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Agenda item	<b>5</b>
Report no	<b>CC/13/24</b>

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL**

**Committee:** Caithness Area Committee

**Date:** 12 August 2024

**Report Title:** Police – Area Performance Report

**Report By:** Chief Inspector Calum Smith - Area Commander (North 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 2023-2026 Year 1, attached as Annex A to this report, for the period covering 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024.

**3. Report Format – Police Area Performance Summary Report**

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

**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.

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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: 30/07/2024

Author: Chief Inspector Calum Smith

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**Performance Against  
Local Policing Plan 2023-2026**



**POLICE  
SCOTLAND**  
Keeping people safe  
**POILEAS ALBA**

**Caithness Area Committee Report  
Monday 12 August 2024**

**Reporting Period - 01 April 2023 – 31 March 2024**



Report by  
Chief Inspector Calum Smith  
Area Commander – North Highland Area Command

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



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## Introduction by Area Commander

Chief Inspector Calum Smith

I present to you the Caithness Area Committee Scrutiny Report covering the reporting period 1 April 2023 until the 31 March 2024.

The statistics being reported are now at North Highland Area Command level which incorporates the following Area Committees:-

Black Isle and Easter Ross, Caithness, Dingwall and Seaforth, Sutherland and Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh.

A verbal update will be provided by the Police Scotland representative in relation to the local context of this Area Committee.

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, however it may be some years before we can accurately compare year on year data as a result of the COVID pandemic. 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, continuing to face some real cost of living challenges which will impact all of our communities, including those who have not felt such hardship before. 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, especially with the notable increase in visitors to the Highlands. My team continue to engage with the Visitor Management Plan, working with various Partners to ensure the Highlands continues to be a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

I have to report a slight increase in Serious Assaults which may be linked to our licenced premises and annual events now fully returned. I also have to report that there has been a slight increase in Anti-Social Behaviour related incidents.

I am pleased to report a reduction in Frauds, however continues to cause some concern with individuals falling victim to various methods of fraud. We have attempted to increase publicity around these and worked with financial institutions to reinforce messages around keeping money safe.

You will note from the report a reduction in missing person enquiries from last year. A proportion of these missing persons enquiries relate to looked after children failing to return home when required to.

Missing person enquiries place significant demands on our resource.

There has been a slight increase on the previous year in relation to Hate Crime related offences. 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.

## 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

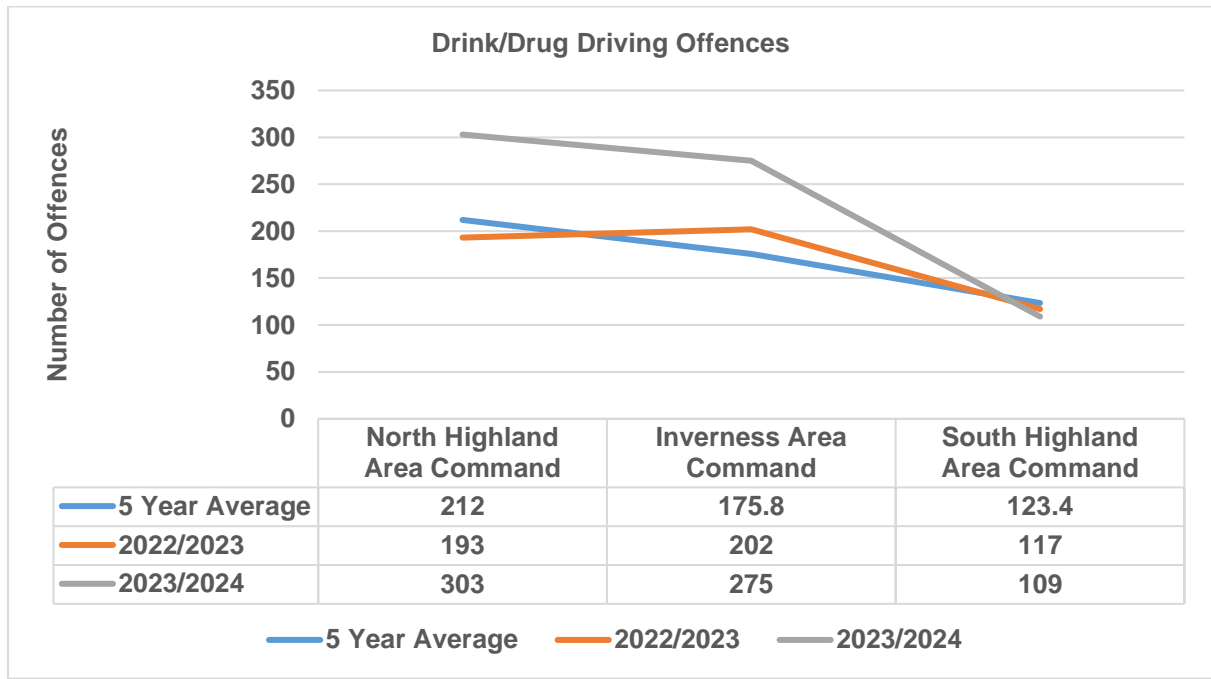
## Road Safety and Road Crime

**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.**

	5 Year Average	3 Year Average	YTD 2022/2023	YTD 2023/2024	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Number of Fatalities - Road Traffic Collisions	9.8	8.7	13	7	-6	N/A
Drink/Drug Driving Offences	212.0	233.0	193	303	110	98.3%
Speeding Offences	590.0	626.7	540	749	209	99.9%

**2023/2024 Drink/Drug Driving Offences -**



## 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.**

	5 Year Average	3 Year Average	YTD 2022/2023	YTD 2023/2024	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Murder	0.6	0.67	0	2	2	100.0%
Assault	606.4	617.3	612	595	-17	73.1%
Serious Assault	30.8	28.0	26	27	1	85.2%
Drug (Possession) Offences	431.0	381.3	335	370	35	87.2%

**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).

**No Knives, Better Lives** - No Knives, Better Lives (NKBL) is a national capacity-building programme that supports primary prevention work related to knife carrying in Scotland. In 2009, the NKBL National Delivery Team at YouthLink Scotland and the Scottish Government began supporting partners in 11 selected Local Authority areas to implement NKBL. The approach to prevention is informed by the principles and values of youth work and a public health approach to violence prevention. The focus is not just on what it is we do not want young people to do and how to stop them doing it, but also what we want young people to be able to do, how we support them to understand and navigate risk and to make positive life choices.

Police Scotland’s Prevention and Intervention Officers supported this initiative in the Highland area. This is further complemented by the Joint Education and Police Knives in School Protocol which has been progressed.



## 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.**

	5 Year Average	3 Year Average	YTD 2022/2023	YTD 2023/2024	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Housebreaking (Dwelling)	38.0	36.7	37	40	3	25.0%
Fraud	145.6	174.7	185	177	-8	20.3%
Theft by Shoplifting	190.8	215.3	160	354	194	74.0%
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	38.8	39.3	36	48	12	75.0%

**Fraud –**

**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. This has and will continue to allow Bank staff to be aware as to the point in they feel that they can/should intervene.

**Parcel Scam Fraud**

General awareness messaging around parcel/delivery company scams has been circulated electronically to all housing providers across the N Division area and to the University of the Highlands and Islands for sharing with their staff, clients and students.

**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. However, the nature of the environment and way of life means there are some crime prevention tips particularly relevant to rural life. 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](http://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.**

	5 Year Average	3 Year Average	YTD 2022/2023	YTD 2023/2024	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Rape	48.2	49.7	48	50	2	28.0%
Domestic Crime	436.6	468.7	473	389	-84	61.5%
Hate Crime	98.0	101.3	105	120	15	70.5%
Missing Persons*			277	170	-107	-

**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.

**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. Further, each Division including, N Division has a dedicated Missing Person Co-ordinator who advises on operational and preventative approaches.

Missing Person Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	Variation
Adult	84	68	-16
Cared for Adult	6	5	-1
Looked After Child	131	41	-90
Child	53	56	3
Absconder/Wanted	3	0	-3
Total	277	170	-107

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). Where required, this officer also works in conjunction with the Missing Person Co-ordinator who similarly enjoys a good working relationship with residential units.

## 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.**

	5 Year Average	3 Year Average	YTD 2022/2023	YTD 2023/2024	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Drug (Supply) Offences	31.8	26.3	21	39	18	87.2%

**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.

Police Scotland has relaunched an awareness-raising initiative aimed at preventing young people from falling into a life of crime. Working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Police have devised an educational pack for young people that shows the devastating effects of Serious Organised Crime.

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 response effectively to any terrorist attack (with a specific focus on emerging high-risk threats, and specialist capabilities).**

WRAP (Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent) - The workshop covers issues such as crime, normal social processes that are used to influence and manipulate, case studies that cut across the spectrum of extremism, terrorist ideologies and factors which may contribute to an individual's susceptibility to a terrorist ideology.

In particular, it seeks to support participants to recognise that using their existing expertise and professional judgement, they may be able to recognise potentially vulnerable individuals who may be susceptible to being persuaded by an extremist or terrorist ideology. Workshops delivered to partners across the Highland area.

ACT Early is a program delivered to schools across the Highland area. The ACT Early session is a vehicle for debate around the sensitive issue of violent extremism within communities. As such it is an enabler for community participants to air grievances, debate matters of interest to them and work through a group problem solving experience. The following links can provide more information regarding the program:

<https://act.campaign.gov.uk/>  
<https://actearly.uk/>

## Crime Statistics

Crime Bulletin Categories	North Highland Area Command					
	2018 /19	2019 /20	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24
<b>TOTAL CRIME &amp; OFFENCES</b>	<b>6 524</b>	<b>5 909</b>	<b>6 061</b>	<b>6 082</b>	<b>6 483</b>	<b>7 449</b>
<b>Group 1 - Non Sexual Crimes of Violence</b>						
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	1	0	1	0	0	2
Culpable homicide (common law)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable homicide (other)	5	1	1	1	1	0
Attempted murder	7	0	7	1	3	5
Serious Assault (incl. FGM, culpable & reckless conduct - causing injury)	56	34	36	31	26	27
Common Assault (of an emergency worker)	86	109	103	113	98	98
Common Assault	620	602	578	645	612	595
Robbery (including assault with intent to rob)	15	3	6	9	4	11
Domestic Abuse (of male)	0	3	1	3	0	2
Domestic Abuse (of female)	0	19	35	26	35	40
Stalking	23	12	15	9	13	14
Cruel & Unnatural treatment of children	2	2	11	7	1	4
Threats and extortion	7	6	19	19	32	27
Other group 1 crimes	11	7	7	8	4	4
<b>Group 2 - Sexual Offences</b>						
Rape	40	26	66	51	48	50
Attempted rape	1	2	1	2	1	1
Sexual assault	91	75	59	57	87	91
Crimes associated with Prostitution	1	0	0	0	0	0
Indecent photos of children	9	8	16	11	17	13
Communicating indecently	17	17	20	17	20	12
Causing to view sexual activity or images	42	45	20	30	38	31
Threatening or Disclosure of intimate image*	12	16	8	12	7	11
Other Group 2 crimes	30	23	23	48	24	32
<b>Group 3 - Crimes of Dishonesty</b>						
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - dwelling house	41	36	44	33	37	40
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - non-dwelling	12	23	11	10	8	9
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - other premises	42	33	25	26	32	36
Opening Lockfast Places - Motor Vehicle	15	9	6	3	2	2
Theft of a motor vehicle	39	44	32	34	36	48
Theft from a Motor Vehicle, Insecure etc	21	18	21	10	31	12
Attempt theft of motor vehicle	0	4	2	3	3	5
Opening Lockfast Places - NOT Motor Vehicle	12	25	11	15	22	27

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Common theft	298	200	213	195	239	195
Theft by shoplifting	231	193	115	132	160	354
Fraud	58	69	135	162	185	177
Other Group 3 crimes	49	32	46	34	45	22
<b>Group 4 - Damage and Reckless Behaviour</b>						
Fireraising	25	33	26	15	28	18
Vandalism (incl. reckless damage, etc.)	628	642	535	588	636	521
Reckless conduct (with firearms)	0	0	0	2	0	0
Culpable & reckless conduct (not firearms)	10	21	39	24	21	16
Other Group 4 crimes	0	0	4	1	2	1
<b>Group 5 - Crimes Against Society</b>						
Possession firearm/offensive weapon/knife in prison (not used in crime)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Possession offensive weapon/knife in school (not used in crime)	1	7	0	2	1	2
Possession offensive weapon/knife in a private place (not used in crime)	0	0	0	0	0	3
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife (not used in crime)	48	48	73	41	31	55
Possession firearm/offensive weapon/knife in prison (used in criminal activity)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possession offensive weapon/knife in school (used in criminal activity)	1	0	0	0	2	0
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife NEC (used in criminal activity)	23	22	38	23	38	44
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	7	14	10	9	5	9
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	44	35	45	19	21	39
Other drugs offences (incl. importation)	0	1	2	0	0	0
Possession of drugs	432	485	526	439	335	370
Offences relating to serious and organised crime	1	2	4	0	0	0
Bail offences (other than absconding)	98	120	122	128	150	125
Other crimes against public justice	171	138	175	145	148	161
Other crimes against society	2	3	2	2	0	1
<b>Group 6 - Anti-Social Offences</b>						
Breach of the Peace	76	45	25	25	28	31
Threatening or abusive behaviour	469	398	411	453	449	477
Hate aggravated conduct (incl. stirring up hatred)	5	2	5	5	8	6
Drunk and incapable	11	2	1	0	1	0
Consume alcohol in designated place (local by-laws)	13	11	2	5	1	11
Other alcohol related offences	12	16	7	5	10	11
Urinating	26	24	7	15	12	11
<b>Group 7 - Miscellaneous Offences</b>						
Wildlife offences	8	10	15	9	19	15
Offences involved animals (not wildlife)	20	21	22	22	18	36

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Community and public order offences	66	73	118	127	117	116
Environmental offences	10	13	14	16	5	6
Licensing offences	36	21	25	27	30	27
Other misc. offences	3	3	1	3	0	5
<b>Group 8 - Road Traffic Offences</b>						
Dangerous driving offences	84	68	72	102	75	77
Driving Carelessly	158	173	145	238	280	369
Driving under the influence	153	149	212	203	193	303
Speeding offences	786	500	570	591	540	749
Seat belt offences	54	57	33	40	37	91
Mobile phone offences	34	39	26	39	53	81
Unlawful use of motor vehicle	648	632	716	627	886	1099
Vehicle defect offences	176	127	134	108	156	224
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	35	18	18	18	33	65
Road Traffic Offences (involving bicycle/tricycle)	2	4	1	0	6	2
Other Group 8 Offences	254	236	186	209	237	274

For additional detail, published crime data can also be accessed online via the following link:-  
[Crime data - Police Scotland](#)