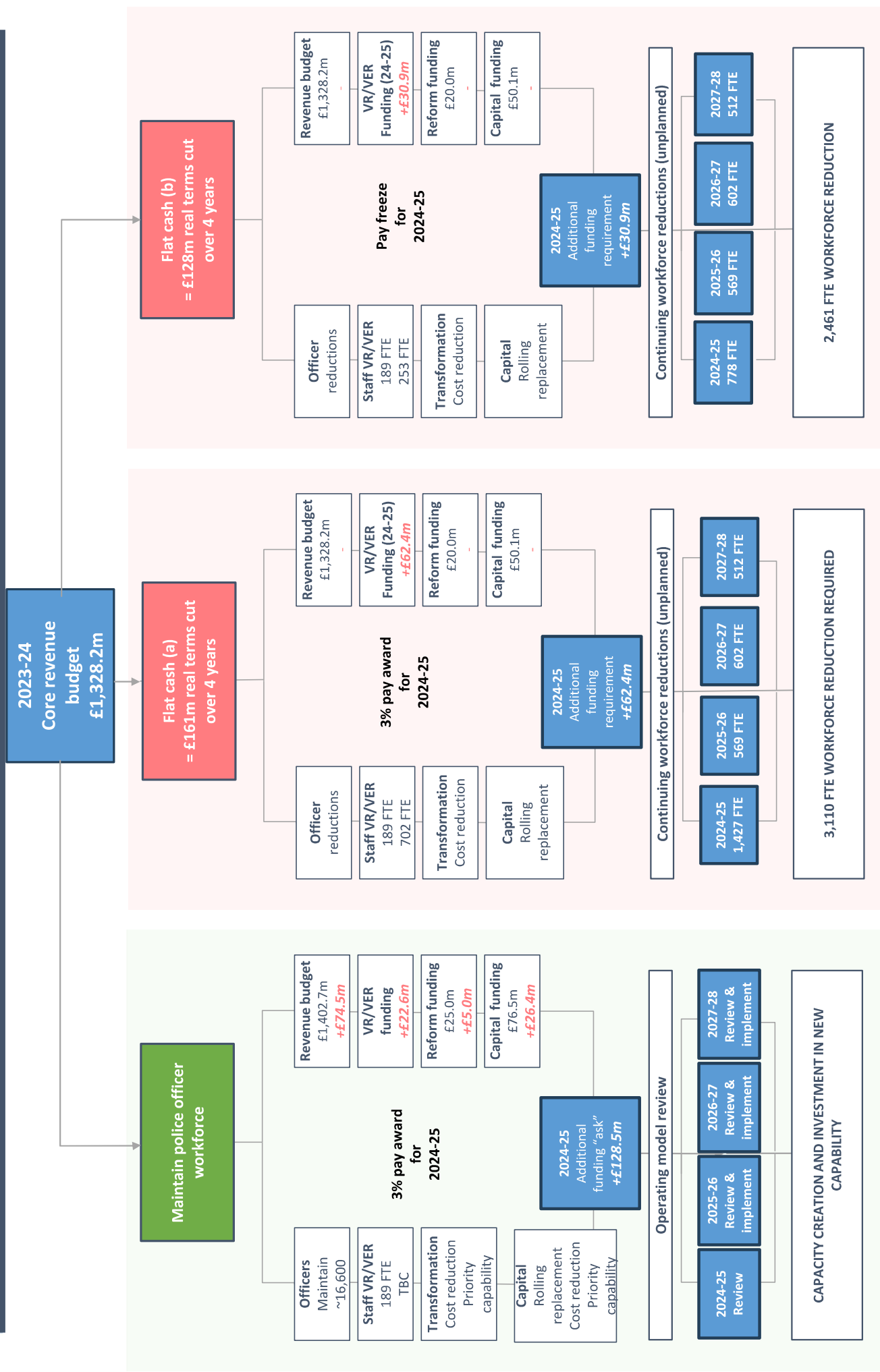
**It is not viable for the service to operate within a flat cash funding settlement for 2024-25 without severely impacting service delivery, officer and staff wellbeing, external and third-party relationships, and ultimately the safety of the public.**

- Flat cash funding would have severe operational consequences, causing a significant disruption to services as **savings would have to be achieved through salami slicing**, as opposed to efficiency or organisational redesign.
- Tactical, short-term measures would have to be taken to deliver maximum savings in 2024-25. This could see a **reduction of up to 1,427 FTE (6.4%)** by 31 March 2025 which can only be achieved through a **continuation of the officer recruitment pause** throughout the entire duration of 2024-25, along with an **extensive VR/VER programme**. The impact of flat cash could be **minimised by implementing a pay freeze** for 2024-25 but this would have further operational implications and would still require significant workforce reductions.
- A flat cash funding settlement in 2024-25 will be likely to result in impacts across the following operational areas:
  - **Caring for our most vulnerable people & communities:**
    - A reduction in visible local policing.
    - Challenges to our ability to fulfil our “Wellbeing” remit with our partners.
  - **Protecting our children and citizens from new threats:**
    - An inability to increase local policing resources and enhance visibility and public confidence.
    - An inability to augment national and local public protection services in the face of continued growth in reporting of sexual crime and domestic abuse.
    - An inability to effectively keep people safe in the online space.
    - An inability to support the implementation of new legislation.
  - **Our proactive capability will be reduced:**
    - A reduction in local resources will undermine our ability to engage in collaborative problem solving and crime prevention.
    - A reduction in Roads Policing resources will inhibit our ability to keep Scotland’s road users safe.
    - Our capacity for the proactive investigation of Serious & Organised Crime Groups will be impacted.
  - **Enabling a safe and secure Scotland:**
    - Delays in attending calls for service and the nationwide adoption of a reduced attendance model.
    - Our capacity to effectively respond to major events and incidents will be impacted.
    - Our capacity to manage community tensions will be impacted.

# **Appendix A**

## **Funding scenarios**

# Summary: funding scenarios



# **Appendix B**

## **Operating environment and crime volumes**



## Group 1 – Non Sexual Crimes of Violence

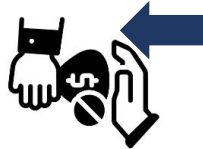
### Robbery and Assault with Intent to rob

Crimes of Robbery and assault with intent to rob are showing an increase of **191 (22.4%)** compared to the five year mean. Whilst there has not been a steady increase in this crime type, the current numbers are the highest for the last five years.



### Threats and Extortion

These crimes have seen a steady increase from 2019/20 onwards, with an average yearly increase of 326 crimes in the current period. Driven by an overall increase of online-based crime, it seems highly likely this crime type will continue to rise. Crimes showing an increase of **1,021 (221.3%)** compared to the five year mean.



## Group 3 – Crimes of Dishonesty

### Fraud

Crimes are steadily increasing year-on-year and are currently the highest they have been for the last five years – up **2,421 crimes (37.2%)** against the five year mean.



### Theft by Shoplifting

Since the lifting of covid restrictions there has been a significant increase in crimes, there are **5,924 (42.0%)** crimes more than the five year mean.



### Theft of a motor vehicle

Crime numbers are higher than any of the previous five years, being an increase of **353 (15.6%)** crimes compared to the five year mean. The previous highest period was 2018/19.



## Group 2 – Sexual Crimes



### Communications Act 2003

Crimes are the highest they have been over the last five years – up by **52 crimes (39.9%)** compared to the five year mean.



### Sexual Assault (SOSA 2009)

Crimes have increased by **281 (14.3%)** compared to the five-year mean.



### Crimes of Sexual Exposure (SOSA)

These have seen an increase of **59 (26.5%)** compared to the five year mean. This increase means the current level of crime is the highest in the period for the last five years.



### Taking, distribution, possession etc, of indecent photos of children (from April 2011)

Crimes are close to the highest level over the last five years and increased by **64 (20.6%)** compared to the five year mean.



### Rape Crimes

At the end of Quarter 2 2023-24 reported crimes of rape noted an increase of 11 crimes (0.9%) compared to the five year mean.

### Rape Detections

During the same period the Rape Detection Rate fell to the lowest level compared to the last five years, down to **47.4% (-4.9 percentage points compared to five year mean)**.

## Group 5 – Other Crimes



### Bail offences (other than absconding)

Crimes have increased by **1,428 (28.1%)** compared to the five year mean.

## Group 6 – Miscellaneous Offences



### Minor Assault

Since 2020/21, the number of common assaults has seen a year-on-year increase, with the current number being the highest over the last five years.

There is an increase of **2,101 (8.1%)** compared to the five year mean.

## Additional Information

### Compared to last year in C3 Division...

Overall call volume up **3.0%**, Partner Demand up **25.9%**,

Average call answer time up, additional public contacts up **14.9%**.

### Protecting Vulnerable People...

Adult concern forms increased, Child concern forms increasing, Drug consumption markers increasing, Missing Persons increasing and Mental Health demands increasing.

### Force Detection Rate



During 2023-24 the overall detection rate has dropped below the lower confidence limit reflected by most crime groups. The mean number of days to detect crimes has increased year on year and has more than doubled from 16.43 in 2018/19 to 33.83 in 2022/23.

## Group 7 – Offences relating to Motor Vehicles



### Drink, Drug driving offences incl. Failure to provide a specimen

Current number of drink, drug driving offences have increased compared to the five-year mean – up **538 (14.9%)**.



### Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossing)

Currently the highest numbers over the past five years – up **507 offences (27.4%)**.



### Driving Carelessly

The current number of this crime have increased by **553 (12.6%)** compared to the five-year mean.



### Mobile Phone Offences

Offences are currently higher than the five-year average by **381 (27.5%)**. The new restrictions on the use of mobile devices introduced in 2022 will likely see this crime type increase.

- Demands on Police Scotland continue to rise.
- Various crime types are enabled through the online sphere and are likely to continue to see ongoing increases and are also increasingly complex to police and detect.
- The current societal Cost of Living situation is highly likely to continue to exacerbate some crime types.
- Group 5 & 7 crimes are heavily affected by police proactivity and previous/current campaigns.
- The issues surrounding detection rates are multi-faceted and complex.

Our Ref: TM/LR

Your Ref:

Date: 24 October 2023

Angela Constance MSP  
Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs  
Scottish Government  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Cabinet Secretary

I am writing to you today as Convener of the Inverclyde Council Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel to express my concern about the current staffing levels of Police Scotland, and the proposed cuts to policing across K division, which includes Inverclyde.

As you know, K Division is a large and diverse area, covering both urban and rural communities. It is also an area with high levels of deprivation, and the continued reduction in policing has, in the panel's opinion, made it even more difficult for the police to help keep our communities safe.

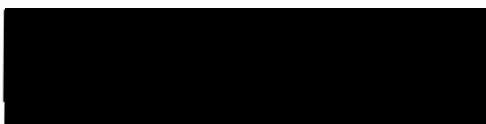
The members of the Panel are aware of considerable concerns within our communities about the impact of the cuts to policing. They are worried about longer response times, less visible police presence, reduced support to our schools, and a decrease in the number of officers available to investigate criminal behaviour. Of particular concern is the impact of police savings on the safety of vulnerable people, such as the elderly and those with disabilities. These people can often be the most likely victims of crime, and they rely on the police to help keep them safe.

The Panel believe that any further cuts to policing in K Division will put the public at increasing risk and I am asking the Scottish Government to give due regard to the concerns of this Panel. As elected members, we certainly understand the pressure on all budgets across all elements of Scottish Government, Local Authorities, and partner agencies this year and the coming years, but it would be remiss of me as Convener of this Panel, not to express my concerns.

In my role as Convener of the Inverclyde Local Police and Fire and Scrutiny Panel, I hope that you recognise the concerns raised in this letter as being in the spirit of keeping the citizens of Inverclyde safe from harm.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



**Councillor David Wilson**  
**Convener of the Inverclyde Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel**



Cabinet Secretary for Justice and Home Affairs  
Rùnaire a' Chaibineit airson Ceartas agus Cùisean na Dùthcha  
Angela Constance MSP/BPA



Scottish Government  
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Councillor David Wilson  
david.ross@inverclyde.gov.uk

Our Reference: 202300383173  
Your Reference: Police Scotland - K Division

21 November 2023

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of 24 October on behalf of the Inverclyde Council Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel regarding policing in "K" Division which includes Inverclyde.

As you will be aware, the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 stipulates that the Chief Constable of Police Scotland is responsible for the policing of Scotland, and is accountable to the Scottish Police Authority for this, rather than to Scottish Ministers directly. These arrangements are in place to ensure public confidence that the police act independently, free from unwarranted Ministerial interference.

Our national police service provides the Chief Constable with the flexibility to deploy resources wherever they are needed. Additionally, individual Divisions can access specialist expertise at a regional and national level to meet demand which would not have been possible before the creation of Police Scotland in 2012. While decisions on the allocation of officers and resources are a matter for the Chief Constable, it is vital Police Scotland continues to inspire public trust and maintains relationships with communities as they ensure local priorities continue to be met.

These priorities are set and agreed locally and are clearly set out in local policing plans. Should you wish to discuss any aspect of local policing I would suggest contacting the Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Gordon McCreadie, who I'm sure you will have had some contact already. He can be contacted via email to [Gordon.McCreadie@scotland.police.uk](mailto:Gordon.McCreadie@scotland.police.uk).

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

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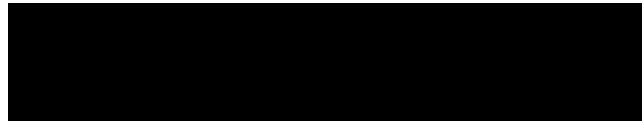


Policing is and will remain a priority for this Government, which is why, despite difficult financial circumstances due to UK Government austerity, we have increased police funding year-on-year since 2016-17, with £1.45 billion being invested this year. As at 30 Sept there were 379 more police officers than in 2007 and around 1,480 new recruits have joined Police Scotland since the beginning of 2022.

Scotland continues to have more police officers per capita than England and Wales and following the agreed pay deal of 12% over two years, our officers continue to be the best paid at all levels.

I hope this reply reassures you that this vital service remains a priority for the Scottish Government.

Yours sincerely



**ANGELA CONSTANCE**

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