

Agenda item	3
Report no	CC/24/25

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Caithness Area Committee

Date: 03 November 2025

Report Title: Police – Area Performance Report

Report By: Chief Inspector Chris Sewell – Orkney Area Commander
(covering 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 2025 – 30 September 2025.

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: 30/10/2025

Author: Chief Inspector Chris Sewell

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Performance Against Local Policing Plan 2023-2026



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Caithness Area Committee Report Monday 03 November 2025

Reporting Period - 01 April 2025 – 30 September 2025



Report by Chief Inspector Chris Sewell
Area Commander – Covering North Highland Area Command

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



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Introduction by Area Commander

Chief Inspector Chris Sewell

As you may already be aware, Chief Inspector Calum Smith has recently taken up a new post in Inverness as Temporary Detective Superintendent, with overall responsibility for CID across the Highlands and Islands.

Replacing him, Chief Inspector Dave McAlpine will assume the role of Area Commander for North Highland on 12 November.

In the interim period between Chief Inspector Smith's departure and Chief Inspector McAlpine's appointment, I have taken on responsibility for overseeing North Highland. It is a privilege to present this scrutiny report covering the period from April to September 2025.

This report highlights our commitment to ensuring community safety and resilience in line with the Local Policing Plan 2023-2026, which focuses on North Highland's unique needs and community-priorities.

Efforts throughout the reporting period have focused on our key priorities, which include road safety, crime prevention, and the protection of vulnerable people.

Our primary aim is to maintain responsive to community needs, whilst adopting a prevention first approach by working closely with stakeholders and partners to address issues early and avoid escalation.

One of the main focuses this reporting period has been road safety, with too many lives still being lost on the roads of North Highland each year.

We have maintained a strong presence on the roads, collaborating with partners through local initiatives to promote safe driving practices via both education and enforcement to reduce serious road collisions.

We have also prioritised addressing anti-social behaviour, disorder, and violence. Partnering with local agencies helps us tackle underlying issues, particularly those related to alcohol and drug misuse, which often contribute to anti-social behaviour.

Our commitment to safeguarding North Highland's vulnerable residents is equally crucial.

We actively address domestic abuse, hate crimes, and sexual offenses, ensuring victims feel supported through robust response systems.

The complex nature of these crimes often necessitates a collaborative approach, and we work alongside partner organisations to protect those most at risk.

During this period, we have continued to raise awareness, encourage reporting, and strengthen intervention strategies.

Although less visible, serious and organised crime remains a key concern.

We work diligently to make North Highland a hostile environment for criminal groups through intelligence-led operations and cooperation with national agencies, effectively disrupting criminal activities and safeguarding vulnerable individuals from exploitation.

Counter-terrorism also demands our attention, even in North Highland's seemingly remote setting.

Our officers are trained to respond effectively to emerging threats, and we work within the community to mitigate risks of radicalisation, continually enhancing our preparedness to address any potential threats.

The statistics in this report reflect the dedication of our officers and partners. Behind each number lies a person relying on us to maintain safety and security.

I am committed to building trust, confidence, and delivering high performance to meet the expectations of the North Highland community.

In closing, I extend my thanks to our officers, staff, and partners for their professionalism and dedication.

Together, we will continue to adapt and respond to upcoming challenges, ensuring North Highland remains a safe and resilient place for residents and visitors alike.

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

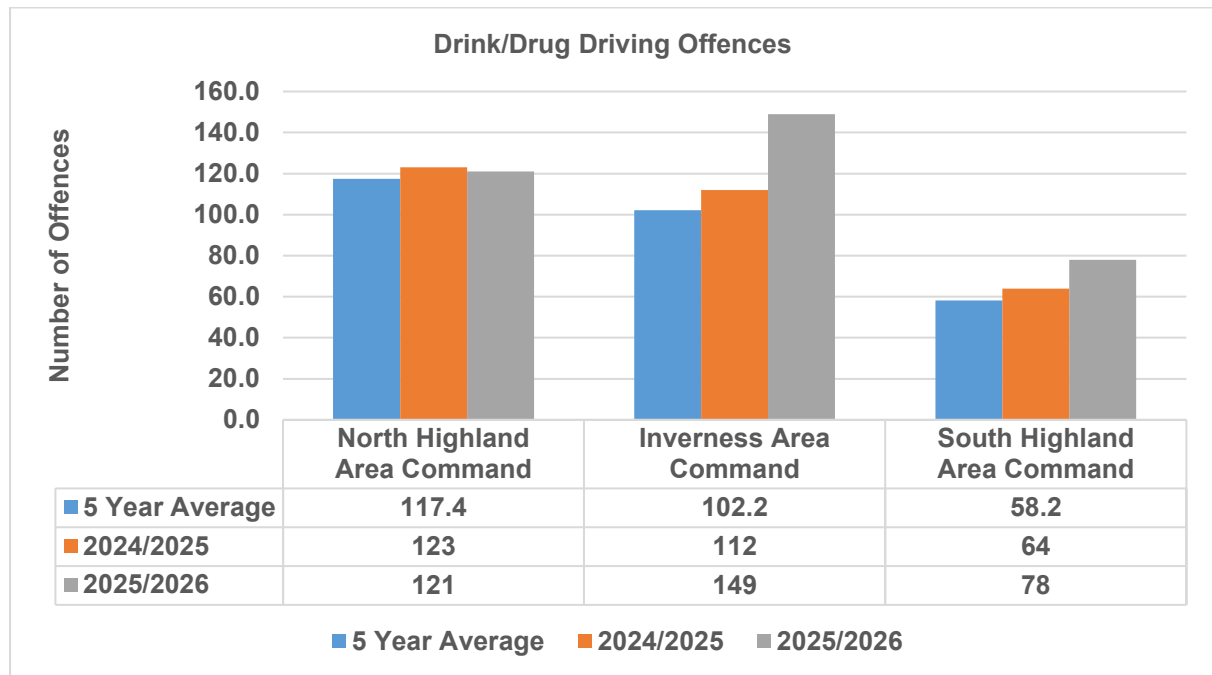
Road Safety and Road Crime

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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Number of Fatalities - Road Traffic Collisions	3.4	4.3	3	5	2	
Drink/Drug Driving Offences	117.4	120.0	123	121	-2	105.8%
Speeding Offences	199.2	115.7	129	205	76	100.5%

2025/2026 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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Murder	0.6	0.7	0	0	-	-
Assault	316.8	317.3	324	321	-3	60.1%
Serious Assault	15.8	15.0	15	17	2	100.0%
Drug (Possession) Offences	212.0	175.3	151	171	20	82.5%

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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Housebreaking (Dwelling)	19.4	20.0	16	14	-2	35.7%
Fraud	88.0	95.0	80	88	8	15.9%
Theft by Shoplifting	101.0	122.3	105	133	28	75.9%
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	16.8	16.0	8	19	11	57.9%

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**

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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Rape	27.4	25.3	35	25	-10	40.0%
Domestic Crime*			242	289	47	66.8%
Hate Crime**			43	106	63	22.6%
Missing Persons	108.8	128.3	87	61	-26	

*Please note, due to the different sources of data being used, and the different methodology/ counting rules, comparison of recorded domestic crimes from 1st April 2024 with recorded domestic crimes prior to 1st April 2024 would not be advised.

** Please note, due to the different sources of data being used, and the different methodology/ counting rules, comparison of recorded hate crimes from 1st April 2024 with recorded hate crimes prior to 1st April 2024 would not be advised.

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	2024/2025	2025/2026	Variation
Adult	28	35	7
Cared for Adult	4	0	-4
Care Experienced Young People	23	11	-12
Child	32	15	-17
Absconder/Wanted	0	0	0
Total	87	61	-26

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

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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.

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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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Drug (Supply) Offences	18.0	16.0	20	12	-8	116.7%

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					
	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26
TOTAL CRIME & OFFENCES	3258	3120	3039	3259	2977	3248
Group 1 - Non Sexual Crimes of Violence	449	434	412	444	470	443
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	1	0	0	2	0	0
Culpable homicide (common law)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable homicide (other)	1	0	1	0	1	1
Attempted murder	5	0	2	3	0	4
Serious Assault (incl. FGM, culpable & reckless conduct - causing injury)	19	15	15	15	15	17
Common Assault (of an emergency worker)	73	66	50	52	63	47
Common Assault	313	319	304	324	324	321
Robbery (including assault with intent to rob)	5	3	2	5	2	6
Stalking	3	4	7	8	13	9
Cruel & Unnatural treatment of children	3	4	1	1	2	6
Threats and extortion	5	6	13	16	14	11
Other group 1 crimes	5	2	1	2	6	7
Group 2 - Sexual Offences	106	126	105	113	126	137
Rape	39	22	21	20	35	25
Attempted rape	1	0	0	0	0	2
Sexual assault	31	26	35	43	31	45
Crimes associated with Prostitution	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indecent photos of children	8	10	10	9	10	13
Communicating indecently	6	6	6	7	9	13
Causing to view sexual activity or images	6	14	20	17	22	18
Threatening or Disclosure of intimate image*	3	6	4	3	5	9
Other Group 2 crimes	12	42	9	14	14	12
Group 3 - Crimes of Dishonesty	368	336	445	499	351	410
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - dwelling house	23	14	19	25	16	14
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - non-dwelling	7	2	6	5	6	7
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - other premises	18	13	18	23	6	7
Opening Lockfast Places - Motor Vehicle	2	2	0	1	2	5
Theft of a motor vehicle	17	19	13	27	8	19
Theft from a Motor Vehicle, Insecure etc	14	4	17	5	8	16
Attempt theft of motor vehicle	2	1	0	3	3	3
Opening Lockfast Places - NOT Motor Vehicle	9	7	11	23	6	9
Common theft	118	100	135	100	88	96
Theft by shoplifting	64	74	75	187	105	133

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Fraud	72	83	117	88	80	88
Other Group 3 crimes	22	17	34	12	23	13
Group 4 - Damage and Reckless Behaviour	306	301	403	327	302	264
Fireraising	18	8	21	13	22	11
Vandalism (incl. reckless damage, etc.)	275	282	370	302	266	243
Reckless conduct (with firearms)	0	1	0	0	0	0
Culpable & reckless conduct (not firearms)	13	9	10	11	13	9
Other Group 4 crimes	0	1	2	1	1	1
Group 5 - Crimes Against Society	545	466	409	416	344	396
Possession firearm/offensive weapon/knife in prison (not used in crime)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possession offensive weapon/knife in school (not used in crime)	0	1	0	1	1	0
Possession offensive weapon/knife in a private place (not used in crime)	0	0	0	2	0	2
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife (not used in crime)	41	22	18	28	15	20
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)	0	0	1	0	0	0
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife NEC (used in criminal activity)	26	9	23	28	22	25
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	3	7	4	3		3
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	29	13	12	16	20	12
Other drugs offences (incl. importation)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Possession of drugs	269	265	191	184	151	171
Offences relating to serious and organised crime	4	0	0	0	0	0
Bail offences (other than absconding)	64	73	83	74	58	88
Other crimes against public justice	107	75	77	80	76	74
Other crimes against society	1	1	0	0	0	1
Group 6 - Anti-Social Offences	247	280	289	311	234	245
Breach of the Peace	15	11	14	25	10	17
Threatening or abusive behaviour	221	254	256	266	197	211
Hate aggravated conduct (incl. stirring up hatred)	2	4	5	2	9	5
Drunk and incapable	1	0	0	0	0	0
Consume alcohol in designated place (local bye-laws)	2	3	0	8	9	2
Other alcohol related offences	3	2	5	3	5	6
Urinating	3	6	9	7	4	4
Group 7 - Miscellaneous Offences	101	103	103	106	87	93
Wildlife offences	12	9	12	12	2	5
Offences involved animals (not wildlife)	10	12	8	20	18	20
Community and public order offences	54	59	65	57	46	54
Environmental offences	11	12	3	1	1	2

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Licensing offences	13	11	15	15	10	10
Other misc. offences	1	0	0	1	10	2
Group 8 - Road Traffic Offences	1136	1074	873	1043	1063	1260
Dangerous driving offences	43	62	50	42	52	56
Driving Carelessly	79	110	90	113	94	168
Driving under the influence	111	116	99	138	123	121
Speeding offences	369	280	109	109	129	205
Seat belt offences	23	22	12	43	28	20
Mobile phone offences	16	18	6	16	21	56
Unlawful use of motor vehicle	313	294	327	370	394	395
Vehicle defect offences	85	45	47	61	60	78
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	8	2	6	8	6	12
Road Traffic Offences (involving bicycle/tricycle)	0	0	1	1	0	1
Other Group 8 Offences	89	125	126	142	156	148

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