
Report To: Local Police and Fire Scrutiny Panel **Date:** 06 February 2025

Report By: Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development **Report No:** P&F/01/25/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 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 28 November 2024 <https://www.spa.police.uk/what-we-do/governance-meetings/board-meeting/28-november-2024/>

and considered several updates, including: -

- COSLA /Local and Regional Scrutiny Engagement
- Mental Health Distress and Vulnerability
- Criminal Justice Committee pre-budget evidence session
- Force Mobilisation Model
- Pay Award 2024-25

3.2 COSLA / Local and Regional Scrutiny Engagement

The Authority Chair updated on the engagement with local and regional police scrutiny representatives. They attend the national COSLA Police Conveners Forum (most recently on 21 November 2024) and regional scrutiny meetings. These forums facilitate information sharing and discussion of local, regional, and national policing issues between police and local government representatives. COSLA plays a key role in these engagements.

3.3 Mental Health Distress and Vulnerability

A Partnership Group led by the Authority has developed a Framework for Collaboration and Collaborative Commitments regarding policing and mental health distress. These documents, expected to be finalised and published in early 2025, build upon the existing Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy (co-sponsored by COSLA and the Scottish Government) and aim to improve access to appropriate services for individuals in mental health crisis who interact with the police.

3.4 Criminal Justice Committee pre-budget evidence session

On October 30, representatives from Police Scotland presented the 2025-26 budget proposal to the Scottish Parliament's Criminal Justice Committee. The proposal included a request for £59.1 million in additional core revenue funding to cover public sector pay assumptions, inflationary pressures, and legislative impacts, including the Domestic Abuse (Protection) (Scotland) Act 2021 and the Police (Ethics, Conduct and Scrutiny) (Scotland) Bill. It also called for £25 million in reform funding to support change and transformation, as well as £83 million in capital allocation for replacing fleet, systems, and equipment, upgrading properties, and investing in technology, automation, and innovation. Additionally, the proposal emphasised the need for multi-year funding commitments, borrowing powers, and the ability to carry forward financial reserves. Following the UK Autumn Budget, an extra £25.3 million was added to account for National Insurance costs. Discussions with the Scottish Government are ongoing, with funding decisions anticipated in the coming weeks.

In December the Scottish Government presented its proposed 2025/26 budget to Parliament, including increased funding for policing. The proposed budget includes a £56.5m revenue uplift, and a £75m capital allocation, a £10.5m increase for infrastructure improvements. The Scottish Police Authority welcomed the proposal, which will support a new policing model. The government also reported that it would be supporting Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to deliver with a resource uplift of £13.6 million and increasing capital investment by £10.3 million to £43 million. The budget is now subject to Parliamentary scrutiny and a vote in February 2025.

3.5 Force Mobilisation Model

The Force Mobilisation Model aims to prioritise frontline services and enhance resourcing for events through a new approach for officers working Monday to Friday. It introduces a seven-day shift pattern combined with a demand-led deployment mechanism, requiring officers to undertake 10 operational frontline deployments annually, including two to three high-demand days like Hogmanay and Bonfire Night. This model seeks to reduce cancelled rest days, improve officer wellbeing, and minimise absences, ultimately enhancing service to communities. Following an

informal survey on shift preferences, a formal consultation with officers is now underway, with plans to review other non-seven-day working areas in the future.

3.6 Pay Award 2024-25

A 4.75% pay offer for police officers and staff (made on 18 October 2024) was accepted by Unite members but rejected by Unison members. This led to a formal failure to agree being registered with the PNBS secretariat (on 29 October 2024) and a separate failure to agree registered by Unison (on 4 November 2024), triggering formal dispute processes (both three-stage processes) which are now underway.

4.0 POLICE ESTATES MASTERPLAN

4.1 In November 2024 the Scottish Police Authority published a report on the Estates Masterplan for Police Scotland, which seeks to address the underinvestment in the policing estate over the years. It outlines the need for approximately £500 million in investment over the next decade to modernise facilities, including upgrading existing buildings and constructing new deployment hubs. The current estate is largely outdated, with a backlog maintenance bill of £245 million, and is not designed to meet future policing needs. The Masterplan aims to enhance energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint of the estate while ensuring alignment with operational requirements through extensive stakeholder engagement. The report seeks endorsement from the Authority for the proposed capital programme as part of ongoing budget negotiations with the Scottish Government, positioning the Masterplan as a strategic framework for sustainable policing infrastructure in Scotland.

4.2 The Estates Masterplan has been developed to provide a strategic framework for the future development of the estate, to address the issue of sustainability, and has been built around the key following principles;

- Maintaining community confidence by having a visible presence in communities and appropriate public access to the police through the estate;
- Supporting a thriving workforce through developing a well-designed and maintained estate that is fit for the future;
- Ensuring the safety of those in custody by developing custody requirements that are effective and fit for purpose;
- Aligning with wider government policy in areas such as a co-location first approach, moving to a smaller modern estate in a move towards Net Zero goals, and freeing up brownfield sites for redevelopment opportunities.

4.3 Whilst the report states that detailed planning and design work has not yet been undertaken, it does highlight priority areas, such as Greenock, as locations with a need for investment.

4.4 The report is available to view at <https://www.spa.police.uk/publication-library/estates-plan-28-november-2024/>

5.0 POLICE SCOTLAND DOMESTIC ABUSE CAMPAIGN

5.1 Building on the "IsThatMe" campaign, Police Scotland's "Couples Questions" campaign encourages young men to examine their relationship behaviours for signs of abuse, control, or coercion. Targeting younger individuals, the campaign aims to prevent abusive behaviours from developing by promoting early recognition of unhealthy relationship dynamics. Those who recognise themselves in the campaign materials are urged to "#ChooseToStop" and seek help from the Respect Phonenumber, which provides support and advice to people in Scotland concerned about their own harmful or abusive behaviours, offering expert guidance and strategies for change.

6.0 HMICS – THEMATIC INSPECTION OF ROAD POLICING IN SCOTLAND

6.1 On 5 November HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) published a report on their thematic inspection of road policing in Scotland. The report highlights several key issues and recommendations for improvement within Police Scotland. It emphasises the need for decentralisation of driver training to enhance retention of female officers and improve access for those in rural areas. The report also calls for better monitoring of the Policing Together initiative to ensure diversity in recruitment and retention within the Operational Support Division. Additionally, it identifies challenges related to road policing officers' court attendance, which detracts from their ability to maintain road safety, and suggests exploring virtual court appearances to alleviate this burden. The inspection further recommends enhancing intelligence and analytical efforts related to road safety and adopting a trauma-informed approach when supporting individuals affected by serious road collisions. Overall, the findings underscore the importance of addressing these areas to improve the effectiveness of road policing in Scotland.

6.2 The 13 recommendations from the inspection are as follows:

- Police Scotland should review its commitment to and investment in its road policing function, to ensure it is effectively supporting Scotland's Road Safety Framework and that road crime is being actively addressed.
- Police Scotland should take urgent steps to address the backlog in specialist driver training.
- Police Scotland should review its policy position, and the training and equipment provided, for local policing officers responding to incidents on the fast road networks.
- Police Scotland should engage with its criminal justice partners to explore options (including virtual appearances) to reduce the time requirement for officers attending court.
- Police Scotland should engage with Scottish Government to progress a legislative change that will allow the escorting of abnormal loads in Scotland to be carried out by another agency.
- Police Scotland should progress the implementation of a road policing performance framework that provides an indication of progress towards achieving the targets set out in Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030.
- Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority should create and implement a joint action plan to identify and address the risk posed by drug driving.
- Police Scotland should implement a process to ensure vehicles are equipped in a consistent manner. The views of officers who will be using the vehicles should be taken into account when considering the type of equipment to be fitted, and how and where it is fitted.
- Police Scotland should identify and adopt best practice in the deployment and use of ANPR.
- Police Scotland should progress the facility for members of the public to report road traffic offences by directly uploading journey-cam footage.
- Police Scotland should review its intelligence and analytical commitment in relation to road safety and road crime, to improve focus on these areas.
- Police Scotland should engage with UK Road Offender Education and other key stakeholders to progress the full implementation of educational training courses for people who commit driving offences that may be appropriately addressed through learning.
- Police Scotland should review its policy on the deployment of family liaison officers, to ensure a consistent level of service to people who have been bereaved following a fatal collision.

The report is available to view at <https://www.hmics.scot/publications/thematic-inspection-of-road-policing-in-scotland/>

7.0 SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE – LOCAL FIRE & RESCUE PLANS

7.1 The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has postponed the development of new Local Fire and Rescue Plans. They recently conducted a public consultation to gather input on the future direction of the service. The results of this consultation, along with the development of a new Strategic Plan, will inform the creation of the Local Plans. The SFRS aims to finalise the Strategic Plan in Summer 2025 and will share a detailed timeline for the development of Local Plans in the coming months.

8.0 INVERCLYDE FIRE SKILLS COURSE

8.1 A group of young people learned all about team building, problem-solving and health and safety as part of a Fire Skills course at Port Glasgow Community Fire Station. S3 pupils from Notre Dame High School and Inverclyde Academy took part in the week-long course, which is run in partnership between Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and Inverclyde Council. They learned vital skills then rounded off the week with a practical demo in front of representatives from their schools, their families, elected members from Inverclyde Council and other partner agencies. They received certificates to mark their participation by Provost Drew McKenzie and the work carried out during the week will be used as evidence towards accredited awards by Inverclyde Council's Community Safety & Resilience and Youth Work teams.

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 (LOIP/Corporate Plan)		X
Equalities & Fairer Scotland Duty		X
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.