

Agenda item	4
Report no	NC/01/24

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Nairnshire Committee

Date: 22 January 2024

Report Title: Police – Area Performance Report

Report By: Chief Inspector Ross McCartney - Area Commander
(South Highland Area Command)

1. Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 To provide an update to Committee Board on the progress with reference to the objectives outlined in the Highland Policing Plan 2023 – 2026.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are invited to note:

- i. Progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023 – 2024 Year 1 attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2023 – 30 November 2023.
- ii. The change in format necessitate by a reduction in back office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports.

3. Report Format – Police Area Performance Summary Report

3.1 This document covers priorities featured in the Local Policing Plan and evidences Prevention and Intervention work corresponding to each of the Policing Priorities, provide local narrative in relation to Serious and Organised Crime and Counter Terrorism.

3.2 At present, for The Highland Council, we report bi-annually at a Highland level, additionally, there has been a local agreement that we would also provide scrutiny reports individually to all 11 Local Area Committees, 10 of them bi-annually and 1 of them annually.

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In response to the budgetary challenges facing policing, we have had to restructure the divisional establishment, to ensure we maintain critical front line services, and this has resulted in a reduction in our 'back office' functionality, which is where the preparation of such reports is undertaken by police officers, supported by analysts.

Scoping the frequency of reporting across other local authority areas, it is apparent that this provision of additional Local Area Committee reports is anomalous, and likely as a result of the geographical diversity of the Highland area.

To this end we are looking to move to Area Command level reporting bi-annually, but with the assurance that the local Inspector or Area Commander will be able to still articulate local context.

This is the first report using this new format and we will be monitoring its implementation.

4. Implications

4.1 Resource – There are no immediate resource applications arising from this noting report.

4.2 Legal – There are no immediate legal implications arising from this noting report.

Community (Equality, Poverty and Rural) – There are no immediate community implications arising from this noting report.

Climate Change/Carbon Clever – There are no immediate implications arising from this noting report.

Risk – There are no immediate implications arising from this noting report.

Gaelic – There are no immediate implications arising from this noting report.

Designation: Chief Inspector

Date: 17/01/2024

Author: Chief Inspector Ross McCartney

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South Area Committee Report

January 2024

Reporting Period - 01 April 2023 – 30 Nov 2023



Report by
Chief Inspector Ross McCartney
Area Commander – South Highland Area Command

Communities, People and Partnerships... at the Heart of the Highlands



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Introduction by Area Commander

Chief Inspector Ross McCartney

I present to you the South Highland Scrutiny Report covering the reporting period 1 April 2023 until the 30 November 2023.

Previously reports were provided to each individual committee, but due to restructuring of our resources to maximise front line policing, we have reduced the number of reports we are providing. The report will now be at Area Command level, but delivered to you at local committee level. I can give you my assurance that although the report will cover a slightly wider geographical area, I will be able to provide any additional local context.

The interpretation of statistics continues to be a key part of what we do, identifying potential crime trends and ensuring I have the right officers in the right place to keep our communities safe. We do compare data on previous years, and we are slowly coming back to pre-COVID demand. I am always happy to discuss the data and provide some context around the statistics provided within the report.

We are now, following the COVID challenges, facing some real cost of living challenges which will impact all of our communities. My team are continuing to work with Partners to protect the vulnerable people within our communities.

We maintain our presence on our Highland roads, enforcing road traffic legislation, improving road safety and investigating road traffic collisions. I know this has been a particular area of concern.

We have unfortunately seen an increase in Assaults and Serious Assaults and

tragically we have also had a murder within the period, rare for our area.

Fraud continues to cause some concern with individuals falling victim to various methods of fraud. We are seeing a slight levelling in reports and are hoping that our increased publicity around these and working with financial institutions is starting to work.

There is a slight increase in the YTD in missing person enquiries. These enquiries generate a considerable amount of work for my staff. A proportion of these relate to people missing in the mountains.

Hate Crime related offences remain low with a slight increase on the previous year. We continue to support victims of crime to engage with us and feel confident in reporting crimes to us.

Our work tackling Serious and Organised Crime continues, we continue to disrupt these individuals and working effectively with Partners is key. We use these relationships to identify individuals that are vulnerable to exploitation, making early interventions and making the Highlands inhospitable to Serious and Organised Crime Groups.

Finally the implementation of technology within Police Scotland I hope will continue, however with the recent budget announcement of cuts to the Police Service these may not progress as promptly as we would prefer. These budget cuts continue to impact negatively on our Policing footprint across the board.

Local Policing Priorities

The Local Policing Priorities for the N Division area are decided by data from our Strategic Assessment which details Threats and Risks, and also feedback from Local Authorities, Partners and public in the Your Police survey.



ROAD SAFETY AND ROAD CRIME

Collaborate to reduce casualties and crime on our roads



ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, VIOLENCE AND DISORDER

Engage with the public and communities to reduce and prevent crime



ACQUISITIVE CRIME

Reduce crime through preventing offending and reducing re-offending



PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Support people considered vulnerable through working with partners



SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

Reduce the harm caused by serious organised crime including cyber related crime



TERRORISM AND PUBLIC ORDER

Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Prepare through collaborative preparedness

Road Safety and Road Crime

Intention - With Partners, enhance Road Safety across the Highland Area.

Objective – With Partners, deliver a Road Safety Strategy focusing on: Challenging driver behaviour; Education at the road side and elsewhere; Detection of offences linked to contributing factors of Fatal and Serious Road Traffic Collisions and collectively reducing potential harm.

We have seen increased detections across most road crime in the period, versus last year and the 5 year average, showing our presence on the roads network. Particularly you will note the significant increase in speeding enforcement, which I know is an area highlighted previously as a priority.

SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)			
	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24
Dangerous driving offences	43	31	38.2	42
Drink, Drug driving offences incl. Failure to provide a specimen	87	65	79.6	85
Speeding offences	708	349	728.6	918
Driving while disqualified	8	4	5.0	7
Driving without a licence	52	35	53.0	25
Failure to insure against third party risks	148	99	124.4	128
Seat belt offences	25	21	20.2	13
Mobile phone offences	15	28	16.8	58
Driving Carelessly	135	185	118.4	225
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	20	32	23.4	18
Using a motor vehicle without test certificate	200	231	182.0	173
Other Group 7 offences	235	247	287.2	324

Operation CEDAR - (Challenge, Educate, Detect and Reduce) builds on established practices and will continue to focus on various agencies working in partnership to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured in the Highland area. Operation CEDAR involves proactive multi-agency enforcement operations on the roads, which sits alongside education activity aimed at improving driver behaviour of all ages. Partner agencies continue to work together to improve understanding of the factors which could contribute to improving road safety for everyone on the roads and together respond to these issues.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Disorder and Violence (including Alcohol and Drug misuse)

Intention – With Partners, better understand the causes to prevent and reduce instances of Anti-Social Behaviour, Disorder and Violence to enhance community safety across the Highland Area.

Objective – Work with Partners to share information, support Education, Prevention, Diversionary and Enforcement Measures linked to harmful alcohol consumption; maintain robust procedures around licensed premises; support victims of violent crime by working with partners to improve service provision and prevent repeat victimisation.

SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)				Detection Rate
	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24	
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	-	1	0.2	1	100%
Serious assault	15	19	15.2	27	92.6%
Possession of drugs	157	83	156.0	91	103% ¹
Common Assault	204	236	224.8	275	66.5%
Common Assault (of emergency workers)	26	27	32.0	33	100%

Harm Prevention Officer – A Harm Prevention Officer (HPO) role was introduced within the N Division area in November 2020. This role is filled by a Police Constable who undertakes daily liaison between internal/external stakeholders with a view to reducing the risk posed to certain members of the public through alcohol and controlled substance misuse.

The HPO works with other partners to target Cuckooing which is a crime whereby crime groups take over the home of a vulnerable person in order to use it as a base for County Lines offences. The HPO works within the nationally recognised Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (Divert, Deter, Disrupt, Detect) targeting the Divert and Deter strands.

The HPO is fully funded by NHS Highland via the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership (HADP).

¹ This will be based on detections from the previous period.

Acquisitive Crime

Intention – With Partners and Communities, prevent instances of acquisitive crime across the Highland area.

Objective – With Partners, share information, support education, prevention, diversionary and enforcement activity linked to acquisitive crime; develop work with targets – recidivist offenders to reduce reoffending linked to acquisitive crime e.g. Persistent Offenders programme; enhance the use of all media platforms to raise awareness of local and national preventative initiatives.

SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)				Detection Rate
	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24	
<i>Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total</i>	24	42	36.4	32	18.8%
<i>Motor vehicle crime - Total</i>	25	29	28.0	34	38.2%
Theft by shoplifting	71	60	70.6	157	59.2%
Fraud	74	92	53.0	96	3.1%

Fraud – The increase in Fraud related crimes last year and continuing to this year has not only been experienced by members of the public residing within the South Highland area, but across the wider N Division area, Scotland and the United Kingdom. Detection of these crimes is incredibly challenging with perpetrators often out with the United Kingdom.

Banking Protocol

Following a number of incidents across the N Division area in respect of Frauds and Banking Protocol, work has been ongoing with various Banks within N Division with a view to setting up learning sessions between staff members to talk through Banking Protocol. This has allowed for a better understanding of the Police response, management of vulnerabilities and referrals/support available to victims.

Rural Watch - The Highland area is renowned for great natural beauty and the rural communities are safe places in which to live, work and visit. Watch Schemes work well as a crime prevention and detection tool but are also extremely valuable in terms of enabling Highland communities to share information, allowing agencies to send out relevant crime alerts, and empower local communities to be more resilient.

To receive local ALERTS about crime and other threats in your area, simply click the green JOIN button on the Rural Watch Website - www.ruralwatchscotland.co.uk

Protecting Vulnerable People

Intention – Protect people at risk of harm.

Objective – With Partners and as corporate parents we will deliver the Highland CHAMPS (Highland Champion Board) strategy; with Partners we will focus on safeguarding communities; with Partners we will address emerging issues through Prevention and Intervention.

SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)				Detection Rate
	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24	
Domestic Abuse (Total)	2	9	5.6	11	72.7%
Sexual Crimes	92	116	94.8	131	55%
Hate Crime	14	16	15.8	19	36%
Missing Persons	89	73		82	N/a

Hate Crime –

Police Scotland underwent a national inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) in relation to Hate Crime with N Division (Highland and Islands) being identified as one of three focussed Divisions. Learning from this had shown the need to ensure the public have confidence in coming to report incidents.

Missing Persons –

Police Scotland takes every report of a missing person seriously and investigates appropriately with access to local, regional and national specialist resources. Missing persons investigations are a core part of local Policing and it is local officers who undertake all investigations, supported by specialist colleagues where necessary. N Division has a dedicated Missing Person Co-ordinator who advises on operational and preventative approaches.

Each Area Command has appointed a local Police liaison officer who maintains contact and liaison with the residential units in their respective area. This role has developed and regular contact has built a good relationship with residential unit(s).

We are also benefiting from increased capability for people missing in the mountains with a small cadre of mountain rescue trained officers now in the division.

Serious and Organised Crime

Intention – With Partners, reduce the threat, risk and harm caused by Serious Organised Crime.

Objective – With Partners work to safeguard the Highland area by taking all opportunities to prevent crime and make the Highland area a hostile environment for Serious & Organised Crime Groups; to improve outcomes for individuals and communities and reduce offending through prevention, early intervention and diversion; in support of our Partners in the Local Authority and NHS via the Highland Alcohol and Drug Partnership Strategy we will direct those who are substance dependant towards recovery through prevention, treatment and support services; with Partners work to reduce the instances of substance misuse in our communities.

SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)				Detection Rate
	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24	
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	5	2	3.0	4	50%
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	6	9	14.0	4	75%

County Lines - When Organised Crime Groups from major cities such as Birmingham, Derby, Liverpool and London are expanding their drug networks to other areas, bringing with it serious criminal behaviour such as violence, exploitation and abuse. The term County Lines refers to the use of a single telephone number to order drugs, operated from outside the local area. They often set up a base in a rural town for a short time, taking over the home of a vulnerable person by 'cuckooing' and use adults and children to act as drug runners. Preventions and Interventions delivered advisory presentations to Partner agencies including Highland Council (Housing/Social Work) and NHS Highland.

N Division has also recently expanded its team of dedicated officers with the sole purpose of targeting County Line offenders, working in partnership with partner agencies and protecting vulnerable persons.

Counter Terrorism

Intention – Support the delivery of the CONTEST strategy to reduce the threat posed by terrorism and domestic extremism.

Objective – Strengthen PREVENT work with Partners and institutions; with Partners, support individuals who are vulnerable to terrorism and violent extremism; strengthen PREVENT work in relation to the internet and Social Media; Effective Multi-agency planning in respect of Counter Terrorism is taking place; Develop our ability to respond effectively to any terrorist attack (with a specific focus on emerging high-risk threats, and specialist capabilities).

Police Constable Lisa Campbell, N Division's Local Counter Terrorism Officer stated:

“As the Counter Terrorism Liaison Officer (CTLO) for N Division, I ensure areas have a Local Contest Liaison Officer who is kept up to date on latest developments in Contest.

I liaise with CT Intelligence, CT Security Advisors, the Prevent Delivery Unit as well as local Area Commanders to address any CT related matters in the area and provide support to the Area Command if required.

I can also provide presentations on Act now, Radicalisation awareness, threat overview and current trends. LCLO's can also assist with this within schools etc.

I can provide updates on the annual threat overview to local Councils.

Work is ongoing with the Highland Council Head of Safeguarding to have a lesson plan on radicalisation put to all Highland Schools”.

Crime Statistics

For additional detail, published crime data can also be accessed online via the link below

Crime data - Police Scotland Crime data - Police Scotland

Recorded Crimes and Offences: Year-to-date (April - November)							
South Highlands - NB (Area Command) by selected crime classifications							
SGJD crime group/classification	Year-to-date (April - November)					% Change from	
	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	5 yr mean	2023/24	5 yr mean	2022/23
TOTAL CRIMES AND OFFENCES (GROUPS 1 - 7)	2 881	3 103	2 756	3 161.2	3 699	17.0	34.2
TOTAL CRIMES (GROUPS 1 - 5)	834	928	899	930.2	1 125	20.9	25.1
OVERALL VIOLENT CRIME*	228	248	287	275.4	341	23.8	18.8
TOTAL OFFENCES (GROUPS 6 - 7)	2 047	2 175	1 857	2 231.0	2 574	15.4	38.6
GROUP 1: NON SEXUAL CRIMES OF VIOLENCE	32	31	49	33.8	65	92.3	32.7
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	-	-	1	0.2	1	400.0	-
Culpable homicide (at common law)	-	-	-	0.2	-	- 100.0	-
Culpable homicide (under statute including RTA, sec. 1)	-	2	2	1.2	1	- 16.7	- 50.0
Attempted murder	-	1	4	1.2	2	66.7	- 50.0
Serious assault	15	15	19	15.2	27	77.6	42.1
Robbery and assault with intent to rob	2	2	-	1.8	3	66.7	x
Domestic Abuse (of female)	10	2	9	5.4	10	85.2	11.1
Domestic Abuse (of male)	-	-	-	0.2	1	400.0	x
Domestic Abuse (Total)	10	2	9	5.6	11	96.4	22.2
Cruel & Unnatural treatment of children	1	3	-	2.0	1	- 50.0	x
Threats and extortion	4	4	11	4.8	14	191.7	27.3
Other group 1 crimes	-	2	3	1.6	5	212.5	66.7
GROUP 2: SEXUAL CRIMES	97	92	116	94.8	131	38.2	12.9
Rape	14	10	19	17.0	17	-	- 10.5
Assault w/i to rape or ravish	5	-	1	1.2	-	- 100.0	- 100.0
Rape and attempted rape - Total	19	10	20	18.2	17	- 6.6	- 15.0
Sexual assault (pre-SOSA 2009)*	1	6	6	4.2	2	- 52.4	- 66.7
Sexual assault (SOSA 2009)*	20	21	30	21.6	39	80.6	30.0
Lewd & libidinous practices*	2	12	7	6.4	7	9.4	-
Indecent/Sexual Assault - Total	23	39	43	32.2	48	49.1	11.6
Prostitution related crime - Total*	-	-	1	0.2	-	- 100.0	- 100.0
Taking, distribution, possession of indecent photos of children	5	5	7	4.6	7	52.2	-
Communicating indecently (SOSA 2009)*	18	9	15	10.8	13	20.4	- 13.3
Communications Act 2003 (sexual)	2	1	2	2.2	3	36.4	50.0
Sexual exposure (SOSA 2009)*	1	1	-	1.0	6	500.0	x
Public indecency (common law)	1	3	1	1.0	1	-	-
Other sexual crimes (SOSA 2009)*	21	18	19	17.0	22	29.4	15.8
Other sexual crimes (non-SOSA 2009)*	-	5	3	3.2	3	- 6.3	-
Threatening / Disclosure of intimate image*	7	1	5	4.4	11	150.0	120.0
Other Group 2 crimes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Group 2 crimes - Total	55	43	52	44.2	66	49.3	26.9
GROUP 3: CRIMES OF DISHONESTY	252	327	341	328.6	485	47.6	42.2
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - dwelling house	21	9	25	17.6	14	- 20.5	- 44.0
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - non dwelling	2	1	7	3.8	2	- 47.4	- 71.4
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - other premises	15	14	10	15.0	16	6.7	60.0
Housebreaking (incl. Attempts) - Total	38	24	42	36.4	32	- 12.1	- 23.8
Opening Lockfast Places - Motor Vehicle	3	-	4	3.2	2	- 37.5	- 50.0
Theft of a motor vehicle	12	16	13	11.8	18	52.5	38.5
Theft from a Motor Vehicle (Insecure etc)	12	9	12	12.2	14	14.8	16.7
Attempt theft of motor vehicle	-	-	-	0.8	-	- 100.0	-
Motor vehicle crime - Total	27	25	29	28.0	34	21.4	17.2
Opening Lockfast Places - NOT Motor Vehicle	9	7	4	7.6	7	- 7.9	75.0
Common theft	75	84	88	103.4	127	22.8	44.3
Theft by shoplifting	39	71	60	70.6	157	122.4	161.7
Fraud	44	74	92	53.0	96	81.1	4.3
Other Group 3 Crimes	20	42	26	29.6	32	8.1	23.1

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GROUP 4: FIRE-RAISING, MALICIOUS MISCHIEF etc	145	192	185	182.6	203	11.2	9.7
Fireraising	4	10	9	9.2	10	8.7	11.1
Vandalism (including malicious mischief)	133	175	166	164.8	184	11.7	10.8
Reckless conduct (with firearms)	1	-	-	0.4	1	150.0	x
Culpable and reckless conduct (not with firearms)	7	6	10	8.0	6	- 25.0	- 40.0
Other Group 4 Crimes	-	1	-	0.2	2	900.0	x
GROUP 5: OTHER (PRO-ACTIVITY) CRIMES	308	286	208	290.4	241	- 17.0	15.9
Carrying offensive weapons (incl. restriction)*	9	3	6	8.4	1	- 88.1	- 83.3
Handling bladed/pointed instrument*	6	8	6	6.4	8	25.0	33.3
Offensive weapon (used in other criminal activity)*	7	3	10	5.4	4	- 25.9	- 60.0
Bladed/pointed instrument (used in other criminal activity)*	1	2	8	2.8	7	150.0	- 12.5
Total offensive/bladed weapons	23	16	30	23.0	20	- 13.0	- 33.3
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	6	5	2	3.0	4	33.3	100.0
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	26	6	9	14.0	4	- 71.4	- 55.6
Bringing drugs into prison	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Supply of drugs - Total	32	11	11	17.0	8	- 52.9	- 27.3
Possession of drugs	165	157	83	156.0	91	- 41.7	9.6
Other drugs offences (incl. importation)	4	-	-	1.4	-	- 100.0	-
Total drugs crimes	201	168	94	174.4	99	- 43.2	5.3
Offences relating to serious and organised crime	1	-	-	0.2	1	400.0	x
Bail offences (other than absconding)	36	49	46	39.8	57	43.2	23.9
Other Group 5 crimes	47	53	38	53.0	64	20.8	68.4
GROUP 6: MISCELLANEOUS OFFENCES	429	499	530	554.2	558	0.7	5.3
Common Assault	187	204	236	224.8	275	22.3	16.5
Common Assault (of emergency workers)	24	26	27	32.0	33	3.1	22.2
Common Assault - Total	211	230	263	256.8	308	19.9	17.1
Breach of the Peace	22	13	15	27.0	5	- 81.5	- 66.7
Threatening & abusive behaviour	105	179	171	166.8	161	- 3.5	- 5.8
Stalking	2	1	8	5.4	4	- 25.9	- 50.0
BOP, S38 & S39 Crim Just & Lic (S) Act 2010 - Total	129	193	194	199.2	170	- 14.7	- 12.4
Racially aggravated harassment/conduct*	3	4	8	5.2	5	- 3.8	- 37.5
Drunk and incapable	2	1	-	1.8	-	- 100.0	-
Consume alcohol in designated place local bye-law	5	6	1	5.2	-	- 100.0	- 100.0
Other alcohol related offences*	8	7	5	9.4	6	- 36.2	20.0
Drunkenness and other disorderly conduct (TOTAL)	15	14	6	16.4	6	- 63.4	-
Wildlife offences*	12	7	5	9.0	5	- 44.4	-
Other Group 6 offences	59	51	54	67.6	64	- 5.3	18.5
GROUP 7: OFFENCES RELATING TO MOTOR VEHICLES	1 618	1 676	1 327	1 676.8	2 016	20.2	51.9
Dangerous driving offences	32	43	31	38.2	42	9.9	35.5
Drink, Drug driving offences incl. Failure to provide a specimen	83	87	65	79.6	85	6.8	30.8
Speeding offences	731	708	349	728.6	918	26.0	163.0
Driving while disqualified	6	8	4	5.0	7	40.0	75.0
Driving without a licence	58	52	35	53.0	25	- 52.8	- 28.6
Failure to insure against third party risks	188	148	99	124.4	128	2.9	29.3
Seat belt offences	22	25	21	20.2	13	- 35.6	- 38.1
Mobile phone offences	12	15	28	16.8	58	245.2	107.1
Driving Carelessly	81	135	185	118.4	225	90.0	21.6
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	11	20	32	23.4	18	- 23.1	- 43.8
Using a motor vehicle without test certificate	114	200	231	182.0	173	- 4.9	- 25.1
Other Group 7 offences	280	235	247	287.2	324	12.8	31.2