

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE AND FIRE)

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 17 June 2021.

Present:

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Barbara Grant

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Sharon McIntyre, Committee Services Officer; and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

Also Attending:

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland (Divisional Commander), Chief Inspector Alan Gray (Area Commander), and Detective Superintendent Craig Willison, Police Scotland; and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS).

Apologies:

Councillors Danny Devlin, Alan Lafferty and Gordon Wallace.

The Chair welcomed all participants present and advised that Steven Bell had recently been appointed as the Council's Community Safety Manager.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1676. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2020/21

1677. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the fourth 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 recorded thanks to Chief Inspector Brian McGeough and Inspector Stevie Scott and welcomed Chief Inspector Alan Gray in his role as Area Commander and Michelle Grant in her role as Communities Inspector for East Renfrewshire.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland provided an overview of the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23 during Quarter 4. He noted the effects of the pandemic on policing, including the implementation of new powers under the Coronavirus regulations. He highlighted a focus on increased partnership working and engagement with the public in response to changes in community concerns such as responding to an increase in levels of youth disorder, online fraud and supporting vulnerable people accessing services which were previously in person. He also noted the decrease in violence, house breaks-ins and domestic abuse during this period. At a strategic level Chief Superintendent Sutherland advised Members of the redesign of the Public Protection Unit focussing on forensic opportunities in reports of non-recent crime. He then brought to Members' attention Police Scotland's public consultation on the use of body worn video for police officers and provided information on the public health approach to policing which was now being implemented within East Renfrewshire.

Chief Inspector Gray reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. He advised that in relation to public protection, sexual crimes in Quarter 4 had reduced from 141 to 111, closer to the average of 116. The associated detection rate for sexual crimes had decreased from 36.9% in the previous year to 32.4% in the current year. In relation to violent crime, there had been an increase of 4 serious assault crimes with 29 being recorded. There had also been an increase in the detection rate for robberies from 45.5% to 81.8%. The number of domestic abuse crimes reported had reduced from 337 to 287, with an increase in the detection rate to 66.6% from the previous year's rate of 55.5%. It was advised that there had been an increase in the detection of drug supply offences, up by 3 to 24. The number of domestic abuse incidents had remained static. The number of homes broken into, inclusive of attempted break-ins, had reduced from 76 to 59. He advised that it was intended to continue to use good forensic awareness and specialist support from Scene Examiners and the divisional Community Investigation Unit to continue the longer downward trend in this area. As previously outlined by Chief Superintendent Sutherland there had been an increase in online fraud and work continued with Trading Standards and the HSCP. There had been an increase in antisocial behaviour and disorder, including youth disorder and work continued with partners in this area. Chief Inspector Gray then reported on the incidents referred to in the report under the areas of violent crime, drug supply and manufacture, crimes of dishonesty, vulnerable road users domestic abuse, adult protection and child protection and young people.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector Gray 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.

Following these questions, Chief Inspector Gray advised he would provide Councillor Bamforth with figures relating to online sexual abuse for Quarter 4.

The Cabinet noted the terms of the report.

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

1678. 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 fourth 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.

Group Commander Alan Coughtrie recorded thanks to Area Commander Jim McNeill and advised that David McCarrey would be present at the next meeting in his new role as Area Commander.

Referring to the report, he provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. He advised that there had been a 3% increase in the total number of incidents, with a 16% increase in special services, namely through assisting partners. There had been a decrease in fire and non-fire casualties and a 1% decrease in false alarms. There had been a 27% decrease in accidental dwelling fires with 2 casualties arising from the same incident. Sadly, one of these was a fatality and investigations were ongoing. This was a 25% decrease on the three-year average. In terms of unintentional injury and harm, there had been a 75% decrease year on year, with a 36% decrease on the three-year average. He reported that there had been a marked increase in deliberate fire setting and that a high percentage of these could be attributed to incidents at the Stables, Boylestone Road Barrhead and at the moorland at Fereneze Golf Club between 17/02/21 and 21/02/21. Engagement work had taken place at these areas as a result. There had been 2 non-domestic fires, one deliberate at a barn at Boylestone Road and one accidental at Rouken Glen Council Offices which had been due to a suspected electrical fault. No firefighting action had been required. It was reported that there had been a 40% reduction in Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during the quarter, a 5% reduction on the 3 year average. The Take 5 campaign had been used in this area, with no further instances of reoccurrence following this being implemented.

Group Commander Coughtrie addressed questions from an earlier meeting of the Cabinet (Police and Fire) advising that there had been 52 incidences of unwanted fire alarm signals over the period of 31 January to 31 March 2021, composed of 18 within educational premises, 11 within residential homes, 6 within hotels and retail and all other activations in individual premises.

Group Commander Coughtrie also intimated that a public consultation would be launched in mid-July regarding automatic fire alarm response and that he would share this with the Cabinet (Police and Fire) at that time.

Group Commander Coughtrie then provided an update on the fire alarm regulation due to come into effect in February 2022, advising that all domestic premises would need to have one smoke alarm in the room most frequently used for general living purposes, one in circulation spaces, one heat alarm in every kitchen and a carbon monoxide detector where there was a carbon-fuelled appliance. In accordance with the new legislation all new builds would be fitted with these alarms and private landlords would have a legal obligation to provide them.

There followed a short question and answer session in the course of which Group Commander Coughtrie provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the statistics recorded in the report.

Elected members thanked Police Scotland and the SFRC for their work during these unprecedented times the report was noted.

