Agenda item	**3**
Report no	**LA/35/26**

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Lochaber Area Committee

Date: 09th November 2026

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

Report By: **Inspector Craig Johnstone**

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 March 2026 – 30 September 2026.

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.

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: Inspector

Date: 27/10/2026

Author: Inspector Craig Johnstone

Performance Against Local Policing Plan 2023-2026

Lochaber Area Committee Report
Monday 09 November 2026
Reporting Period - 01 April 2026 – 30 September 2026



Report by Inspector Craig Johnstone on behalf of Chief Inspector Donna Allan
Area Commander –South Highland

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

OFFICIAL

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Introduction by Area Commander

Inspector Craig Johnstone on behalf of Chief Inspector Donna Allan

I present to you the Lochaber Area Committee Scrutiny Report covering the reporting period 1st April 2026 to 30th September 2026.

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 I 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 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 continues to be a safe and enjoyable place to visit.

Our focus on road safety is reflected in the continued increase in drink/drug driving offences detected by officers, a jump in seatbelt offences being detected and other vehicle related offences. We will continue to highlight the harm this creates
and target our resources accordingly.

There has been a decrease in common assaults, coupled with an increase in attempted murders.

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

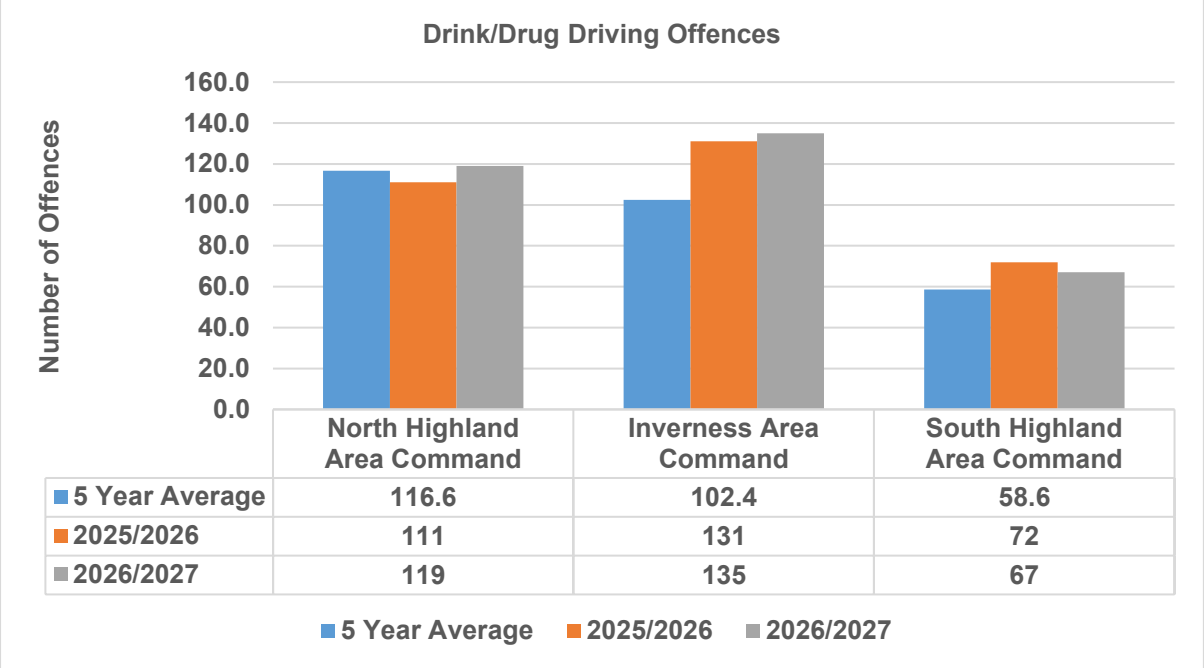
Road Safety and Road Crime

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 2025/2026	YTD 2026/2027	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Number of Fatalities - Road Traffic Collisions	6.4	5	6	3	-3	
Drink/Drug Driving Offences	58.6	58.7	67	72	5	106.9%
Speeding Offences	183.6	141.7	218	232	14	100.4%

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 2025/2026	YTD 2026/2027	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Murder	0.4	0.3	0	0	0	-
Assault	205	229.7	265	204	-61	69.1%
Serious Assault	12.4	11.7	6	8	2	37.5%
Drug (Possession) Offences	78	67	81	68	-13	108.8%

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 2025/2026	YTD 2026/2027	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Housebreaking (Dwelling)	12.4	12.7	11	14	3	7.1%
Fraud	58.4	61.7	77	74	-3	14.9%
Theft by Shoplifting	75.2	90.3	78	92	14	56.5%
Theft of a Motor Vehicle	9.8	10.7	12	3	-9	100%

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 2025/2026	YTD 2026/2027	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Rape	13.6	15.3	21	15	-6	73.3%
Domestic Crime*			214	208	-6	76.8%
Hate Crime**			17	28	11	68.8%
Missing Persons	70.4	75	88	71	-17	

*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 His 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	2025/2026	2026/2027	Variation
Adult	40	26	-14
Cared for Adult	2	3	1
Care Experienced Young People	6	29	23
Child	40	13	-27
Absconder/Wanted	0	0	-
Total	88	71	-17

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 2025/2026	YTD 2026/2027	YTD Variation	Detection Rate
Drug (Supply) Offences	4.8	3.7	4	4	-	50%

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					
	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25	2025 /26	2026 /27
TOTAL CRIME & OFFENCES	**2268**	**1541**	**1745**	**1957**	**2289**	**2699**
Group 1 - Non Sexual Crimes of Violence	**200**	**237**	**273**	**318**	**352**	**314**
Murder (excluding culpable homicide at common law)	0	1	1	0	0	0
Culpable homicide (common law)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable homicide (other)	2	2	1	0	1	0
Attempted murder	0	3	0	2	1	11
Serious Assault (incl. FGM, culpable & reckless conduct - causing injury)	15	12	12	17	6	8
Common Assault (of an emergency worker)	21	19	23	42	35	49
Common Assault	155	181	206	218	265	204
Robbery (including assault with intent to rob)	1	0	2	1	6	3
Stalking	0	6	3	6	8	6
Cruel & Unnatural treatment of children	3	0	0	6	3	2
Threats and extortion	3	11	10	13	13	20
Other group 1 crimes	0	2	15	13	14	11
Group 2 - Sexual Offences	**73**	**90**	**88**	**67**	**85**	**74**
Rape	8	14	8	17	21	15
Attempted rape	0	1	0	0	1	1
Sexual assault	31	35	37	23	21	27
Crimes associated with Prostitution	0	1	0	0	0	0
Indecent photos of children	4	3	3	6	12	7
Communicating indecently	7	12	8	4	8	3
Causing to view sexual activity or images	12	10	13	8	8	8
Threatening or Disclosure of intimate image*	0	4	7	5	3	4
Other Group 2 crimes	11	10	12	4	11	9
Group 3 - Crimes of Dishonesty	**250**	**236**	**323**	**269**	**292**	**322**
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - dwelling house	6	18	11	16	11	14
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - non-dwelling	1	6	1	4	2	3
Housebreaking (incl. attempts) - other premises	12	8	10	6	8	9
Opening Lockfast Places - Motor Vehicle	0	2	1	1	1	1
Theft of a motor vehicle	11	6	15	5	12	3
Theft from a Motor Vehicle, Insecure etc	8	4	9	11	7	3
Attempt theft of motor vehicle	0	0	0	1	0	1
Opening Lockfast Places - NOT Motor Vehicle	7	4	6	5	6	9
Common theft	65	68	77	75	78	96
Theft by shoplifting	58	47	110	83	78	92

Fraud	49	58	62	46	77	74
Other Group 3 crimes	33	15	21	16	12	17
Group 4 - Damage and Reckless Behaviour	**140**	**142**	**135**	**146**	**146**	**150**
Fireraising	9	6	7	7	10	15
Vandalism (incl. reckless damage, etc.)	126	129	121	134	128	125
Reckless conduct (with firearms)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Culpable & reckless conduct (not firearms)	5	7	5	5	8	10
Other Group 4 crimes	0	0	2	0	0	0
Group 5 - Crimes Against Society	**238**	**140**	**171**	**155**	**203**	**208**
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	1	1	0	0
Possession offensive weapon/knife in a private place (not used in crime)	0	0	0	0	1	0
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife (not used in crime)	10	9	4	11	18	2
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	1	0
Other possession of offensive weapon/knife NEC (used in criminal activity)	5	14	8	7	8	11
Production, manufacture or cultivation of drugs	4	1	4	1	0	0
Supply of drugs (incl. possession with intent)	6	7	3	4	4	4
Other drugs offences (incl. importation)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Possession of drugs	138	51	61	59	81	68
Offences relating to serious and organised crime	0	0	1	0	0	0
Bail offences (other than absconding)	38	29	45	41	48	68
Other crimes against public justice	37	28	44	31	38	55
Other crimes against society	0	0	0	0	4	0
Group 6 - Anti-Social Offences	**167**	**154**	**146**	**155**	**158**	**171**
Breach of the Peace	11	13	5	2	10	21
Threatening or abusive behaviour	135	129	124	142	139	133
Hate aggravated conduct (inl. stirring up hatred)	4	6	5	2	6	12
Drunk and incapable	0	0	0	0	0	0
Consume alcohol in designated place (local bye-laws)	6	1	0	0	1	0
Other alcohol related offences	4	4	6	6	2	1
Urinating	7	1	6	3	0	4
Group 7 - Miscellaneous Offences	**39**	**40**	**44**	**54**	**52**	**61**
Wildlife offences	6	4	3	2	4	1
Offences involved animals (not wildlife)	2	12	5	11	12	12
Community and public order offences	17	14	33	30	32	38
Environmental offences	7	2	0	4	1	3

Licensing offences	7	7	3	7	3	3
Other misc. offences	0	1	0	0	0	4
Group 8 - Road Traffic Offences	**1161**	**503**	**565**	**793**	**1002**	**1399**
Dangerous driving offences	41	27	26	39	29	45
Driving Carelessly	88	62	55	90	119	136
Driving under the influence	67	50	48	61	67	72
Speeding offences	469	24	94	113	218	232
Seat belt offences	18	12	5	24	31	99
Mobile phone offences	8	4	8	26	42	48
Unlawful use of motor vehicle	286	169	167	186	243	364
Vehicle defect offences	63	33	47	103	76	174
Drivers neglect of traffic directions (NOT pedestrian crossings)	13	10	5	11	17	17
Road Traffic Offences (involving bicycle/tricycle)	0	0	2	0	1	2
Other Group 8 Offences	108	112	108	140	159	210

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