

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE AND FIRE)

Minute of Meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock, on 22 February 2018.

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; Jim Sneddon, Head of Democratic and Partnership Services; and Paul O'Neil, Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Superintendent Donna Henderson and Inspector John McQuilter, Police Scotland; and Group Manager Mark Gallacher, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apologies:

Councillors Danny Devlin; Stewart Miller; and Paul O'Kane (Vice Chair).

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

312. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF FINANCIAL YEAR 2017/18

313. 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 2017/18. A statistical report giving a breakdown of various categories of crimes and offences committed during the reported period was appended to the report.

In the absence of Chief Superintendent Brian McNulty and Chief Inspector Angela Carty, it was noted that Superintendent Donna Henderson and Inspector John McQuilter were representing Police Scotland.

Superintendent Henderson provided some background information about her responsibilities within the Greater Glasgow Division, one of which was being Chief Inspector Carty's line manager. At this stage, she invited Inspector McQuilter to provide further details about the information contained in the performance report.

Inspector McQuilter began by highlighting that East Renfrewshire Police Scotland Youth Volunteers had completed their induction course and had been able to get involved in their first community project in December 2017 delivering Christmas hampers to pensioners. He summarised the performance of the police during the reported period by referring to the local policing priorities that were identified in the East Renfrewshire Local Policing Plan 2017/20. These were noted as Homes Being Broken Into; Anti-social Behaviour and Disorder; Violent Crime; Drug Dealing and Misuse; and Child Abuse Including Child Sexual Exploitation.

Whilst noting that the number of homes that had been broken into had decreased from 100 in the corresponding period the previous year to 92 in the reported period, and having noted that a number of arrests had been made, Inspector McQuilter emphasised the importance of communities working with the police to protect their homes through crime prevention measures, particularly in reporting anything that was out of the ordinary. He also highlighted that anti-social behaviour remained a community priority and that the police continued to focus their efforts on preventing disorder. Details of the objectives of the police in tackling this problem were outlined in the report. It was noted that one of the measures being taken to address the problem was the use of diversionary tactics where young people were being engaged in a programme of activities such as boxing and football amongst other things. In addition, campus officers continued to give talks to school pupils about the impact anti-social behaviour was having on their local communities.

Inspector McQuilter reported that in terms of violent crime, the recorded number of victims of violence had reduced when compared to the corresponding period the previous year and that there were no robberies recorded during the course of the reported period. He also highlighted that the festive season saw a rise in the demand for policing services due to an increase in acts of crime. However, as a result of the 'Winter Initiative Plan' which involved high visibility patrols engaging with local businesses and staff at licensed premises the police had seen a reduction in overall crime and no serious violence during that period. Furthermore, the number of domestic abuse victims continued to decrease and it was noted that the police continued their work with partner organisations such as East Renfrewshire Women's Aid and Advocacy, Support, Safety and Information Services (ASSIST).

Concluding his remarks, Inspector McQuilter provided details on the number of detections of drug dealing and misuse and the work of campus officers in raising awareness in young people about the threats of child abuse and child sexual exploitation. He also explained that in response to concerns expressed about the safety of children in and around schools at the start and end of the school day, the police were working in partnership with the Council to progress in the longer term the 'Park and Stride' project the aim of which was to discourage drivers from bringing their vehicles in close proximity to schools and to encourage healthy aspects of walking to school. He also advised that 2 schools were being chosen each day for police patrols to visit the aim of which was for officers to educate parents about road safety issues in and around schools.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Superintendent Henderson and Inspector McQuilter responded to a number of questions and provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire. These included campus officers; dealing with incidents of domestic abuse; road safety in and around schools and the measures being taken to tackle anti-social behaviour.

During the discussion of these issues, the Chief Executive advised that there were no plans in the Council's budget consultation that would impact on the continued operation of campus officers. Inspector McQuilter also indicated that the police were fully supportive of the work being carried out by campus officers.

Responding to a question about incidents of domestic abuse, Inspector McQuilter explained that all officers were trained to deal with such incidents although one of the problems the police faced in conducting their investigations into such incidents was that some victims were reluctant to co-operate and that as a result it was difficult to report such matters to the Procurator Fiscal service.

Inspector McQuilter also advised that the 'Park and Stride' project had been launched at Kirkhill Primary School, with proposals to roll the project out to other schools in the future. Superintendent Henderson and Inspector McQuilter also commented that the police would respond to any incidents of aggressive driver behaviour in and around schools and advised that any such incidents should be reported to them.

In response to a question regarding the absence of detection rates recorded in the report about anti-social behaviour, Inspector McQuilter explained the reason was that not every incident of anti-social behaviour resulted in a crime being committed.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2017/18

314. 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 third quarter of 2017/18. An analysis of the incidents in each of the Council's five electoral wards during the reported period was appended to the report.

In the absence of Local Senior Officer Graeme Binning and Group Manager Colin Martin, it was noted that Group Manager Mark Gallacher was representing SFRS.

Group Manager Gallacher reported that the performance of the service was measured against the key performance indicators detailed in the East Renfrewshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014/17. These were noted as Accidental Dwelling Fires; All Non-Fatal Fire Casualties; Deliberate Fire Raising; Fires in Non-Domestic Buildings; Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals; and Road Traffic Collisions. He summarised the performance by comparing each of the indicators against the performance recorded in the corresponding period in 2017.

Whilst noting that the total number of accidental dwelling fires had increased from 13 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 25 in the current reported period although only 1 required an intervention by SFRS, Group Manager Gallacher highlighted that the total number of all non-fatal fire casualties had remained the same when compared to the corresponding period in 2016/17. He reported that the total number of incidents involving deliberate fire raising had seen a slight increase from 27 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 28 in the current reported period. Similarly the total number of fires in non-domestic buildings showed a slight increase from 6 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 7 in the current reported period. It was noted that the total number of unwanted fire alarm signals had increased from 54 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 78 in the current reported period.

Group Manager Gallacher also reported that the total number of road traffic collision incidents attended by SFRS which resulted in non-fatal casualties, had increased from 5 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 8 in the current reported period. The number of recorded casualties had increased from 8 in the corresponding period in 2016/17 to 11 in the current reported period. However, it was noted that there were no fatalities recorded within the reported period.

Whilst outlining the range of partnership and community engagement activities undertaken by SFRS during the third quarter of 2017/18, Group Manager Gallacher explained that these included attendance at the weekly meetings of the Greater Results in Partnership (GRIP) and providing support to the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) in relation to fire safety awareness training. Other activities included supporting the work of the SFRS autumn thematic action plan including presentations to a total of 2,080 secondary school pupils on firework talks and bonfire safety. In addition, the service continued to support partners in joint home fire safety visits within sheltered accommodation units and that the Community Action Team and Retired Employee Association (REA) volunteers had conducted 25 home fire safety visits for East Renfrewshire Telecare.

Group Manager Gallacher also reported that a total of 393 home fire safety visits had been carried out in East Renfrewshire during the third quarter of 2017/18, 39 of which were as a result of high risk referrals from East Renfrewshire Community Planning Partners and 84 as a result of Post Domestic Incident Responses (PDIR). He explained that the SFRS conducted a PDIR of all domestic dwelling incidents including fire alarm actuations and special services. This involved positive engagement with the occupier(s) of the affected property and neighbouring properties by SFRS personnel and where required SFRS provided and fitted 10 year battery powered smoke detectors.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Group Manager Gallacher responded to and provided clarification on a number of questions in relation to operational issues in East Renfrewshire. These included accidental fires; the installation of sprinklers in buildings; factors associated with fire starting; and causes of unwanted fire alarm signals.

During the discussion of these issues, Group Manager Gallacher explained in terms of accidental fires whilst there no specific details in the report to suggest that age was a factor in this type of fire although he would review the age groups involved in such fires to establish if this was the case. In response to a question about what progress had been made regarding the installation of sprinklers into buildings, he advised that SFRS was campaigning for this to happen and that the Scottish Government was giving consideration to the matter. He also advised that distraction was now the main factor associated with fire starting whereas in the past alcohol had been one of the main factors.

In response to concerns expressed about unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS), Group Manager Gallacher acknowledged that there were more false alarm signals in residential home/nursing homes and that SFRS attended a range of false alarm incidents due to faulty systems. He highlighted that SFRS had powers to take enforcement action against those premises that did not repair faulty systems and could reduce the number of visits to a set of premises if they had a history of false alarms.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.