Request to Police Scotland to ban use of facial recognition technology – Motion as adjusted approved.

14 Bailie Wardrop, seconded by Bailie Carroll, moved that

"Council notes that Police Forces in England and Wales have been using Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) since 2015 and they have expanded its use in recent years. Some police forces also use what is called "Live Facial Recognition" which involves scanning public spaces and crowds in real time, matching faces against a database of images.

Council also notes that Police officers have used facial recognition in various community contexts, including protests, sporting events, concerts, and in busy shopping streets.

Council acknowledges that while the technology is in use, there have been legal challenges regarding its use. In the Ed Bridges' case, the Court of Appeal said South Wales Police's use of live facial recognition violated privacy rights and broke data protection and equality laws.

Council notes that in 2017, Police Scotland's initial ambition to introduce Live Facial Recognition (LFR) by 2026 as part of their 10-year strategy, 'Policing 2026', however notes their later confirmation in 2020 to not advance this, after a report by the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing stated that there was 'no justifiable basis for Police Scotland to invest in this technology', as well as describing the potential use of LFR as 'a radical departure from Police Scotland's fundamental principle of policing by consent'.

Council acknowledges an assessment of the reliability, efficacy, and fairness of Police Scotland's use of retrospective facial recognition (RFR) in March 2025 showed the impracticality of enforcing due to a lack of meaningful data collection.

Council understand that the outcome of the Live Facial Recognition (LFR) National Conversation was considered by the Police Authority's Policing Performance Committee on 10th June 2025. Currently, the Scottish Police Authority is not consulting on the introduction of LFR but instead its potential introduction, and that the initial national conversation happening around this is to decide whether or not this work should be taken forward.

Council also notes Police Scotland's response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request on 31st March 2025 stating they are considering enhancing CCTV resources with the introduction of Briefcam's object matching software, which also has capabilities to match faces live, although it has been stated they will not use this element of the technology if updated.

Council notes its concerns that there is no specific legislation in the UK that governs the use of facial recognition technology by Police, and shares Stop Watch's issues with the technology that it "has been found to amplify and entrench discriminatory policing – particularly in regard to women and racially minoritised communities".

Council also notes the European Union has already taken action to ban such technologies and since 2nd February 2025, unacceptable AI technologies including live facial recognition in public spaces, untargeted scraping of facial images from the internet or CCTV footage, and biometric-based categorization that infer sensitive information such as ethnic origin, political beliefs, sexual orientation or religion, with the aim of categorising and potentially resulting in discriminatory treatment, are prohibited.

Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority to indicate that it is the view of Glasgow City Council that further work should not progress around the introduction of LFR in Police Scotland."

Bailie McCabe, seconded by Councillor Leinster, moved as an amendment that the final 3 paragraphs be deleted and the following inserted:

"Council understands that technological advances can bring benefits to the police and other justice agencies in detecting, preventing and prosecuting crime. However, Council believes that the Scottish Police Authority must ensure that any use of technology is fit for purpose and non-discriminatory and that robust guidance and oversight are in place. Furthermore, any use of technology must respect the rights of our citizens.

Council reaffirms its commitment to digital human rights citizens and recommits to the core values outlined in our Digital Strategy 2024–2030:

- Be Accessible and Inclusive
- Protect and Secure
- Be Open and Transparent
- Involve and Empower
- Collaborative and in Partnership

In addition, Council commends the work of the Eurocities Digital Forum and Working Group on Digital Citizenship which has successfully advocated for protections under the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, and Council recommits to our membership of this and the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, bringing together cities from around the world to share experience and best practice in upholding, promoting and expanding the digital rights of our citizens.

Council believes that these values must apply to all organisations working in the city, in particular public bodies including Police Scotland.

Council further believes that live FRT raises significant ethical issues and the need for proper and ongoing public scrutiny is paramount, including a new comprehensive legislative framework.

Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority to indicate that it is the view of Glasgow City Council that the factors above be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to progress with trials or implementation of live FRT by Police Scotland."

Councillor Vallis, seconded by Councillor Mooney, moved as an amendment to delete all and insert the following:

"Council notes that facial recognition technology (FRT) is being explored and used by police forces across the UK and internationally.

Council recognises that in Scotland, the deployment of LFR has been cautious, and welcomes the current public engagement and oversight being undertaken through the Scottish Police Authority and the national conversation on this issue.

Council believes that investment in front-line policing must remain a priority, and that greater resources should be directed towards local police visibility and community safety initiatives.

Council further believes that improved court resourcing is necessary to ensure that justice is not delayed, and that technology must not be used as a substitute for properly funded and staffed justice services.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. Work with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority through the SAFE Glasgow Partnership to monitor any future consideration of facial recognition technology and ensure use of the technology is evidence-led. Call on Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority to ensure that any future consideration of facial recognition technology is evidence-led and that the Partnership is included in those considerations.
2. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to properly resourced community policing and a justice system that delivers timely and fair outcomes for victims, witnesses and the public."

During the debate Bailie Wardrop, Bailie McCabe and Councillor Vallis, with the agreement of their seconders, agreed to combine their motion and amendments resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

"Council notes that Police Forces in England and Wales have been using Facial Recognition Technology (FRT) since 2015 and they have expanded its use in recent years. Some police forces also use what is called "Live Facial Recognition" which involves scanning public spaces and crowds in real time, matching faces against a database of images.

Council also notes that Police officers have used facial recognition in various community contexts, including protests, sporting events, concerts, and in busy shopping streets.

Council acknowledges that while the technology is in use, there have been legal challenges regarding its use. In the Ed Bridges' case, the Court of Appeal said South Wales Police's use of live facial recognition violated privacy rights and broke data protection and equality laws.

Council notes that in 2017, Police Scotland's initial ambition to introduce Live Facial Recognition (LFR) by 2026 as part of their 10-year strategy, 'Policing 2026', however notes their later confirmation in 2020 to not advance this, after a report by the Justice Sub-Committee on Policing stated that there was 'no justifiable basis for Police Scotland to invest in this technology', as well as describing the potential use of LFR as 'a radical departure from Police Scotland's fundamental principle of policing by consent'.

Council acknowledges an assessment of the reliability, efficacy, and fairness of Police Scotland's use of retrospective facial recognition (RFR) in March 2025 showed the impracticality of enforcing due to a lack of meaningful data collection.

Council understand that the outcome of the Live Facial Recognition (LFR) National Conversation was considered by the Police Authority's Policing Performance Committee on 10 June 2025. Currently, the Scottish Police Authority is not consulting on the introduction of LFR but instead its potential introduction, and that the initial national conversation happening around this is to decide whether or not this work should be taken forward.

Council also notes Police Scotland's response to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request on 31 March 2025 stating they are considering enhancing CCTV resources with the introduction of Briefcam's object matching software, which also has capabilities to match faces live, although it has been stated they will not use this element of the technology if updated.

Council notes its concerns that there is no specific legislation in the UK that governs the use of facial recognition technology by Police, and shares police transparency campaign groups' issues with the technology that it "has been found to amplify and entrench discriminatory policing – particularly in regard to women and racially minoritised communities".

Council understands that technological advances can bring benefits to the police and other justice agencies in detecting, preventing and prosecuting crime. However, Council believes that the Scottish Police Authority must ensure that any use of technology is fit for purpose and non-discriminatory and that robust guidance and oversight are in place. Furthermore, any use of technology must respect the rights of our citizens.

Council reaffirms its commitment to digital human rights citizens and recommits to the core values outlined in our Digital Strategy 2024–2030:

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In addition, Council commends the work of the Eurocities Digital Forum and Working Group on Digital Citizenship which has successfully advocated for protections under the EU Artificial Intelligence Act, and Council recommits to our

membership of this and the Cities Coalition for Digital Rights, bringing together cities from around the world to share experience and best practice in upholding, promoting and expanding the digital rights of our citizens.

Council believes that these values must apply to all organisations working in the city, in particular public bodies including Police Scotland.

Council further believes that live FRT raises significant ethical issues and the need for proper and ongoing public scrutiny is paramount, including a new comprehensive legislative framework.

Council believes that investment in front-line policing must remain a priority. Council therefore resolves to:

1. Work with Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority through the SAFE Glasgow Partnership to monitor any future consideration of facial recognition technology and that the Partnership is included in those considerations.
2. Reaffirm the Council's commitment to properly resourced community policing and a justice system that delivers timely and fair outcomes for victims, witnesses and the public."

Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority to indicate that it is the view of Glasgow City Council that the factors above be taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to progress with trials or implementation of live FRT by Police Scotland.

The motion, as adjusted, was unanimously approved.

Adjournment.

15 In terms of Standing Order No 17, the Council agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1545 hours until 1555 hours.

Resumption of meeting.

16 The meeting resumed at 1555 hours and the sederunt was taken as follows:-

Present: The Lord Provost, Jacqueline McLaren (Chair).

JAMES ADAMS	STEPHEN DOCHERTY	DONNA McGILL
SAQIB AHMED	LAURA DOHERTY	NORMAN MacLEOD
SUSAN AITKEN	STEPHEN DORNAN	ELAINE McSPORRAN
IMRAN ALAM	SEAN FERGUSON	ANNE McTAGGART
BLAIR ANDERSON	ELAINE GALLAGHER	LEÒDHAS MASSIE
KEN ANDREW	MARIE GARRITY	CHRISTY MEARNS
ALEXANDER BELIC	ZEN GHANI	ANGUS MILLAR
RICHARD BELL	ALLAN GOW	MALCOLM MITCHELL
DECLAN BLENCH	WILLIAM GRAHAM	JON MOLYNEUX
EVA BOLANDER	SHARON GREER	ROBERT MOONEY

ABDUL BOSTANI	GREG HEPBURN	MARGARET MORGAN
PHILIP BRAAT	FIONA HIGGINS	EVA MURRAY
JILL BROWN	SEONAD HOY	CECILIA O'LONE
HOLLY BRUCE	MHAIRI HUNTER	JILL PIDGEON
BILL BUTLER	RASHID HUSSAIN	LINDA PIKE
GRAHAM CAMPBELL	DAN HUTCHISON	HANIF RAJA
CHRISTINA CANNON	FYEZA IKHLAQ	DAVENA RANKIN
PAUL CAREY	EUNIS JASSEMI	THOMAS RANNACHAN
ANTHONY CARROLL	ANN JENKINS	LANA REID-MCCONNELL
JOHN CARSON	LILITH JOHNSTONE	ROZA SALIH
ALLAN CASEY	RUAIRI KELLY	FRANNY SCALLY
ANNETTE CHRISTIE	ALEX KERR	SORYIA SIDDIQUE
CHRIS CUNNINGHAM	KEVIN LALLEY	KIERAN TURNER
STEPHEN CURRAN	PAUL LEINSTER	CATHERINE VALLIS
FEARGAL DALTON	FRANK McAVEETY	MARTHA WARDROP
JOHN DALY	PAUL MCCABE	ALEX WILSON
AUDREY DEMPSEY	ELAINE McDOUGALL	

DEACON CONVENER

LORD DEAN OF GUILD

Apology: Thomas Kerr.

Attending: M Millar, Director of Legal and Administration; D Hutchison, Executive Director of Education Services; R Emmott, Executive Director of Financial Services; and C Edgar, Director of Communication and Corporate Governance.