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SCOTTISH POLICE
AUTHORITY
ÙGH DARRAS POILIS NA H-ALBA



Local Police Plans

A Framework for Scrutiny

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Introduction and Context

Local scrutiny is critical to the effective oversight and delivery of local policing across Scotland. Local Authorities were given responsibility for local scrutiny and engagement arrangements by the Police & Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. Scrutiny in this context is the process of holding local commanders to account for delivery of, and improvement in, policing in the area.

This non-statutory national framework for scrutiny is intended primarily for use by Elected Members in local authorities, who are responsible for scrutinising delivery of local police and fire and rescue services. It describes the relationship between Local Police Plan and other strategic plans at a national and local level, and suggests areas where scrutiny may have a focus at different times during the planning cycle.

This Framework has been produced by the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) and COSLA in close collaboration with key strategic partners, including representatives from several Local Authorities. It has been produced in response to a recommendation made in a [Tri-partite Review of Local Police Plans](#), undertaken by the Scottish Police Authority, COSLA and Police Scotland in 2021-22. The work to produce this initial Framework was taken forward by a jointly-chaired SPA-COSLA Short Life Working Group during the summer and autumn of 2022.

The Framework draws and seeks to build on examples of existing good practice from local partners. The document itself should be regarded as being a 'living document', being kept under regular review and adapted in accordance with feedback from users. Elected Members and officers at Local Authority Level will be able to provide feedback on an ongoing basis using the SPA's Engagement Hub – Citizen Space. Also, it is intended that this Framework will be adapted and expanded upon, as appropriate, at a local level to reflect local arrangements, structures and processes, in partnership with the local area commander.

Principles for Scrutiny

In 2018 the Improvement Service published the following guidance on Scrutiny for Elected Members

- **Elected Member Notebook – Scrutiny.** This resource sets out how scrutiny works and how to apply the skills upon which effective scrutiny depends. It also gives Elected Members the knowledge and techniques needed to be effective members of a scrutiny committee. The document can be accessed here: [Elected Member Notebook: Scrutiny \(improvementservice.org.uk\)](https://improvementservice.org.uk)
- The Improvement Service has also produced a **shorter notebook** for elected members that want an overview of the key points of scrutiny without the level of detail contained in the main notebook. A link to this version is available here: [Scrutiny: What elected members need to know \(improvementservice.org.uk\)](https://improvementservice.org.uk)

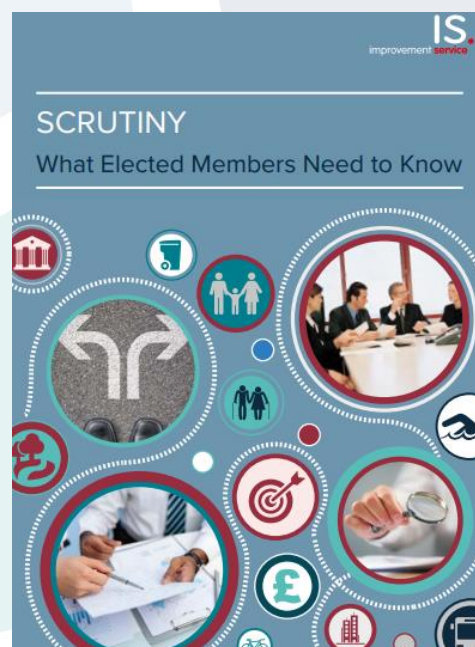
The principles set out within the documents are universal, as are the components of effective scrutiny and the key skills required of scrutineers. The information provided in the notebooks can therefore be applied to scrutiny of local policing, which is also covered in the main notebook.

Components of Effective Scrutiny

Constructive Political Relationships
Effective organisation of the scrutiny function
Officer support
Training and development
Planning and focus
Working with others

Scrutiny Skills

Assessing evidence
Questioning



What is a Local Police Plan?

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 (S. 47) requires Police Scotland to produce Local Police Plans for each of the 32 local authorities in Scotland.

A Local Police Plan is a document which: describes the main priorities and objectives for policing in the local area; explains the reasons for selecting the priorities and objectives; and sets out the proposed arrangements for delivery of policing to meet the priorities and objectives.

It is important that delivery of an approved Local Police Plan is measurable using performance indicators, so wherever practicable, outcomes (with indicators of progress and performance) should be described for priorities and objectives.

A Local Police Plan should also describe how its priorities, objectives and arrangements contribute to the delivery of other relevant local outcomes, strategies and development plans, including those that are defined through community planning, namely in **Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs)**.

Local Police Plans should be seen, and therefore scrutinised, through the lens of being Plans that aim to make a positive contribution locally, to both policing-specific matters and wider community concerns. A substantive part of service delivery undertaken by the police service to implement Local Police Plans uses local and national police assets, in partnership with the local authority assets and those from other organisations.

Local Police Plans are produced by Local Commanders. Commanders have a statutory duty to consult with the local authorities when developing a Local Police Plan, prior to obtaining approval from the local authority. As an Elected Member, you have a key role in ensuring that the Plan reflects and addresses local challenges and priorities in your area.

Local Police Plans should be in place for no longer than a three year period before being reviewed, and should be consistent with the latest published version of the Scottish Police Authority's Strategic Police Plan.

Relationship with other Plans

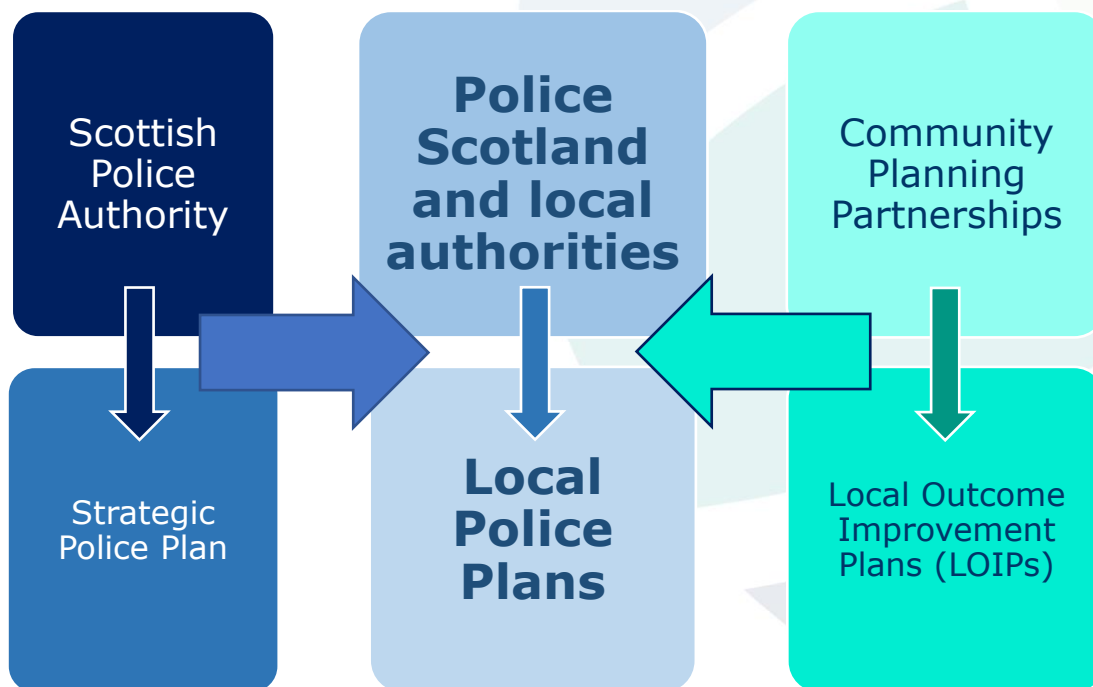
Local Police Plans are part of an integrated suite of strategic planning tools within policing and between policing and communities.

The Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 requires the Scottish Police Authority to develop a Strategic Police Plan in partnership with the Chief Constable. The Strategic Police Plan informs Police Scotland’s approach to all other strategies and implementation plans, ensuring a consistent cascade of purpose for all operational policing in Scotland. Local Police Plans require to be consistent with the Strategic Police Plan, and reviewed whenever a new Strategic Police Plan is published by the Scottish Police Authority.

Local Police Plans should also be consistent with, and contribute to, Local Outcome Improvement Plans (LOIPs). These LOIPs are produced by Community Planning Partnerships, and Police Scotland has a statutory duty to participate in community planning.

Nationally, the Policing Performance Committee of the Authority oversees and scrutinises Police Scotland’s performance in delivering the Strategic Police Plan, Annual Police Plan and operational policing policy. The COSLA Community Wellbeing spokesperson is a member of the Committee. Elected members can access national performance reports and watch the Committee proceedings [here](#).

The Chief Constable also provides updates on policing in Scotland to every Scottish Police Authority meeting. Elected members can access the Board proceedings [here](#).



The Three Stages of Scrutiny

Local authority scrutiny regarding Local Police Plans is especially important at three stages, as each stage has a distinct focus:

Stage 1

Development of the Local Police Plan, prior to its approval by the local authority (engagement, consultation, content and supporting evidence).

Stage 2

Monitoring progress and performance during the life of the Plan's delivery (actions and results – measurable impact on the priorities and outcomes as seen through performance indicators).

Stage 3

Reviewing Local Police Plan delivery prior to renewal (accomplishment of the Plan, continued strategic relevance, what to take forward in the next Plan).

Suggested checklists for use at each of the three stages are located at the end of the document.



Stage 1 Scrutiny

During the development stage of a new Local Police Plan it is suggested that scrutiny focusses on:

- the nature and quality of consultation and engagement activity;
- how the outputs from consultation and engagement activity have influenced the Local Police Plan (alongside other evidence, for example, crime/incident/demand/intelligence data);
- how the Local Police Plan aligns with both the latest published Strategic Police Plan and the relevant Local Outcome Improvement Plan;
- what outcome-based measures (indicators) are proposed for reporting on performance and delivery progress;
- what data/information will be available to Elected Members at the level of the local authority and sub-local authority level, and how this can be accessed; and
- whether what is proposed in the Local Plan can be evidenced in its approach, reflecting research and/or tested policing approaches.

Stage 2 Scrutiny

During the ongoing monitoring stage of Local Police Plan delivery (through regular performance reporting to the local authority) it is suggested that scrutiny focusses on:

- progress by Police Scotland on delivering the objectives in the plan;
- updates on emerging local policing issues out with the local police plan;
- aspects of progress and performance as it relates to the wider Community Planning Partnership and Police Scotland;
- changes to the policing performance indicators;
- the range and quality of both numeric (quantitative) and narrative (qualitative) evidence being used to evidence progress and impact across both crime-related as well as non-crime demand, such as antisocial behaviour, roads policing matters, public welfare concerns and major events policing;
- external (non-police) evidence, information and opinion from across the partnership; and
- clear demonstration of collaborative partnership working, both being led or contributed to by Police Scotland.

Members are encouraged to refer to the Improvement Service resources on scrutiny for further advice on scrutiny methods, tools and approaches.

Stage 3 Scrutiny

When a Local Police Plan approaches its completion or is otherwise due for review/renewal, it is suggested that scrutiny focusses on:

- what has been achieved during the life of the Plan, with reference to completion of the objectives and measurable performance change;
- how has policing contributed, through the Local Police Plan, as a partner to delivery of the LOIPs and other relevant local outcomes, strategies, development plans;
- how the selected priorities in the Local Police Plan now compare with other priorities; and
- what factors could be considered valuable in shaping the next Local Police Plan.

Suggested Scrutiny Checklists

These checklists have been developed to help Elected Members at each stage in the cycle of the Local Police Plan development, delivery and review.

Stage 1 Development of a Local Police Plan	Checklist
Police Scotland provide a sufficient consultation period with communities/stakeholders in developing the Local Police Plan (3 months minimum), including with Elected Members	
Findings from consultation/engagement activity are included in Local Police Plan or otherwise available for review/inspection	
Consultation/Engagement processes and methods are accessible and inclusive to communities, and relevant local partners and other stakeholders	
Selected Priorities and Objectives in the Local Police Plan take account of Consultation/Engagement Outputs	
Broader policing evidence is presented in the Local Police Plan to justify selection of Priorities and Objectives, reflecting research and/or tested policing approaches e.g. crime, incident, demand, intelligence information	
The Local Policing arrangements are articulated in the Local Police Plan. Arrangements might include how local policing teams are organised across the local authority and the local command structure, and reference to key premises such as HQs, and local police stations	
Sufficient explanation is given on how the policing arrangements are expected to deliver against the Priorities and Objectives	
Outcome measures for the Priorities/Objectives are defined in the Local Police Plan	
Baseline measures are provided for the Outcome measures	
Links to wider relevant local outcomes, strategies, development plans and community planning outcomes (the LOIPs) are articulated in the Local Police Plan	
The Local Police Plan is consistent with the most recently published Strategic Police Plan, especially the priorities, objectives and outcomes in the Strategic Police Plan	
Sufficient notice and time (months rather than weeks) is given to the local authority to review and comment on the draft Local Police Plan prior to its approval	
Feedback from the local authority should be responded to by Police Scotland, with an explanation given for why points raised have been taken on board or otherwise	

Stage 2 Delivery of a Local Police Plan	Checklist
Delivery milestones (where set in the Local Police Plan) are being met	
Numeric / quantitative performance measures are being reported consistently – if not, is a satisfactory explanation provided given?	
Numeric / quantitative performance measures are moving in the expected direction – if not, is a satisfactory explanation provided given?	
Narrative / qualitative performance information is being reported in sufficient detail and depth– if not, is a satisfactory explanation provided given?	
Emerging or high-risk issues out with the Priorities in the Local Police Plan are being reported, alongside detail of how these are being addressed and implications, if any, for delivery of the Plan	
Best practice and other successes are being identified in performance reports	
Where performance is unsatisfactory, explanation is given on what actions will be taken and when performance levels will be expected to improve by	
Performance reports outline anticipated performance (or challenges to performance) in the period ahead (e.g. the quarter or six-month period ahead)	
Clear demonstration of collaborative partnership working is provided, both being led or contributed to by Police Scotland	
Stage 3 Review of a Local Police Plan	Checklist
A review of the existing Local Police Plan is being carried out by Police Scotland with the local authority and will report findings to Elected Members	
Stakeholders, including Elected Members, are invited to contribute to the review	
The review covers progress made and an assessment of measurable performance change	
Changes to the strategic landscape are considered as part of the review	
The review has identified areas to be taken on board when preparing the next iteration of the local police plan.	

Sources of Support

In addition to support from officers in relevant local authorities, the Scottish Police Authority and COSLA welcome enquiries and contact from Elected Members involved in the scrutiny of Local Police Plans and local policing.

The Scottish Police Authority and COSLA, in partnership with local area commanders, are also supportive of local authorities adapting and building on this framework document to better meet local circumstances and arrangements, and would be able to provide assistance if this is required.

For support regarding any aspect of Local Police Plans please contact:

- **Scottish Police Authority**
SPAStrategyandPerformance@spa.police.uk
- **COSLA** info@cosla.gov.uk
- **Your local police commander**

Improvement Service

The Improvement Service produces Community Planning Outcomes Profiles to support Elected Members to help you assess if the lives of people in your community are improving. They contain a set of core measures on important life outcomes including early years, older people, **safer/stronger communities**, health and wellbeing, and engagement with local communities. The Profiles also give you a consistent basis for measuring outcomes and inequalities of outcome in your area.

[Community Planning Outcomes Profile | Improvement Service](#)

Providing Feedback

The Scottish Police Authority and COSLA intend to update this document, based on feedback from Elected Members and local officials who have been making use of it.

Reviews will take place at various points in the three stages of the local scrutiny cycle:

Stage 1 review – expected Summer 2023

Stage 2 review – expected at regular intervals between late 2023 and late 2025

Stage 3 review – expected Winter 2025/2026

Please provide your feedback on using this document to support your scrutiny activity by clicking [here](#) – the link takes you to the Scottish Police Authority’s Citizen Space engagement hub.

