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Agenda item	3
Report no	LA/27/25

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 10/11/2025

Report Title: Police – Area Performance Report

Report By: Chief Inspector Scott Robertson - Area Commander
(Covering for 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 2023–2026 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: 29/10/2025

Author: Chief Inspector Scott Robertson

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Performance Against Local Policing Plan 2023-2026



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POILEAS ALBA

Lochaber Area Committee Report Monday 10 November 2025

Reporting Period - 01 April 2025 – 30 September 2025



Report by
Chief Inspector Scott Robertson
Area Commander – Orkney Area Command, covering for South
Highland

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



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Introduction by Area Commander

Chief Inspector Scott Robertson (Orkney Area Commander, covering for South Highland)

As the Local Area Commander for Orkney and temporarily covering South Highlands area I present to you the Lochaber Area Committee Scrutiny Report covering the reporting period 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025.

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

Badenoch & Strathspey, Nairnshire, Lochaber and Skye & Raasay.

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 we have the right officers in the right place to keep our communities safe. We do compare data on previous years, however we are not yet at a point where we can accurately compare year on year data as a result of the COVID pandemic which does impact our 5-year data. I am always happy to discuss the data and provide some context around the statistics provided within the report.

We continue to see real challenges within our communities in terms of the cost of living. Rural living may seem the ideal to some but for others there is significant impact, including those who have not felt such hardship before. My team are continuing to work, wherever we can, with partners to protect the vulnerable people within our communities.

Along with our colleagues in Roads Policing, 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 continue to be a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

Our focus on road safety is reflected in the increase in drink/drug driving offences detected by officers. We will continue to highlight the harm this creates and target our resources accordingly.

I am pleased to report a reduction in overall acquisitive crime, including Housebreaking and Theft by Shoplifting.

We have experienced a slight increase in fraud, which is in keeping with national trends, however the global nature and scale of many of these frauds continues to cause concern, particularly when targeting vulnerable people. We regularly publish information designed to help people protect themselves and, in conjunction with financial institutions, reinforced messages around keeping money safe.

We have seen a small increase in missing person reports, however missing person enquiries place significant demands on our resources. N Division has a dedicated Missing Person Co-ordinator who advises on operational and preventative approaches. This officer also engages with missing people charities and regularly provides support in this regard.

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.

I also appreciate local concern around ASB and drugs misuse and can report we have ongoing operations to target those causing harm to our communities and we will always seek to prioritise making this a safe place to live, work and visit.

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

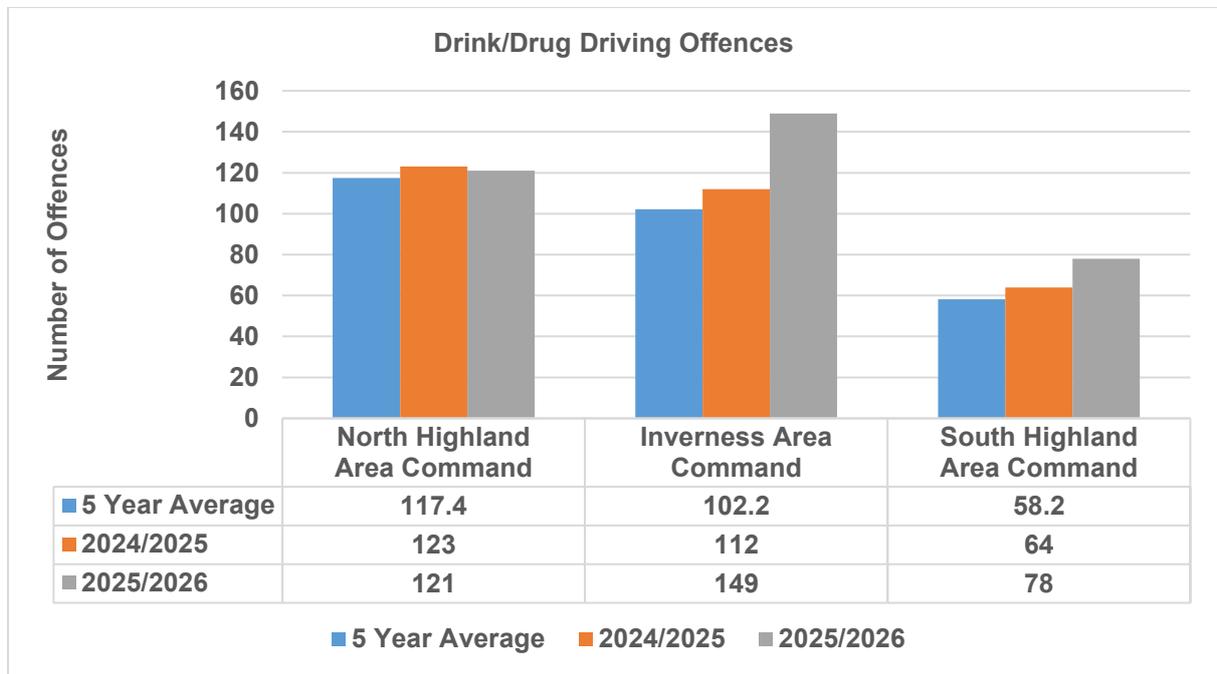
Road Safety and Road Crime

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	5.4	7.7	6	9	3	
Drink/Drug Driving Offences	58.2	55.0	64	78	14	78.2%
Speeding Offences	249.4	83.3	113	218	105	100.0%

2024/2025 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	0.4	0.7	0	0	-	-
Assault	181.0	203.3	218	277	59	57.4%
Serious Assault	17.8	20.3	27	15	-12	86.7%
Drug (Possession) Offences	86.8	57.7	59	97	40	72.2%

Harm Prevention Officer – A Harm Prevention Officer (HPO) role has been operating for some time within the N Division. 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).

Prevention and Intervention Officers - Police Scotland's Prevention and Intervention Officers play a full part in early intervention work throughout South Highland Area Command, supporting colleagues and partners in their efforts to address anti social behaviour.

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 2024/2025	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Housebreaking (Dwelling)	13.8	15.0	16	11	-5	18.2%
Fraud	50.4	56.0	46	89	43	10.1%
Theft by Shoplifting	63.8	80.0	83	78	-5	69.2%
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	9.6	8.7	5	15	10	46.7%

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.

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.

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	11.4	13.0	13	13	-	45.0%
Domestic Crime*			166	223	57	57.8%
Hate Crime**			25	58	33	22.4%
Missing Persons	61.6	63.7	66	88	22	

*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. This officer also engages with missing people charities and regularly provides support in this regard.

Missing Person Category	2024/2025	2025/2026	Variation
Adult	30	40	10
Cared for Adult	1	2	1
Care Experienced Young People	18	6	-12
Child	17	40	23
Absconder/Wanted	0	0	0
Total	66	88	22

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 2024/2025	YTD 2025/2026	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Drug (Supply) Offences	8.8	5.3	5	9	4	66.7%

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.

Crime Statistics

Crime Bulletin Categories	South Highland Area Command					
	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025/2 026
TOTAL CRIME & OFFENCES	2174	2271	1605	1772	1987	2427
Group 1 - Non Sexual Crimes of Violence	187	202	247	280	330	388
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	0	0	1	1	0	0
Culpable homicide (common law)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable homicide (other)	0	2	2	1	0	0
Attempted murder	0	0	3	0	2	0
Serious Assault (incl. FGM, culpable & reckless conduct - causing injury)	13	15	12	22	27	15
Common Assault (of an emergency worker)	16	21	19	23	42	37
Common Assault	141	154	185	207	218	277
Robbery (including assault with intent to rob)	2	1	0	2	1	6
Stalking	2	0	6	3	6	8
Cruel & Unnatural treatment of children	1	3	0	0	6	3
Threats and extortion	4	3	11	10	13	13
Other group 1 crimes	0	1	3	4	6	5
Group 2 - Sexual Offences	73	73	90	87	69	83
Rape	9	9	14	8	17	20
Attempted rape	4	0	1	0	0	1
Sexual assault	16	30	35	36	25	22
Crimes associated with Prostitution	0	0	1	0	0	0
Indecent photos of children	4	4	3	3	6	12
Communicating indecently	15	7	12	8	4	8
Causing to view sexual activity or images	14	12	10	13	8	8
Threatening or Disclosure of intimate image*	3	0	4	7	5	3
Other Group 2 crimes	8	11	10	12	4	9
Group 3 - Crimes of Dishonesty	185	251	240	328	270	316
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - dwelling house	18	6	18	11	16	11
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - non-dwelling	1	1	6	1	4	2
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - other premises	10	12	8	10	6	8
Opening Lockfast Places - Motor Vehicle	3	0	2	1	1	1
Theft of a motor vehicle	11	11	6	15	5	15
Theft from a Motor Vehicle, Insecure etc	12	8	5	9	11	8
Attempt theft of motor vehicle	0	0	0	0	1	0
Opening Lockfast Places - NOT Motor Vehicle	5	7	4	6	5	6
Common theft	57	65	70	80	76	86
Theft by shoplifting	21	58	47	110	83	78

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Fraud	34	50	59	63	46	89
Other Group 3 crimes	13	33	15	22	16	12
Group 4 - Damage and Reckless Behaviour	104	140	142	137	146	150
Fireraising	3	9	6	7	7	10
Vandalism (incl. reckless damage, etc.)	97	126	129	123	134	132
Reckless conduct (with firearms)	1	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable & reckless conduct (not firearms)	3	5	7	5	5	8
Other Group 4 crimes	0	0	0	2	0	0
Group 5 - Crimes Against Society	233	238	142	173	159	233
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	0	1	2	1	0
Possession offensive weapon/knife in a private place (not used in crime)	0	0	0	0	0	1
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife (not used in crime)	8	10	9	4	11	18
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	0	0	0	1
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife NEC (used in criminal activity)	5	5	14	8	7	9
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	6	4	1	4	1	0
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	22	6	8	3	5	9
Other drugs offences (incl. importation)	3	0	0	0	0	0
Possession of drugs	123	138	52	62	59	97
Offences relating to serious and organised crime	1	0	0	1	0	0
Bail offences (other than absconding)	27	38	29	45	41	53
Other crimes against public justice	38	37	28	44	33	41
Other crimes against society	0	0	0	0	1	4
Group 6 - Anti-Social Offences	130	167	155	147	159	167
Breach of the Peace	17	11	13	5	2	10
Threatening or abusive behaviour	85	135	130	125	145	147
Hate aggravated conduct (incl. stirring up hatred)	3	4	6	5	3	7
Drunk and incapable	2	0	0	0	0	0
Consume alcohol in designated place (local bye-laws)	4	6	1	0	0	1
Other alcohol related offences	8	4	4	6	6	2
Urinating	11	7	1	6	3	0
Group 7 - Miscellaneous Offences	47	39	42	45	55	58
Wildlife offences	11	6	5	4	3	6
Offences involved animals (not wildlife)	8	2	12	5	11	13
Community and public order offences	15	17	15	33	30	34
Environmental offences	1	7	2	0	4	1

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Licensing offences	12	7	7	3	7	4
Other misc. offences	0	0	1	0	0	0
Group 8 - Road Traffic Offences	1215	1161	547	575	799	1032
Dangerous driving offences	29	41	27	26	39	29
Driving Carelessly	57	88	69	59	90	119
Driving under the influence	59	67	52	49	64	78
Speeding offences	528	469	42	95	113	218
Seat belt offences	20	18	12	6	24	33
Mobile phone offences	11	8	7	8	26	41
Unlawful use of motor vehicle	312	286	175	168	186	244
Vehicle defect offences	112	63	34	47	103	77
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	6	13	12	5	11	16
Road Traffic Offences (involving bicycle/tricycle)	2	0	0	2	0	1
Other Group 8 Offences	79	108	117	110	143	176

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