

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE & FIRE)

Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 30 November 2023.

Present:

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair)

Councillor Katie Pragnell
Councillor Gordon Wallace(*)

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

Attending:

Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Stephen Bell, Community Safety Manager; John Burke, Committee Services Officer; and Lesleyann Burns, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Superintendent Natalie Carr; Chief Inspector Graeme Gallie, (Area Commander), Police Scotland; Area Commander David McCarrey; and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology:

Councillor Caroline Bamforth

CHAIR'S REMARKS

673. The Chair welcomed Superintendent Natalie Carr to her first meeting of the Cabinet (Police and Fire).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

674. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 2 - 2023-24

675. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the second quarter of 2023-24. 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 2022-23.

Introducing the report, Superintendent Carr first thanked the Chair and the Committee, as well as all Police partner organisations, for their contributions to the collaborative approach that had led to the excellent statistics outlined in the report. She expressed her wish that this partnership approach would continue.

Chief Inspector Gallie then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2023-26.

On referring to the report, he recognised the significant impact acquisitive crime and in particular theft by housebreaking, had on communities and was pleased to report a significant decrease in that area. He advised that there had been 37 offences during the year, which was 53% below the 5 year average for the period, with the detection rate for the offences up 7%.

In respect of crimes of dishonesty, it was reported that crimes of this type had decreased by 4% for the year. Theft by shoplifting continued to climb with 120 offences compared to 97 the previous year. It was believed that the cost of living crisis was having an effect on these figures. It was also highlighted that Police Scotland had seen a significant success in recovering funds for victims of Fraud, with £100,000 of funds recorded during the quarter for complainers who had been subject to online and banking fraud.

In relation to public protection, it was noted that there had been a 12% reduction in overall recordings of sexual crimes and offences, but noted that offences of communicating indecently and threatening/disclosure of intimate images had seen an increase. Police Scotland continued to work in partnership with Education colleagues and others to highlight the risk and harm of sextortion and inappropriate communications through social media messaging and Campus Officer inputs.

Commenting on violent crime, Chief Inspector Gallie reported an increase in Non-Sexual Crimes of Violence, with 11 offences recorded during the quarter, bringing the total to 46 for the year. No serious assaults had been reported during the quarter.

In terms of antisocial behaviour and disorder, 953 complaints had been recorded by the end of the quarter, which was 2% lower than the same period in the previous year. Hate crimes and hate incidents were also reported to have decreased against both the previous year and the 3 year average.

It was highlighted that a significant focus continued on wilful fire raisings, with 25 having been reported in the year. A whole systems approach was being taken to addressing the issues around these incidents, working with partners in a trauma informed approach to young people and their families.

In relation to drug dealing and use it was noted that recorded drug crimes had increased by 13% from the previous year, which had been achieved through active policing and intelligence gathering, with 8 offences of supply detected.

Chief Inspector Gallie concluded by giving some examples of the work being done in East Renfrewshire by officers of Police Scotland on all of the areas of focus covered, which were highlighted within the report.

There followed a question and answer session in the course of which Chief Inspector Gallie 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. In particular, there was discussion of the work of Campus Officers and the whole systems approach taken, in particular, in relation to shoplifting where the cost of living crisis could be having an impact.

The Cabinet noted the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2023-24

676. The Cabinet considered a report by the Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the first quarter of 2023-24 against the key priorities in their local plan.

Introducing the report, Area Commander McCarrey referred to the work over bonfire night and extended his thanks to all partners who had been involved. He also praised the work of young people who had participated in the Fire Skills event and thanked partners for their engagement in turning out for the passing out parade for participants. Finally, he mentioned that His Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate for Scotland had visited and spoken with both SFRS and Police Scotland.

Group Commander Coughtrie then reported on the performance of SFRS on performance over quarter 2.

Group Commander Coughtrie began by discussing the role of the SFRS Community Safety Enforcement Department, who supported duty holders in local businesses to ensure they were meeting statutory regulations and reduce non-domestic fires in East Renfrewshire. He provided details of how they audited properties to establish levels of risk and interventions that may be required.

Group Commander Coughtrie continued by thanking East Renfrewshire Council for their collaborative efforts on the Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) Policy changes and the Short-Term Letting Policy. He also thanked the Council, Police Scotland and the Scottish Ambulance Service for working with SFRS on the recent Fire Skills course, which had been a great success. He indicated that another such event was planned to be run in March 2024.

On engagement activity that had taken place and equipment supplied during the quarter, 33 community activities by the community action team and 82 by operational crews. 223 home fires safety visits were carried out, 98 in premises identified as high risk with 117 smoke detectors being fitted.

In relation to accidental dwelling fires a 10% decrease on the year on year figure was reported and a 17% reduction against the 3 year figure. It was noted that detection was present in 89% of premises and activated in 75%. Details of some of the ongoing community work that took place was provided, with the high engagement rates in East Renfrewshire being noted. There had been 1 fire related casualty, with an individual requiring first aid at the scene and no hospital treatment required. The Post-Domestic Incident Response Programme was also highlighted.

Group Commander Coughtrie reported that the figures in relation to unintentional injury and harm saw a 33% increase in the year-on-year average and an increase of 25% against 3

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year average figures. However it was clarified this was against a figure of no casualties for the previous 3 years.

Deliberate fire setting showed an 8% increase on the year on year indicator, with a 3% increase on the 3 year average. Again, this was reported as being against historically low figures. The Community Action Team and Operational Crews continued to carry out engagement activity to mitigate the risk of this type of activity, working in partnership with Police Scotland and other partners. It was indicated that certain groups had been identified and it was expected that a significant drop would be achieved in the next quarter.

Non-domestic fire safety showed a 60% decrease from the previous year and stable figure against the 3 year average. Details of the incidents were provided.

Group Commander Coughtrie concluded by providing information in relation to UFAS. The year on year figure had decreased by 77%, a decrease of 16% on the 3 year average. It was indicated that the decrease in UFAS was particularly pleasing and showed the success of recent policy changes.

There followed a question and answer session in the course of which officers McCarrey and Coughtrie responded to a number of questions and comments on a range of issues recorded in the report. Mainly, the discussion focused on the number of deliberate fire setting incidents and the response by East Renfrewshire based teams to fires outside of the East Renfrewshire area. Improvements in UFAS figures were also welcomed.

Area Commander McCarrey offered members the opportunity to participate in a future session where they could view the Virtual Reality tool used by Fire Officers in relation to vehicle safety. It was also agreed that SFRS would review their presentation of figures, in liaison with elected members, to ensure they were easily understood.

Thereafter the Cabinet agreed to note the report.

CHAIR