

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE & FIRE)

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 2 December 2021.

Present:

Councillor Colm Merrick (Chair)
Councillor Tony Buchanan (Leader)
Councillor Barbara Grant

Councillor Alan Lafferty
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor Merrick in the Chair

Attending:

Lorraine McMillan, Chief Executive; Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive; Murray Husband, Head of Digital and Community Safety; Louise Pringle, Head of Communities, Revenues & Change; 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 Michelle Grant, Communities Inspector, Police Scotland; Area Commander David McCarrey and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apologies:

Councillors Caroline Bamforth, Betty Cunningham and Danny Devlin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1829. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

Councillor Merrick welcomed all attendees to the meeting and noted the attendance of Communities Inspector Michelle Grant who would be observing the meeting.

VALEDICTORY – CAROLINE INNES, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1830. Councillor Merrick advised that this would be the last Cabinet (Police and Fire) meeting attended by Caroline Innes, Deputy Chief Executive, who was due to retire in January 2022 after 37 years of public service. On behalf of the Cabinet he thanked the Deputy Chief Executive for her involvement in East Renfrewshire Council over the years and wished her a long and happy retirement. This was echoed by other members of the Cabinet and throughout

the meeting by Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service colleagues who commended the level of partnership working achieved. At the end of the meeting the Deputy Chief Executive responded in suitable terms.

Councillor Merrick welcomed Louise Pringle, current Head of Communities, Revenues & Change to the meeting who would take up the post of Director of Business Operations and Partnerships in February 2022. All meeting attendees welcomed the future Director of Business Operations and Partnerships and looked forward to working with her in due course.

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Councillor Gordon Wallace joined the meeting at this point.

POLICE SCOTLAND – PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2021-22

1831. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the second quarter of 2021-22. 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.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland provided an overview of the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23 during quarter two and noted the easing of COVID-19 restrictions during this period. He advised of the successful support Police Scotland provided to the safe delivery of the Playground Festival, TRNSMT Festival and the Annual Boyd Procession out with the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow. He commended the successful partnership working approach of the Safe East Renfrewshire Summer Plan, particularly given the extended period of good weather and large areas of open spaces within the Council area requiring resource.

He outlined that anti-social behaviour and public nuisance calls had reduced and recognised that this reduction was partly a result of the easing of COVID-19 restrictions in addition to the work of partners. He thanked the Council for their support in policing delivery and looked forward to a safe festive period.

Chief Inspector Gray thanked the Chair for allowing the Communities Inspector to join the meeting and for the rescheduling of the Cabinet Police and Fire meeting from the 18 November to 2 December in response to the demands placed on Police Scotland during COP 26. He then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. He outlined the changing timeline of the wider COVID-19 restrictions during this period being eased and the impact this had on the delivery of local operational policing services and crime profiles.

Chief Inspector Gray advised that acquisitive crimes were lower than for the same period the previous year and 16% lower for the five-year average. The number of homes broken into, inclusive of attempted break-ins, remained unchanged from last year's figure and was down 30% compared to the five-year average.

Online fraud had increased both locally in East Renfrewshire and across the United Kingdom. The Economic Crime Unit continued to support local officers with expert advice to progress investigations and increase awareness of new and emerging scams through local social media and the Police Scotland website. Effective partnership working with the Council's Trading Standards Prevention Team officers and local banks through an agreed

“Banking Protocol” resulted in regular alerts being made to Police Scotland of suspicious activity. This enabled officers to quickly attend and investigate the circumstances, ensure the safety of potential victims and prevent the potential loss of finances.

Chief Inspector Gray advised that in relation to public protection, sexual crimes had decreased in comparison to 2020 and the five-year average data. The detection rate for sexual offences so far this financial year was 68.9%, significantly higher than the 5 year average figure of 45.3%. Work continued with partner agencies to ensure victims had the confidence to report ongoing and historical incidents.

Slightly fewer domestic abuse incidents were attended compared to the same period the previous year, although this was 5% more than the five-year average. The number of domestic abuse incidents where associated crimes had been recorded, remained well below the previous 5 year average figure of 45.1% and was currently 37.4%. With the support of Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit colleagues, positive engagement with potential victims of domestic abuse was encouraged to ensure that advice, support and intervention could be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

In relation to the detection of drug supply offences, it was advised that there had been a decrease of 13.4% compared to the previous year, with 71 crimes recorded in East Renfrewshire. The number of offences recorded relating to the supply of drugs was 22.4% higher than the previous 5 year average. Work continued in line with an ongoing focus on a public health approach to policing.

In relation to violent crime, in the second quarter of the year minor assaults had increased slightly compared to the same period the previous year although remained below the five-year average. Serious assaults also remained low and in line with previous year to date and 5 year average data. Reports of robberies remained low and in a static position compared to the previous year's figures. Assaults on emergency service workers have increased nationally. Consultation on the wider use of body worn video took place earlier this year and safety training was being provided for officers.

Antisocial behaviour and disorder, including youth disorder, saw a significant reduction in comparison to the first quarter and five-year average. Following a restriction on foreign travel through the second quarter as a result of COVID-19 restrictions, it was anticipated there would be an increase in the use of local parks and open spaces within the Council area. The establishment of the Safe East Ren Group to deliver a “Summer Plan” during the second quarter resulted in no significant incidents of disorder throughout the period and a decline in antisocial behaviour.

Chief Inspector Gray then reported on the incidents referred to in the report under the areas of violent crime, 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.

The terms of the report were noted.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE (SFRS) PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2021-22

1832. The Cabinet considered a report by the Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), providing details of the performance of SFRS in East Renfrewshire during the second quarter of 2021-22.

Area Commander David McCarrey referenced the delivery of COP 26 and formally noted his thanks to Police Scotland colleagues. He advised that there had been no attacks on SFRS officers during bonfire night events and updated Cabinet that through partnership working with the Scottish Ambulance Service there was now an ambulance in operation out of Clarkston Fire Station. He thanked Cabinet members and the Council for their consultation response to the unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS) consultation and advised that the outcome from the consultation was scheduled for Board review early next year.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided further information on the involvement of the SFRS in the delivery of the "Summer Plan" composed by the Safe East Ren Group during the second quarter and noted formal thanks to Chief Inspector Gray and Rachel Forbes from the Council's communications team.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided an update on the activity of the Community Action Team and the equipment supplied and fitted during the second quarter by SFRS.

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.

Referring to the report, Group Commander Coughtrie provided an overview of the activity during the reported period. No accidental dwelling fire casualties had occurred during quarter two, with a 50% reduction on the three-year average. Operational crews had carried out 79 high risk home fire safety visits.

In terms of unintentional injury and harm, there had been a significant increase on the same period the preceding year. The main contributor was road traffic collisions, which accounted for 57% of non-fire casualties. The number of casualties showed an increase as a result of one road traffic collision with 8 casualties, all with minor injuries. Additionally SFRS assisting partner agencies with entry to premises had contributed to the increase in this figure.

It was noted that during this period crews and the Community Action Team carried out twenty multi-agency engagement activities across East Renfrewshire with a focus on road traffic collisions, unintentional injury and harm within the home. During the extended period of good weather there were no water related incidents or casualties. Familiarisation visits to reservoirs and dams were carried out and response plans implemented to prepare for future periods of good weather. Social media campaigns 'Stay Alive' and 'Get to know the fatal five' continued, these focussing on the dangers of drink and drug driving, speeding, careless and inconsiderate driving and using a hand held mobile phone highlighting the risks of these activities to the lives of others.

He reported that there had been an increase in deliberate fire setting, both on the year on year and three-year average. The predominant cause was secondary fires consisting of grassland and refuse fires occurring within the school holidays and extended period of good weather. Only one primary fire was reported and it was noted there were no vehicle fires. The Community Action Team and Fire Safety Enforcement had continued to engage with partners and the community regarding deliberate fire setting.

It was reported that there had been no increase in non-domestic fires in relation to the previous reporting period, with only two recorded and a significant decrease in this type of incident against the three year indicator. One accidental fire took place at a care home due to the overheating of a light fitting where minimal damage occurred and one deliberate fire at a primary school where combustible materials were lit causing significant damage to the roof. Post fire audits were carried out by fire safety officers after both of these incidents to address any deficiencies found.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals had increased by 31% during the quarter and by 3% over the three-year average. It was noted that the majority of these incidents were avoidable and caused by human error. Education and care premises reported the highest level of these incidents.

There followed further questions in the course of which Group Commander Coughtrie and Area Commander McCarrey provided clarification on a range of operational issues within East Renfrewshire and the statistics recorded in the report.

Group Commander Coughtrie provided an update on the fire alarm regulations 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. He advised visiting the SFRS website for further information on the new regulations and to arrange a home fire safety visit. He further advised that SFRS would fit and supply alarms for high risk individuals. Area Commander David McCarrey and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie Scottish Fire and Rescue Service indicated they would contact the Council's Trading Standards team regarding the fire alarm installation regulations due to come into effect in February 2022.

The report was noted.

CHAIR

