

Introduction



As Local Police Commander, I am pleased to present this update for the final quarter of the 2020/21 financial year.

This period incorporated the anniversary of the first COVID-19 lockdown and whilst restrictions remain in place and many aspects of the future remain unclear, we have worked hard to adapt and find new ways of working, to help maintain community safety and deliver Local Police Plan objectives.

In March this year Chief Inspector Alan Gray and Inspector Michelle Grant took up their new roles as Area Commander and Communities Inspector for East Renfrewshire. These officers have a wealth of operational and management experience and I am certain that they will help deliver further service improvements in the local authority area.

My thanks of course also goes to CI Bryan McGeogh and Insp Stevie Scott who have moved on after serving East Renfrewshire so well.

COVID-19 has of course been a challenge for us all but I firmly believe that the procedures and processes we have established in response, have helped ensure that we have been able to continue providing a professional and compassionate policing service, whilst minimising the impact of COVID infections and precautionary isolations amongst our workforce.

As we have emerged from what has been a very challenging second major "lockdown," engagement with the public and our partners is more important than ever and we remain committed to listening and responding to community concerns.

In relation to community concerns, poor driver behaviour and youth disorder continue to feature as regular source of concern from the public. These are issues acknowledged in our Police Plan and we remain firmly focused on improving outcomes, delivering safer communities and keeping people safe. In addition to our locally based resources in Giffnock and Barrhead, we continue to work closely with divisional and national resources such as the Road Policing, Divisional Violence Reduction Unit and specialist investigative teams - focusing on various aspects of serious crime and public protection.

Public Protection

Local Policing Priority: Crime (Sexual Offences)

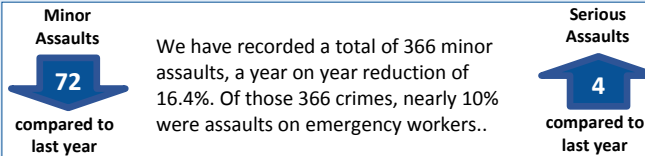


Up to and including Q4, sexual crimes have reduced by 21.3% compared to the previous year - having fallen from 141 crimes to 111. The associated detection rate for this year is 32.4% which is down slightly from 36.9% last year. Whilst the fall in the number of reported crimes is welcome, improving detection rates for these crimes will continue to be a focus for us.



East Renfrewshire Local Police Plan (2020-2023) Quarterly Report (2020-21 Q4: Jan to Mar 2021)

Violent Crime



Local Policing Priority: Crime (Violent Crime) Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety

This year we have seen an overall reduction in the number of assaults. There has been an increase of 4 serious assault crimes with 29 being recorded.

The detection rates are 61% and 62% for minor and serious assault respectively. These rates have improved from 57% and 60% the previous year and we remain committed to lowering the number of crimes and increasing our detection rates further.

We have investigated 11 robberies this year and 9 of these crimes were detected (81.8%). The number of crimes remained static compared to the previous year but our detection rate increased significantly from 45.5% last year.

Whilst the numbers of Domestic Abuse incidents we have dealt with have remained static compared to last year, the number of Domestic Abuse crimes we have recorded has reduced by over 14%, from 337 to 287. Our detection rate for these crimes has also increased markedly to 66.6% from last year's rate of 55.5%.

Our aim going forward will be to consolidate and improve on these successes.

Drug Dealing & Misuse

Local Policing Priority: Crime (Drug Supply & Manufacture) Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety



Targeting the unlawful supply of controlled drugs in East Renfrewshire, in line with our Public Health approach to policing is ongoing. This year we have increased the number of drug supply offences detected, up by 3, to 24.

The gathering and development of intelligence is vitally important to enable officers to obtain search warrants, however effective proactive policing, by frontline officers engaging with people and utilising stop-search powers where legislation permits, can be equally productive. These are areas we aim to focus on improving.

Acquisitive Crime



The number of homes broken into (including attempts) is 59, down compared to last years figure of 76.

This is nearly half of the 5 year average figure of 116.6 domestic housebreakings per year.



Local Policing Priority: Crime (Crimes of Dishonesty) Fairer East Ren Plan: Reducing social isolation, loneliness & increasing safety

Whilst COVID-19 restrictions have clearly impacted upon the levels of break-ins, our aim is to continue the longer term downward trend, utilising good forensic awareness and specialist support from Scene Examiners and our divisional Community Investigation Unit.

In line with national trends, instances of Fraud, particularly crimes involving telephone and internet "scams" have risen markedly over the past year. Investigation of these crimes is often time-consuming and challenging but they are treated as a priority because of the significant impact they can have, on often vulnerable victims. The financial cost can be devastating, as can the human cost as victims often struggle to overcome their sense of helplessness. We continue to take a range of preventative actions in partnership with other agencies including East Renfrewshire Council departments such as Trading Standards and the HSCP.

Antisocial Behaviour & Disorder



During 2020-21 in East Renfrewshire, we have dealt with 1980 public nuisance calls, 330 neighbour disputes and 482 noise complaints, amongst many other antisocial behaviour and disorder incidents.



Local Policing Priority – Crime (Disorder and Antisocial behaviour) Fairer East Ren Plan—Reducing social isolation, loneliness and increasing safety



The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic in our communities has been significant and is reflected in the increased demand we have seen in calls relating to antisocial behaviour and disorder.

Whilst the vast majority of these calls do not result in crimes being recorded, they nevertheless rightly receive high levels of scrutiny and attention to ensure that all steps are taken to minimise impact on individuals. This is often carried out in close collaboration with partner agencies, and frequently with ERC departments. During the course of the year, improved working practices within the GRIP process, particularly with the HSCP, have proved successful.

Despite the significantly increased numbers of complaints about antisocial behaviour and disorder, we actually recorded 51 fewer crimes of vandalism during the year equating to a 12.5% reduction.

CRIME

Our Area of Focus: Violent Crime

In late February a 15 year-old boy sustained multiple stab wounds to his torso chest and arms in Thornliebank Road, in a targeted attack. Uniformed officers from Giffnock who were carrying out routine patrols encountered the victim. They carried out emergency first-aid whilst awaiting an ambulance. Following detailed and meticulous enquiries, two males aged 15 and 16 years, have been charged with attempted murder.

In late March two unarmed uniformed Community Police Officers from Giffnock were carrying out routine enquiries at an address in Thornliebank when a shotgun was presented at them. The officers were uninjured, and despite being exposed to a significant and traumatic incident they both returned to duty the following day. The male responsible was subsequently arrested and is being held on remand.

Due to an increase in robberies, in early January a preventative action plan was implemented across the local authority area. Potential vulnerable premises were visited, crime prevention advice was shared and hi-visibility patrols were established in key areas.

Our Area of Focus: Drug Supply and Manufacture

Proactive policing patrols are a key part of our activity in reducing the harm caused by drugs. In February one of our Campus Officers identified suspicious activity near to one of our High Schools. Assisted by other uniformed officers, three male suspects were detained a quantity of herbal cannabis was recovered. One of the officers sustained an injury during the incident. A 17 year-old male was charged with multiple offences including being concerned in the supply of drugs, resisting arrest and attempting to pervert the course of justice. Another male was been charged with drug possession.

Our Area of Focus: Crimes of Dishonesty

Between December and March, four crimes occurred whereby elderly residents in the Giffnock and Clarkston areas were victims of fraud and attempt fraud. Two victims lost a total of more than £5000. Through robust investigation by local officers a 22 year-old man has been charged.

In late January two business premises in the Newton Mearns North and Neilston area were broken into on consecutive evenings. After investigation, two males aged 15 and 17 were identified and arrested four days after the initial crime occurred.

In February and March, two high value thefts of building materials occurred from an East Renfrewshire retailer. Investigation by our Community Policing team identified a 45 year-old man as being responsible for these crimes, along with others in Lanarkshire and Ayrshire. they bring to the local economy and community.

PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

Our Area of Focus: Vulnerable Road Users

Up to and including Q4 we have charged a total of 55 drivers with driving whilst under the influence of drink and/or drugs. This marks a 10% increase in detections from the previous year. Trained officers from our Roads Policing Unit regularly provide assistance to local officers to carry out roadside “drug wipe” tests that can identify drivers who may be driving whilst under the influence of drugs. This is a welcome and effective development to our range of tactics being deployed to ensure the safety of all of our road users.

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

The Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 has enabled police to deal more effectively with different types of domestic abuse, including coercive control. In January, a 52 year-old man was charged with a contravention of section 1 of the Act in relation to an ongoing campaign of verbal, physical and emotional abuse of his partner.

In early March an 18 year-old man was identified for indecently exposing himself to a 75 year-old woman in the Giffnock area. He was arrested and appeared at court where he was released with specific bail conditions which included a curfew.

Robust scrutiny by the local management team of these types of enquiry is carried out daily, supported by our Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit to ensure that all investigative opportunities are explored, and support is made available to victims and potential victims.

Our Areas of Focus: Young People

As we progressed through the 4th quarter of the year we identified an emerging issue with an increasing level of reports of youth disorder. In early March a significant incident occurred in Busby Road, Clarkston, when officers came under a sustained attack by a large number of teenage youths, many of whom were under the influence of alcohol. The extent of the attack necessitated two youths being sprayed with incapacitant spray. Drugs and a knife were recovered at the locus.

The strong relationships that our Campus Officers have with pupils in East Renfrewshire High Schools has played a large part in ensuring we are able to deal robustly and effectively with emerging issues. During the “lockdown” period when school closures were in place, Campus Officers were frequently deployed on late-shift duties, in particular at weekends, when issues were frequently occurring. Their presence at key locations and times enabled them to undertake positive interactions with young people when they were found congregating at or near to antisocial behaviour hot-spots.



CONCLUSION

As the Local Policing Commander for East Renfrewshire, I am pleased to present the Cabinet Report for the 4th Quarter of the year.

Thankfully COVID restrictions continue to ease and our key strategy remains to Engage, Explain, Encourage and, only where necessary, Enforce compliance with rules that are designed to keep everyone safe. Youth disorder is an ongoing source of concern to residents. When dealing with young people during these challenging times, our response is led primarily by wellbeing and safety considerations. Our aim is not to prohibit young people from socialising and enjoying outdoor spaces but to ensure that they do so safely and responsibly, and with respect for all other members of our communities.

We remain wholly committed to continuing and improving partnership working with East Renfrewshire Council, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, and a range of other partner agencies to deliver improvements and positive outcomes in our communities.

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland
Divisional Commander