



Item: 5

Police and Fire Sub-committee: 24 February 2026.

Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–29 – Draft Consultation Response.

Report by Director of Infrastructure and Organisational Development.

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Scottish Police Authority launched its consultation on the draft Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–2029 on 1 December 2025, with the consultation period closing on 25 January 2026. This consultation formed part of the statutory review requirements under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012.
- 1.2. The Scottish Police Authority’s review began in Summer 2025 and considered the continued relevance of existing strategic outcomes, progress over the preceding three years, and wider developments shaping policing in Scotland. Early engagement with key partners, including HMICS, the Scottish Government and Local Authorities, informed the development of a refreshed draft Plan for consultation.
- 1.3. Orkney Islands Council was invited to participate in the consultation.
- 1.4. As the Consultation closed before the next scheduled meeting of the Police and Fire Sub-committee, a draft response was prepared and submitted to ensure the Council’s views were represented within the consultation timeframe.
- 1.5. The draft Consultation response is attached as Appendix 1.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that members of the Sub-committee:
 - i. Approve the draft response to the Consultation on the draft Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–2029, previously submitted to the Scottish Police Authority on 23 January 2026 to ensure the Council’s views were represented within the consultation timeframe, attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–29 sets the overall direction and priorities for policing across the country. Developed by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) in line with the Scottish Government’s Strategic Police Priorities, it outlines the main objectives and outcomes that Police Scotland are expected to deliver over a three-year period.
- 3.2. The Annual Police Plan, produced by Police Scotland, takes its lead from the Strategic Policing Plan and translates these national objectives into specific actions and priorities for each year.
- 3.3. Local Police Plans are then developed by divisional commanders in consultation with local authorities and communities, ensuring that the national strategy is delivered in a way that reflects local needs and circumstances.
- 3.4. In this way, the Strategic Policing Plan provides the overarching framework, while the Annual and Local Police Plans ensure that its aims are put into practice at both national and local levels. The current Strategic Police Plan, published in March 2023, set an outcome-focused strategic direction for policing based on the Scottish Government’s 2019 Strategic Police Priorities.
- 3.5. The Scottish Police Authority was required to undertake a review of the Plan within three years of its approval.

4. The Consultation

- 4.1. The draft Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–29 sets out the refreshed vision for policing, responding to the evolving needs of communities, the changing nature of crime, and the ongoing challenges facing public services. It builds on the previous strategy, aligning with the Scottish Government’s Strategic Policing Priorities.
- 4.2. The 2026–29 draft reflects increasing complexity in community needs, including demographic shifts and heightened vulnerability linked to economic pressures and mental health. There is also recognition of rapid growth in digital crime requiring new skills and approaches.
- 4.3. The importance of partnership working, prevention, and early intervention are central pillars of effective policing and there is recognition of persistent financial constraints across public services, impacting recruitment, visible policing, and the ability to maintain local presence.

4.4. The plan's five strategic outcomes focus on:

- safer communities and wellbeing.
- compassionate, trauma-informed service delivery.
- collaborative, whole-system prevention.
- an inclusive and supportive working environment.
- best value through efficiency, innovation, and adaptability.

4.5. The Consultation asked whether for each strategic outcome the respondent:

- strongly agree.
- agree.
- neither agreed nor disagree.
- disagree.
- strongly disagree.

For Further Information please contact:

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Implications of Report

- 1. Financial** – None.
- 2. Legal** The roles and responsibilities of the Scottish Police Authority (the Authority) and Police Scotland in relation to strategic planning are set out in the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 at Sections 34 and 35. Under the Act, the Scottish Police Authority is responsible for producing a Strategic Police Plan and involves the Chief Constable of Police Scotland in developing it.
- 3. Corporate Governance** None.
- 4. Human Resources** None.
- 5. Equalities** None.
- 6. Island Communities Impact** None.
- 7. Links to Council Plan:** The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Council Plan strategic priorities:
 - Growing our economy.
 - Strengthening our Communities.
 - Developing our Infrastructure.
 - Transforming our Council.

8. Links to Local Outcomes Improvement Plan: The proposals in this report support and contribute to improved outcomes for communities as outlined in the following Local Outcomes Improvement Plan priorities:

- Cost of Living.
- Sustainable Development.
- Local Equality.
- Improving Population Health.

9. Environmental and Climate Risk None.

10. Risk None.

11. Procurement None.

12. Health and Safety None.

13. Property and Assets None.

14. Information Technology None.

15. Cost of Living None.

List of Background Papers

Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–29

Appendix

Strategic Policing Plan for Scotland 2026–29 – Draft Consultation Response

Draft Consultation Response

Strategic Outcomes

Outcome 1: Communities are safer and more secure, with less crime and improved wellbeing, through effective policing services reflective of local needs.

Response: Strongly Agree

Rationale: This outcome is especially relevant here as the impact of single incidents can be significant due to geography and limited resources. The focus on local needs, prevention, and wellbeing aligns with priorities and the realities of island communities.

Outcome 2: Services are designed and delivered compassionately, in a trauma-informed and person-centred way to ensure victims have trust and confidence in policing and are supported.

Response: Agree

Rationale: The commitment to trauma-informed, person-centred service delivery is positive and in small communities, compassionate policing is essential for building trust and supporting recovery.

Outcome 3: Partners and stakeholders are involved in developing a responsive and proactive whole-system approach to prevention, early intervention and harm reduction.

Response: Neither agree nor disagree

Rationale: Opportunities for partnership working, shared assets and training sit within the sphere of the Community Planning Partnership, and the principles of whole-system working are supported. However, the current arrangements with Police Scotland do not provide for quarterly (three-month) local reporting and scrutiny, which is essential for timely oversight and effective collaboration in Orkney. Without this, it is difficult to fully endorse the outcome as currently implemented

Outcome 4: The working environment is safer and its culture more inclusive and is one where inspiring leadership enables everyone to feel valued and supported.

Response: Neither agree nor disagree

Rationale: The ambition for a safer, inclusive environment is welcome, but the strategy lacks recognition on how these aims will be delivered in islands locations. Persistent challenges in Orkney include limited resourcing, difficulties in recruitment, and the need to travel due to the lack of islands tailored training and development.

Outcome 5: The policing system delivers best value through efficient, effective and sustainable services, which are adaptable, and embrace opportunities for innovation and collaboration.

Response: Agree

Rationale: Support the drive for efficiency, sustainability, and innovation, provided that these changes do not reduce accessibility or visibility in rural and island areas. Technology and estate changes should enhance frontline presence, not diminish it. Monitoring the impact of digital tools on officer time and community engagement will be important to ensure best value is achieved.

Additional comments

"The Council welcomes the Strategic Policing Plan 2026–29 as an overarching framework that sets out clear national priorities and values for policing in Scotland. We recognise that the plan is not intended to address operational detail, but rather to provide direction and outcomes that will guide the development of the Annual and Local Police Plans.

It is important that the plan explicitly acknowledges the diversity of Scotland's communities and the need for flexibility in how national priorities are delivered locally. For rural and island areas such as Orkney, this means ensuring that the framework enables local priorities, challenges, and opportunities to be reflected in subsequent planning and delivery. We encourage the plan to highlight the importance of ongoing engagement with local authorities and communities, so that the strategic outcomes are translated into effective action on the ground.

We support the plan's emphasis on prevention, partnership, compassion, and innovation, and its commitment to inclusive and trauma-informed policing. To realise these ambitions, it is essential that the mechanisms for local input, accountability, and adaptation are clear and robust. This will help ensure that issues such as resourcing, recruitment, and training—while operational in nature—can be addressed appropriately through the Annual and Local Police Plans, in line with the strategic direction set by the plan.

In summary, we support the strategic direction of the plan and ask that it continues to provide space for local voices and priorities, so that policing services remain responsive, effective, and trusted in all communities across Scotland.

Digital tools and estate changes must enhance, not diminish, accessibility and visibility in rural areas. Efficiency gains should not come at the expense of frontline presence. The impact of technology on officer time and community engagement should be monitored and reported.

Road safety, drug-related harm and protection of vulnerable people remain top priorities. Partnership investment and pragmatic flexibility in resource deployment are essential to maintain public confidence and community safety. While we support the plan's strategic outcomes, we urge that implementation is sensitive to the unique needs of island and rural communities, with clear mechanisms for local input, transparent performance measures and sustained partnership working.