

Introduction



As Local Police Commander for East Renfrewshire, I am pleased to provide this report relating to our performance and policing priorities during the first quarter of the 2021-22 financial year.

As the response to the COVID pandemic has progressed, officers working in East Renfrewshire have continued to remain focussed upon the local policing priorities identified by our communities, as set out in our 2020-2023 Policing Plan.

Working closely with partners in the Safe East Ren Group, through this quarter we have helped develop a joined up plan to support the delivery of safe parks and open spaces for all, in preparation for a summer when many of our residents would be staying at home.

Partnership working has also progressed in line with our Greater Glasgow Division Public Health Approach to policing. We have looked at ways to best support ERC plans to impact on drug misuse and have provided our Local Problem Solving Team officers with NHS Trauma Informed training, to assist their identification and support to members of our communities with mental health issues.

As COVID restrictions have continued to ease, we have planned for the return of large scale events within our policing division. These include the Playground Festival planned for late September in Rouken Glen Park, the TRNSMT festival and the COP26 international climate conference scheduled for November 2021. Effective preparations and efficient use of police resources will ensure that events such as these are policed appropriately, whilst maintaining a responsive policing service for East Renfrewshire communities.

Acquisitive Crime



14 crimes relating to homes being broken into (including attempts) have been recorded during Q1, a rise of 5 compared to the same period last year.

This was not unexpected given the significant COVID restrictions that were in place during the same period last year and is down 45% compared to the 5 year average.



Local Policing Priority: Crime (Crimes of Dishonesty)

Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety

Overall crimes of dishonesty in Q1 of this year were 7% lower than for the same period last year and 14.7% lower than the five year average figure.

Whilst the majority of acquisitive crime categories have seen a fall in numbers, the most notable increase is in relation to fraud. In the first quarter we have recorded a total of 69 crimes compared to 40 in the same period last year and the 5 year average figure of 21.2 crimes.

In the 1st quarter of this year three residents over the age of 70, lost a combined sum in excess of £134,000. Whilst enquiries are ongoing into these crimes, these victims have now had their funds reinstated by banks.

East Renfrewshire Local Police Plan (2020-2023)

Quarterly Report (2021-22 Q1: Apr to Jun 2021)

Public Protection

Local Policing Priority: Crime (Sexual Offences)



In line with wider trends, Q1 has seen a decrease in the reporting of sexual crimes with 18 victims having come forward in the first quarter compared to 27 last year.

During this period, in separate and unrelated incidents, four sheriff's warrants have been executed by our officers in relation to possession of indecent images of children. Four separate males with ages ranging from 17 to 56 have been reported to the Procurator Fiscal in relation to alleged offences.



Local Policing Priority: Crime (Violent Crime)

Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety

Whilst our current year to date figures for Q1 show that we have attended 15 fewer domestic abuse incidents compared to the same period last year, (136 down from 151), this is slightly more than the 5 year average of 128.4. Year to date domestic abuse incidents where associated crimes have been recorded, have reduced by 38%, from 71 last year to only 44 in Q1 this year. This may indicate a willingness of victims to report concerns relating to domestic abuse at an early stage, prior to escalation into criminal conduct.

Whilst not all domestic abuse crimes involve physical violence, patterns of escalation in behaviour in abusive relationships are recognised. We place a high priority on investigating and detecting all criminal conduct related to domestic abuse as this has potential to prevent repeat offending and potentially more serious and/or more violent crime.

Drug Dealing & Misuse

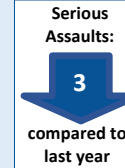
Local Policing Priority: Crime (Drug Supply & Manufacture)



To date this year we have recorded 12 crimes relating to the supply of controlled drugs in East Renfrewshire, which is above the 5 year average figure of 9.8 crimes recorded in Q1. This demonstrates our continued commitment to impact on the damaging effects which the supply of illegal substances have in our communities.

Through our Public Health approach in this area we are working closely with H&SC partners to best support the improved response to instances of Non Fatal Overdose within East Renfrewshire.

Violent Crime



In the 1st quarter of this year we have recorded 3 fewer serious assaults and 24 fewer minor assaults, compared to the same period last year. These represent reductions of 33% and 20% respectively and figures remain well below the 5 year average statistics.



Local Policing Priority: Crime (Violent Crime)

Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety
No crimes of homicide were recorded in the first quarter of the year.

We investigated two reported robberies, with a 26 year old male being reported to the Procurator Fiscal for one of these offences whilst enquiries into the other crime are ongoing.

Whilst reductions in both serious and minor assaults are welcomed, these may be the result of a wide range of factors and the future relaxation of restrictions in social mobility may have an impact in this area. To impact on potential reoffending, where accused persons have been released on bail with special conditions whilst awaiting trial, we continue to robustly monitor compliance.

Antisocial Behaviour & Disorder



During the 1st quarter of last year we received 1436 calls related to anti-social behaviour. This year, the corresponding figure has dropped by 36% to 925 calls, in line with the 5 year average figure of 991 calls.



Local Policing Priority – Crime (Disorder and Antisocial behaviour)

Fairer East Ren Plan—Reducing social isolation, loneliness and increasing safety



The first quarter of the year saw a welcome reduction in call demand in relation to overall anti-social behaviour calls, a significant percentage of which was previously driven by the COVID pandemic and “lockdown” restrictions imposed in Q1 of 2020-21.

During late winter and early spring, along with ERC colleagues, we identified locations where large numbers of youths were gathering, becoming involved in risk taking behaviour, causing disorder and committing criminal acts such as fire-raising. We developed dedicated action plans with partners and were supported by additional specialist policing resources, including off-road motorcyclists, Mounted officers and our Air Support Unit who utilised their Unmanned Aerial System to assist in identifying groups and facilitate safe and effective engagement with our officers.

CRIME

Our Area of Focus: Violent Crime

During May and June this year two of our Campus Police Officers received training alongside ERC teaching staff to develop and implement the "Mentors in Violence Prevention" (MVP) project in high schools. MVP is a Scottish Government backed, peer mentoring programme which gives young people the chance to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms which underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of violence. Our officers will support schools in the roll out of this program starting in the 2021-22 academic year.

In late March, the body of a 26 year old Barrhead man was discovered in the grounds of the Royal Alexandra Hospital, Paisley. A murder enquiry was instigated which focussed on events which had occurred, shortly beforehand, in the Barrhead area. Following extensive enquiries by divisional officers and our Major Investigations Team, a 26 year old man from Barrhead was arrested and appeared at court on the 16th June. He is currently remanded to prison pending further proceedings.

In April, following conviction after a High Court trial, a 22 year old woman was sentenced to three years imprisonment for Assault to Severe Injury, Permanent Disfigurement & Danger of Life. The crime occurred in the accused's Barrhead home last October.

In June officers attended a report of a disturbance in Barrhead where 2 men aged 26 and 42 years respectively, were arrested. Weapons including a machete and a sword were recovered. Both men were held in custody to appear at court. The criminal case is still pending.

Our Area of Focus: Crimes of Dishonesty

As highlighted earlier in this report, the prevalence of crimes relating to fraud has increased significantly both locally in East Renfrewshire and across the United Kingdom. Criminals continue to develop ever changing methods to commit fraud, often, but not always from overseas and often utilising communications networks and the internet. Effective investigation of these crimes can require specialist skills, technological expertise and the support of financial organisations. In response to these issues, we have created a dedicated Financial Crimes Unit within the Greater Glasgow Police Division. The unit is led by experienced CID officers, and deal predominantly with higher value frauds or fraudulent schemes involving multiple frauds with a high combined value. In addition to their own investigations, some of which relate to crimes in East Renfrewshire, they are well placed to offer their own specialist knowledge and assistance to all officers investigating fraud, ensuring that we maximise all opportunities to detect crimes and minimise the risk of future crimes.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Our Area of Focus: Vulnerable Road Users

Road safety is a high priority amongst residents in East Renfrewshire and our officers liaise regularly with ERC Roads & Transportation Dept., identifying locations of concern and addressing these through enforcement and improvement of infrastructure.

During the first quarter, our officers have been carrying out regular road side speed checks and a number of preventative action plans, in addition to regular patrols and enforcement activities carried out by the Police Scotland Roads Policing Unit.

In the space of one particular week in May, officers charged 13 drivers with road traffic offences including 4 individuals driving without a proper licence, 3 drivers driving without insurance and 3 drivers under the influence of drink/drugs.

We will to continue to focus on these issues.

Our Areas of Focus: Domestic Abuse— Adult Protection—Child Protection

In May this year an 80 year old man, already serving a prison sentence for sexual offences committed in East Renfrewshire in the 1970's and 80's, was sentenced to an additional 20 months imprisonment following continued investigation by our officers. We remain committed to identifying offenders and putting them before the courts, irrespective of the time which may have passed. Whilst doing so our approach is always victim centred, ensuring that appropriate support and care is made available to victims.

Our Areas of Focus: Young People

In June, political tensions in the middle east resulted in a notable rise in hate crimes and incidents nationally. The large Jewish community in East Renfrewshire was particularly affected by this and a number of incidents in East Renfrewshire were widely covered by the media. Pro-Palestinian, anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic graffiti and literature appeared in one high school. We worked very closely with our partners at ERC Education Department and Jewish community leaders to provide support and reassurance to the community and particularly pupils at the school in question to ensure that they were able to continue their education in a safe and secure environment, and without fear. Going forward, our Campus Officers will continue to deliver hate crime prevention inputs in schools as we have done in previous years, highlighting the damage that all forms of hate can cause in our society and empowering young people to challenge inappropriate or unlawful behaviour.



CONCLUSION

As Local Policing Commander for East Renfrewshire, I am pleased to present the Cabinet Report for the 1st Quarter of the year.

Whilst challenges will undoubtedly continue as we progress through the COVID pandemic and as restrictions ease and our operational commitments to large scale policing events return, our commitment to working with partners across East Renfrewshire to improve the joint services we provide to our communities, will remain firm and indeed be enhanced through our Public Health approach to policing.

Our Local Police Plan will continue to provide focus to drive our daily business to address the issues which are of most concern to our residents.

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland
Divisional Commander