

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE AND FIRE)

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 23 February 2017.

Present:

Councillor Mary Montague (Chair)
Councillor Jim Fletcher (Vice Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan
Councillor Barbara Grant

Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Ian McAlpine
Councillor Stewart Miller

Councillor Montague in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Fiona Morrison, Head of Education Services (Provision and Resources); Jim Sneddon, Head of Democratic and Partnership Services; Janice Thomson, Lead Planning Officer, Alcohol, Drugs, Community Justice and Gender Based Violence; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Superintendent Brian McNulty and Chief Inspector Angela Carty, Police Scotland; and Group Managers Mark Gallacher and Stephen Wright, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apologies:

Councillors Elaine Green and Vincent Waters.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2396. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

VARIATION TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

2397. In accordance with the terms of Standing Order 19, Councillor Montague altered the order of business to facilitate the conduct of the meeting.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2016/17

2398. The Cabinet considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of the SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the third quarter of 2016/17. An analysis of the incidents in each of the Council's six wards during the reported period was appended to the report.

Group Manager Wright provided a summary of the key performance indicators of the service during the reported period in the course of which he highlighted that overall the performance was positive with there being a downward trend in the number of incidents that SFRS had to attend during the course of the reported period. He summarised the key performance indicators which were noted as Accidental Dwelling Fires; All Non-Fatal Fire Casualties; Deliberate Fire Raising; Non-Domestic Buildings; Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals; and Road Traffic Collisions.

Whilst noting that the performance of each of the indicators in the third quarter of 2016/17 had been measured against the figures reported for the corresponding period in 2015/16, Group Manager Wright reported that the total number of Accidental Dwelling Fires had decreased from 15 to 13; the total number of all Non-Fatal Fire Casualties had decreased from 4 to 1; the total number of incidents involving Deliberate Fire Raising had decreased from 34 to 27; the total number of Fires in Non-Domestic Buildings had decreased from 9 to 6; and the total number of Unwanted Fire Alarms Incidents had decreased from 77 to 54. However, it was noted that the total number of Road Traffic Collisions incidents attended by SFRS which resulted in non-fatal casualties had increased from 3 to 4; the number of recorded casualties had also increased from 6 to 8; and that there had been 1 fatality within the reported period.

Group Manager Wright also reported on a range of partnership and community engagement activities undertaken by SFRS during the course of the third quarter of 2016/17 highlighting that the Local Area Liaison Officer continued to attend the weekly meetings of Greater Results in Partnership (GRIP). He also outlined the activities carried out by the Community Action Team including their attendance at a careers night at Woodfarm High School; conducting 22 Home Fire Safety Visits for East Renfrewshire Telecare together with the representatives of the Retired Employee Association; and conducting fireworks talks in all high schools in East Renfrewshire to nearly 2000 pupils and staff. Details of other activities that were carried out in the lead up to bonfire night on 5 November 2016 were also reported.

Furthermore, it was noted that a total of 435 home fire safety visits (HFSV) were carried out in East Renfrewshire by SFRS operational personnel and Community Action Team Officers which visits were conducted jointly with partner agencies where deemed appropriate. It was noted that of the total number of HFSVs carried out 122 of these were as a result of high risk referrals from East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partners and 62 were as a result of Post-Domestic Incident Responses (PDIR). A PDIR was carried out at all domestic dwelling incidents including fire alarm actuations and special services.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Group Managers Gallacher and Wright responded to a number of questions about operational issues within East Renfrewshire. In particular, an explanation was given on the difference between legal and illegal bonfires and the measures being taken by SFRS to reduce deliberate fires.

The Cabinet agreed to note the terms of the report.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2016/17

2399. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland providing details of the performance of the police in East Renfrewshire over the third quarter of 2016/17. A statistical report giving a breakdown of various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period was appended to the report.

Chief Superintendent McNulty provided a summary of significant events that had taken place within the Greater Glasgow Division during the reported period which impacted on policing within East Renfrewshire most notably the 'Old Firm' fixture that had taken place early on Hogmanay on 31 December 2016 together with the usual celebrations leading up to New Year. He also highlighted that he had attended an award ceremony at Holyrood High School associated with the Police Scotland Youth Volunteers (PSYV) programme.

Whilst noting that the Policing 2026 Strategy entitled 'Serving a Changing Scotland' would be launched next week and would be subject to a 10 week consultation exercise, Chief Superintendent McNulty suggested that perhaps consideration could be given to arranging a further meeting before the date of next scheduled meeting of the Cabinet (Police and Fire) to allow him to brief Members further on the strategy. Concluding his remarks, he emphasised that the objective of the Estates Strategy was not simply about closing police stations but more about examining ways in which a better service could be delivered to local communities.

At this stage, there was a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent McNulty in response to concerns raised about the closure of police stations explained that there would always be a presence in East Renfrewshire and that he would like to increase the visibility of officers in the Council's area. He also acknowledged that there was an issue with detection rates for crimes falling particularly with regard to common assaults.

The Chief Executive commented that the Council was in discussions with Police Scotland regarding the possibility of finding co-locations throughout East Renfrewshire in the course of which Chief Superintendent McNulty stated that the footfall going into police stations had reduced significantly over the years for a variety of reasons and that by reducing the operational hours of some police stations this would allow more officers to be out on patrol. At this stage, he invited Chief Inspector Carty to provide further details on the performance report.

Chief Inspector Carty reported that since the last quarterly update there had been an additional 11 serious assaults taking the total to 24, and that this figure equated to the 5-year average. Overall, violent crime had reduced compared to the corresponding period in 2015/16 and was significantly lower than the 5-year average. Details of the measures taken to address this type of offence were outlined in the report. She stated that whilst there was a slow-down in the rise of common assaults, the total number of common assaults between April and December 2016 was 345 representing an increase of 35.3% above the figure reported in 2015/16 and 15% above the 5-year average figure.

Whilst acknowledging that the detection rate for common assaults, hate crimes and domestic abuse had fallen significantly, Chief Inspector Carty explained that an analysis of this issue was currently underway to ensure that all possible avenues of investigation had been pursued. She also highlighted that overall complaints of disorder across East Renfrewshire had reduced.

Chief Inspector Carty also reported that there had been an increase in the number of domestic abuse crimes rising by 19 during the period April to December 2016 compared to the corresponding period the previous year. She stated that the police continued to work with Advocacy, Support, Safety and Information Services (ASSIST) to ensure that some of the most vulnerable victims had access to the right support at the earliest opportunity. Furthermore, the number of victims of hate crime had increased to 68, although the increase was not related to any of the increased tensions surrounding the Brexit vote. She also referred to an educational programme which was branded "Be Smart" the objective of which was to identify and develop young people to act as peer mentors for future courses. The programme was launched at Hampden Stadium and attended by pupil representatives from Eastwood, Mearns Castle and St Luke's High Schools.

Whilst noting that the detection rates for sexual crime had dropped from 79.7% during the period April to December 2015 to 56.9% over the same period in 2016/17, Chief Inspector Carty reported that there had been 17 fewer victims of theft by housebreakings in 2016/17 compared to the corresponding period in 2015/16 and this represented a reduction of 11%. She also indicated that Campus Officers continued to promote the issue of road safety in primary schools and were on hand when St Mark's Primary School had taken part in a national road safety competition to design road safety banners. The school were winners of the competition and a banner was proudly displayed outside the school.

Concluding her remarks, Chief Inspector Carty commented on the public consultation process entitled 'Your View Counts' launched in April 2016, referred to two 'pop up' events that were organised at ASDA and The Foundry in Barrhead and the positive results achieved in tackling Serious and Organised Crime it being noted that over 346 individuals were arrested in the Greater Glasgow Division alone and the sum of £485,000 had been seized in terms of the Proceeds of Crime Act.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent McNulty and Chief Inspector Carty responded to questions on the reasons behind the reduction in the number of housebreakings; concerns about inconsiderate parking around schools; the absence of information about police complaints; and the reasons for the increase in hate crime.

It having been noted that the police were working in partnership with community safety wardens to tackle the problem of parking around schools and that letters had also been sent out to parents seeking their co-operation in addressing the problem, Chief Inspector Carty explained that as a result of a number of arrests being made this had contributed to a reduction in the number of housebreakings. She also advised that community police officers were attending meetings of community councils and were providing advice on how to keep homes safe and secure. Chief Superintendent McNulty advised that in terms of police complaints changes had been made to the way these were now investigated and that where possible attempts were being made to resolve them at the front line, failing which there was a dedicated team that gave consideration to complaints.

Concluding her remarks, Chief Inspector Carty outlined the reasons why hate crime had increased most notably through the use of social media albeit such incidents were normally spontaneous. Chief Superintendent McNulty also emphasised verbal attacks against police officers were classed as hate crimes and such incidents were recorded in the statistics.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

PRESENTATION – DOMESTIC ABUSE

2400. The Cabinet noted the terms of a presentation on the subject of Domestic Abuse given by the Lead Planning Officer, Alcohol, Drugs, Community Justice and Gender Based Violence, Health and Social Care Partnership.

CHAIR

