

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE AND FIRE)

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 19 November 2020.

Present:

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Tony Buchanan

Councillor Barbara Grant
Councillor Alan Lafferty

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Claire Reid, Community Safety Manager; Jennifer Graham, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland, Chief Inspector Bryan McGeogh, Police Scotland; and Local Senior Officer James McNeill, and Group Manager Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology:

Councillor Paul O’Kane (Vice Chair).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1427. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT OVER THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2020/21

1428. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the second quarter of 2020/21. The report also provided statistical information in relation to various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period together with comparative statistics for the corresponding period in 2019/20.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland commented briefly on how Police Scotland had responded to the COVID-19 pandemic since the previous quarter. He highlighted that Police Scotland continued to strive for the correct balance between policing the pandemic and responding to ongoing community concerns. At this stage, he invited Chief Inspector McGeogh to comment on the performance report.

Chief Inspector McGeogh reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. He began by highlighting that in terms of drug dealing and seizures the police had made several arrests and seized a quantity of controlled drugs with the number of detections having increased from 9 to 14 when compared to the corresponding period the previous year. He also reported that the number of crimes of violence and serious assaults had both reduced compared to the previous year. Crimes of violence had reduced from 246 to 229 and Serious Assaults from 14 to 13. However, it was noted that the number of domestic abuse crimes had increased from 155 to 172 when compared to the corresponding period for the previous year and the number of domestic incidents attended by the police had also increased from 259 to 275. He advised that this trend was not unique to East Renfrewshire and had also been identified in other areas. The number of reported sexual crimes and acquisitive crimes had both seen a reduction compared to the previous year. He further reported that the police recorded an increase of 722 calls from the public in relation to anti-social behaviour over the reported period, although the number of calls had reduced significantly since quarter 1, and crimes of vandalism had also reduced compared to the previous year.

Concluding his remarks, Chief Inspector McGeogh reported that community engagement continued to highlight road safety as a priority and a number of people had been reported for road traffic offences. He added that officers had worked with colleagues from the Council's Roads and Transportation service on a new initiative which developed road signs that encouraged victims of domestic abuse to come forward and provided details of a helpline they could contact. The joint initiative had received positive feedback and would continue into the next quarter.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland provided further information regarding the forthcoming move to Level 4 for many areas in the West of Scotland including East Renfrewshire, which included legislation to prevent members of the public from travelling between local authority areas other than in certain specified circumstances. He advised that Police Scotland would continue to balance supporting the new legislation and addressing normal policing demands in the area, and that education and engagement would be used to encourage people to follow the new legislation in the first instance with enforcement being used as a last resort.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector McGeogh responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the crime statistics recorded in the report.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2020/21

1429. The Cabinet considered a report by the Local Senior Officer, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the second quarter of 2020/21. An analysis of the incidents identified in the six areas for demand reduction that had taken place in each of the Council's five wards during the reported period was outlined in the report.

Local Senior Officer McNeill commented briefly on the challenges the service had faced during these unprecedented times and referred to some local management changes. At this stage he invited Group Manager Coughtrie to comment on the performance report.

Group Manager Coughtrie provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. He highlighted that during the course of quarter 2 there had been 16 accidental dwelling fires with no casualties arising from these fires. It was believed that the reduction in fire casualties could be attributed to an increase in premises with functional detectors which was a very positive statistic. In terms of unintentional harm and injury 5 non-fire casualties had been recorded. He reported that there had been 38 incidents of deliberate fire setting and 2 non-domestic fires.

Reporting that there had been 58 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during the quarter, Group Manager Coughtrie highlighted that this was a significant reduction on the 3 year average. He also reported that the community action team continued to operate 7 days a week to react quickly to any calls for advice on fire safety and their "Make the Call" campaign encouraged the general public and community partners to refer people who may be at greater risk of fire including smokers; people with mobility problems; and those on medical oxygen. A training programme had also been developed for home care and care home staff which would be rolled out virtually during quarter 3.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Local Senior Officer McNeill and Group Manager Coughtrie provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire. In particular, Local Senior Officer McNeill advised that the parliamentary review group on fireworks was ongoing and he would provide any updates on that to Members in due course.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

CHAIR

