

**MINUTE**  
**of**  
**CABINET**  
**(POLICE & FIRE)**

**Minute of meeting held at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Giffnock on 9 February 2023.**

**Present:**

Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)  
Councillor Andrew Anderson  
Councillor Caroline Bamforth

Councillor Katie Pragnell (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Gordon Wallace(\*)

Councillor O'Donnell in the Chair

**Attending:**

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Louise Pringle, Director of Business Operations and Partnerships; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Eamonn Daly, Democratic Services Manager and Liona Allison, Assistant Committee Services Officer.

**Also Attending:**

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

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**317.** There were no declarations of interest intimated.

**POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT - QUARTER 3 - 2022-23**

**318.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the third quarter of 2022-23. 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 2021-22.

Introducing the report Superintendent Murphy reported that it had been a demanding period with a re-emergence of more traditional types of crime post-COVID. He explained that his role was to provide operational support to Chief Inspector Gallie and his local team of officers. He highlighted the areas of focus contained in the report and referred to some recent supports provided locally to tackle these areas.

He referred in particular to larger scale events that took place during the quarter, such as football matches, and to the impact these had on policing locally, as it was often necessary to divert resources. He also referred to the return to normality over the festive period both in respect of shopping levels and events taking place.

Thereafter he paid tribute to the work of Chief Inspector Gallie and his team in keeping the residents of East Renfrewshire safe.

In concluding Superintendent Murphy offered condolences on behalf of Police Scotland to Scottish Fire and Rescue Service colleagues for the tragic loss of firefighter Barry Martin who lost his life tackling the recent blaze at the former Jenner's Store in Edinburgh.

Chief Inspector Gallie then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. Prior to making his report, Chief Inspector Gallie echoed the comments made by Superintendent Murphy in relation to firefighter Barry Martin.

On referring to the report, he recognised the significant impact acquisitive crime and in particular theft by housebreaking, had on communities, and advised that for acquisitive crime, the number of homes broken into (including attempts) was 31. The year to date total of 92 was 26% lower than the 5 year average but up 21% on last year. He explained that tackling acquisitive crime had been a priority with significant resources both locally and nationally dedicated to enhance prevention and bring offenders to justice. This had recently delivered significant success which will be reflected in the final report in Quarter 4. It was noted that this was not just an East Renfrewshire issue and the police were working with partners across the UK to share information, intelligence and best practise.

As an update he advised that a number of arrests had been made in January and this information would be contained in the Quarter 4 report.

In respect of crimes of dishonesty, it was reported that crimes of this type had slowed in growth, down from a 30% increase last quarter to a 21% increase for the year and remained in line with the 5 year average. Motor vehicle crime was down compared to the previous year and the 3 and 5 year averages. It was noted that 77 motor vehicle crimes had been recorded in the year, with there being an equal split between thefts from and theft of motor vehicles. Theft by shoplifting continued to climb with 26 more offences than last quarter. However the festive campaign contributed to slowing this increase over the Christmas period.

In relation to public protection, it was noted that there had been 83 Sexual Crimes recorded for this reporting period. Whilst this was an increase of 18 offences compared to last year, it remained below the 3 and 5 year average. 33% of offences had been successfully detected. It was noted that there was a developing trend in offences relating to online sexual extortion taking place. This could be orchestrated from anywhere in the world and have a significant impact on the victims.

Regarding domestic abuse incidents, Chief inspector Gallie reported that 409 domestic incidents had been recorded in the current year, and that in 40% of these incidents a crime was established. Where a crime was established, all opportunities to gather evidence were exhausted, with a 50% detection rate for domestic abuse related crime. He also provided information in relation to the aftercare provided to victims, including the notification to victims of any bail conditions imposed by the courts.

In relation to drug dealing and use it was noted that during the reporting period there had been 103 recorded drug crimes. Of these offences 96 resulted in a crime detection. Since the last report as presented, through working with the community and through effective intelligence gathering the recording of offences in relation to the supply of drugs, including possession with intent to supply had increased significantly from 4 to 10.

Commenting on violent crime, Chief Inspector Gallie reported that serious assaults currently sat at 14 for this year, 30% lower than the previous year. There had been 55 non-sexual crimes of violence recorded this year, up from 46 for the same period the previous year. Although this is a small increase of 9, the police remained focused on this area, delivering a successful detection rate of 46%. It was noted that crimes relating to threats and extortion had increased to 16, a 33% increase on the previous year.

In terms of antisocial behaviour and disorder, the continuing downward trend in calls was noted with a decrease of 20% on this year compared to the previous year. There had been 25 fire-raising this year which was currently below the 5 and 3 year average.

Chief Inspector Gallie referred to the lasting impact anti-social behaviour could have on individuals, communities and business, and explained some of the partnership work the police did to tackle this. Reference was made in particular to proactive policing, with targeted stop searches having a 30% success rate. The total number of crimes involving an offensive or bladed weapon were down by 20% on the 3 year average with a successful detection rate of 50%. It was acknowledged that policing alone would not deliver against antisocial behaviour, and it was only through working with partners that long-term success would be achieved.

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. This included the first East Renfrewshire Action on Alcohol conference, organised by Inspector Michelle Grant. This event brought together Elected Members, partner organisations, retailers, schools and young people to examine and discuss the impacts of alcohol on the people of East Renfrewshire. Details of some of the positive work that had taken place following the conference were provided.

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. These included the return of officers to community council meetings; cycle lanes on Ayr Road; housebreaking; vaping sales; the impact of the cost of living crisis on crime figures; the successful Action on Alcohol conference; tackling online sexual extortion; firearms; and drug possession and supply amongst others.

The Cabinet noted the report.

## **POLICE SCOTLAND – EAST RENFREWSHIRE LOCAL POLICING PLAN 2023-26**

**319.** The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, on the East Renfrewshire Local Policing Plan 2023-26. The plan set out the local policing priorities for East Renfrewshire over the period of the plan, highlighting the outcomes the police aimed to achieve over that period.

The Democratic Services Manager clarified the process for the plan's consideration at the

full Council meeting on 1 March, following which' having heard Councillor O'Donnell welcome the plan but refer to the financial challenges facing both the police and councils may impact on the ability to maintain current levels of joined up working between partner organisation, the Cabinet:-

- (a) noted the report;
- (b) agreed that it be remitted to Council for consideration.

### **FIREFIGHTER BARRY MARTIN**

**320.** Before considering the report from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Councillor O'Donnell referred to the tragic loss of firefighter Barry Martin and on behalf of the Council offered condolences to the service for their loss of a colleague. He explained that Provost Montague had formally written to the Interim Chief Fire Officer on behalf of the Council.

### **SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2022-23**

**321.** 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 third quarter of 2022-23 against the key priorities in their local plan.

Introducing the report Area Commander McCarrey referred to the difficult times for the service following the tragic loss of a colleague and thanked both the officers from Police Scotland and Councillor O'Donnell for their kind words.

In terms of the report it was highlighted that it included the traditional bonfire night and he expressed thanks to all partners for their help and preventative work which had contributed to low levels of operational demand.

Concluding his introduction he referred to positive developments in relation to ongoing industrial action. Whilst a lot of work had been carried out in developing resilience arrangements he was hopeful these would not be required.

Group Commander Coughtrie then reported on the performance of SFRS on performance over quarter 3.

Prior to commenting on the information contained in the report, Group Commander Coughtrie provided an update on the situation regarding changes to the handling of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS). This included the appointment of a UFAS Reduction Officer for the area who would work with the UFAS Champions in stations to identify areas where further support was necessary in relation to premises with high UFAS activity. He outlined the changes to handling UFAS to be implemented from 1 July clarifying that these would apply to commercial premises and other premises such as factories, offices shops and leisure centres.

The changes would reduce unnecessary callouts, free up operational capacity for other duties such as community engagement and also save money with the cost of every unnecessary callout being approximately £1,900. It was clarified that the policy changes would not apply to sleeping premises, such as hospitals, care homes, hotels or domestic dwellings.

Group Commander Coughtrie prefaced his remarks on the report by commenting on some of the engagement activity that had taken place and equipment supplied during the quarter. This included 25 community activities by the community action team and 65 by operational crews. 278 fires safety visits were carried out, 116 in premises identified as high risk with 121 smoke detectors being fitted.

In relation to accidental dwelling fires a 45% increase on the year on year figure was reported. However this was against a low figure for the same period the previous year and was an actual increase from 11 to 16 and the 3 year figure showed a reduction of 8%. It was noted that cooking was the main contributor. It was noted that detection was present in 100% of premises and activated in 91%. Details of some of the ongoing community work that took place was provided, with the high engagement rates in East Renfrewshire being noted.

Group Commander Coughtrie reported that the figures in relation to unintentional injury and harm were disappointing, seeing increases in both the year-on-year and 3 year average figures. However it was clarified that 50% of activity related to assisting other organisations gain access to property.

Deliberate fire setting also showed a disappointing 42% (19 to 27) increase. However the previous year had been a historic low and the 3 year average showed an 18% reduction overall. He clarified that the vast majority were secondary fires involving refuse containers and grassland.

Non-domestic fire safety also showed a 40% increase (5 to 7) from the previous year but with a 6% reduction on 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 decrease was encouraging, however there had been a slight increase in the 3 year average. It was noted that the majority were in educational facilities with the main causes being accidental, system faults and cooking. The impact of poor maintenance was also highlighted.

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. These included supporting the vulnerable; working with the HSCP; work in schools; tackling deliberate fire setting; community engagement and community initiatives; reasons for differences in alarm installation and activation rates; and the work of the UFAS officer, amongst other things.

Thereafter the Cabinet agreed to note the report.

CHAIR

