

MINUTE
of
CABINET
(POLICE & FIRE)

Minute of virtual meeting held at 10.00am on 9 June 2022.

Present:

Councillor Katie Pragnell (Chair)
Councillor Andrew Anderson (Vice Chair)
Councillor Owen O'Donnell (Leader)

Councillor Caroline Bamforth
Councillor Gordon Wallace

Councillor Pragnell in the Chair

Attending:

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

Also Attending:

Chief Superintendent Mark Sutherland (Divisional Commander), Chief Inspector Jane Taylor (Area Commander), Chief Inspector Greg Robertson - Public Health Coordinator; Michelle Grant, Communities Inspector, Police Scotland; Area Commander David McCarrey and Group Commander Alan Coughtrie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

Apology:

Councillor Danny Devlin.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

14. There were no declarations of interest intimated.

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

15. The Cabinet considered a report by the Divisional Commander, Police Scotland, providing details of the performance of the police over the fourth 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 2020-21.

Chief Superintendent Sutherland welcomed new members to the Cabinet (Police and Fire) and advised that he looked forward to a successful and meaningful collaboration over the next four years and advised that this was a good forum to share performance and associated context, have open discussions regarding the performance, and work together to improve the outcomes.

He thanked the outgoing Chair Councillor Merrick for his time on the Cabinet (Police and Fire) and wished him all the best.

He noted the impact of the pandemic on the performance indicators. He welcomed feedback on the current reporting style and how this could possibly be reviewed to ensure the Cabinet (Police and Fire) was provided with the required and relevant information.

He then introduced Chief Inspector Jane Taylor (Area Commander) highlighting her skills in community policing and thanked Chief Inspector Alan Gray (former Area Commander) for his time in the role.

He outlined that the report before Elected Members was based on the East Renfrewshire Local Police Plan 2020-23 and focused on the two key priorities. These were noted as crime, reducing crimes of greatest concern and detecting offenders; and protecting vulnerable people, working with partners and the most vulnerable to reduce risk. He advised that an overview to the public health approach to policing would also be provided as part of the presentation of information to Elected Members.

On reviewing the last quarter of 2021/22, he outlined that partnership working continued into winter with a significant reduction in anti-social behaviour and disorder, with some of this also partially linked to the easing of COVID-19 legislation. Acquisitive crime was rising, however it was noted that this was a national trend and was expected to be seen with people not spending as much time at home and as a result of the emerging cost of living crisis. Tackling acquisitive crime remained a priority. It was reported that there had been a reduction in sexual crime, with the public protection restructure resulting in improved detection rates although the police always needed to ensure that victims had the confidence to come forward and approach police. He referenced the good work of the banking protocol and the Herbert protocol within East Renfrewshire.

Chief Inspector Taylor then reported on the performance of the police against the five local policing priorities contained in the East Renfrewshire Policing Plan 2020-23. She outlined the impact of the Omicron variant in the reporting period, advising that police absences were at their lowest level during this period. Operation Tala which was the Police response to COVID-19 was stood down and police officers deployed to this operation returned to their substantive roles. Officers also returned from their deployment on the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow.

She advised that the restrictions on large scale indoor and outdoor events were lifted with officers from East Renfrewshire assisting with the policing response across the Greater Glasgow area.

On referring to the report, Chief Inspector Taylor advised that for acquisitive crimes, the number of homes broken into (including attempts) was 74, an increase from the previous year which was 58 incidents although still down 23% on the five year average which was 96 incidents. This increase was potentially due to people returning to work after working from home during the pandemic however work continued across local authority boundaries, capturing forensic opportunities with colleagues to identify perpetrators. Local residents had been notified via social media messaging, through community engagement and leaflet drops.

In relation to public protection, up to and including quarter four sexual crimes had reduced by 6.4% compared to the previous year having fallen from 110 crimes to 103. The associated detection rate for the current year was 48.5% which was up significantly from 32.7% last year and higher than the 5 year average of 46.7%. Whilst the falling number of reported claims and the rising detection rates were welcome, improving on the detection rates for these crimes would always be a priority.

In relation to domestic abuse incidents, in the year to date 532 domestic abuse incidents had been handled. This represented a 6% increase compared to the previous five-year average. The number of domestic abuse incidents with associated crime was 291, slightly higher than the 2020-21 figure of 287. However this was 4% less than the five-year average. Officers continue to support victims of domestic abuse, and were trained to refer and direct potential victims to support services. The police continued to risk assess to protect victim safety working in partnership to ensure appropriate safety planning was in place to protect victim safety and wellbeing. Robust scrutiny was additionally provided by domestic abuse investigation colleagues.

In relation to the detection of drug supply offences, it was advised that a total of 171 drugs related offences had occurred. This was 28% fewer than last year and 43% fewer than the five-year average. Drug supply was down 17% on the five-year average although had increased 25% on the previous year. Offences regarding possession were at 34% last year and the police were ensuring that officers were proactively policing using the legislation available and ensuring that searches were recorded. An updated training programme on the searching of offenders was also being undertaken within East Renfrewshire. In addition, it was reported that the police worked closely with colleagues in the East Renfrewshire Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) and Health and Social Care Partnership across a range of issues signposting vulnerable members of the community to support services and the peer navigator and lived experience work. The ADP also funded and delivered a bespoke mental health training package in conjunction with SAMH for a number of response officers.

In relation to violent crime, 21 incidents of serious assaults had been recorded, 8 less in comparison to the previous year. This was also 23.4% below the five-year average. One crime of attempted murder was recorded during this period, however this was detected.

It was reported that the trend highlighted in quarter two and quarter three had continued in relation to attacks on emergency service workers. There had been 50 emergency worker assaults, up 15 on the previous year, and also an increase of 42.9% on the five year average, which had been reduced by an exceptionally low reporting number in 2018/19. This trend was replicated across Greater Glasgow with 44 offences recorded at the end of quarter three, with a further six added to this total in quarter four. This was the result of four separate incidents where the victims were all police officers and the offences of a relatively minor nature. It was noted that reporting was encouraged and that newly modernised officer safety training was in place. Assaults involved exclusively police officers, with the exception of two incidents where an ambulance technician and a paramedic were assaulted.

Reports of robberies remained low at 5, which was six less than the previous year and the five-year average. The detection rate for this crime was 100%.

In terms of antisocial behaviour and disorder, there were a total of 2,089 reports of antisocial behaviour in 2021/22. This was 1,284 fewer than the previous year, as calls regarding COVID-19 breaches or gatherings decreased. East Renfrewshire's Greater Results in Partnership (GRIP) meetings took place weekly to allow for information sharing and for appropriate action to be taken. Planning had started on summer safety campaigns with the Safer East Renfrewshire plan. Work was ongoing with Scottish Water and the SFRS to maximise expertise and provide safety information while working with British Transport Police to monitor train activity and mitigate issues before they arrived in the community.

There followed a question and answer session in the course of which Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector Taylor 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 officer safety, domestic abuse, waterway safety, and anti-social behaviour at the Picketlaw Reservoir, Eaglesham. During this session it was noted that Police Scotland would attend the next meeting of the Eaglesham and Waterfoot Community Council on 14 June 2022.

The terms of the report were noted.

POLICE SCOTLAND - PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO POLICING - PRESENTATION

16. The Cabinet considered a presentation by Chief Superintendent Sutherland and Chief Inspector Greg Robertson - Public Health Coordinator, providing an overview of the public health approach to policing.

The presentation outlined the vision of the public health approach to policing through a 'better citizen' approach, and that policing in Greater Glasgow would demonstrate a long-term commitment to strengthen and support partners to collectively improve the health outcomes of the population.

It was explained that there were six key areas of focus within the approach to ensure that policing policy was aligned with existing evidence-based approaches of public health partners. These were noted as; to determine the most effective policing assets to contribute to current strategic priorities; to optimise opportunities to support in circumstances where police officers were uniquely placed; to support partners to deliver a place based approach to healthier living in priority locations; to enhance prevention policing approaches to help address underlying causes of poor health outcomes; and to seek longer term reduction in policing demand and reinvest to increase capacity for early intervention.

The nine strategic objectives were also outlined, these being noted as; to know partners policing needs; consult experts on prevention priorities; raise awareness on public health; support if uniquely placed to do so; use and share data; enhance prevention policing; deeper collaboration with partners; contribute to partner forums; and contribute to reducing poverty.

The priorities of the public health approach to policing detailed a focus on harm reduction from drugs, mental health support, and contributing to reducing poverty.

The measures of success were also outlined. These included, amongst others, public health awareness sessions working with Public Health Scotland; the positive outcomes project and peer mentors who worked with people offending to fund an addition; the development of mental health assessment units; the use of naloxone saving 16 lives during a 6 month test of change, and restructuring of public protection teams.

Following discussion it was agreed that:-

- (a) the public health approach to policing to be added to the agenda for the next meeting to allow further opportunity for Elected Member questions; and
- (b) the presentation be circulated to Elected Members.

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

17. 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 2021-22.

Area Commander David McCarrey introduced himself and noted key priorities of the SFRS to be a community connector amongst partners.

Group Commander Coughtrie welcomed working with the Cabinet (Police & Fire) moving forward and advised that as a service SFRS was continuing good progress in implementing their COVID recovery strategy and applying business as usual where possible, whilst maintaining appropriate controls to keep personnel safe and the property and fleet portfolio with maximum resilience to meet the needs of communities.

He outlined that the nine week consultation on the SFRS on the draft Strategic Plan 2022-2025 was live. The draft plan proposed seven outcomes showing how these outcomes deliver against the Fire and Rescue Framework 2022 and the SFRS Long Term Vision. Each outcome also provided a set of statements that described what success would look like when delivered against that outcome. Shaping forward direction, the proposals outlined how SFRS would make a significant contribution to making people's lives in Scotland better and safer.

Group Commander Coughtrie advised that during the reporting period crews and the Community Action Team carried out 25 multi-agency engagement activities across East Renfrewshire, whilst station personnel carried out 63. Operational crews had carried out 142 home fire safety visits, with 96 of these being high-risk visits. 52 Post domestic incident responses had been carried out, with 53 home fire safety visits resulting from the post-domestic incident responses. 158 Smoke detectors had been fitted.

It was further reported that for accidental dwelling fires, there had been an increase in the year on year indicator of 50%. However this was against an extremely low figure of 10 in the same reporting period the previous year with an increase of 5 incidents over the 12 week period. It was pleasing to note an overall reduction of 9% on the three-year indicator. Cooking was again the main contributor, accounting for over 60% of activity. However, it was positive to note that detection was present in 73% of the premises and the detection actuated in 82% of them giving an early warning. This confirmed a continued awareness regarding the importance of the installation and maintenance of fire detection equipment within the home.

To support reduction in this type of activity, the Community Action Team continued to be actively involved in engaging with partners through GRIP meetings, as well as various referral pathways to identify and support the most vulnerable in communities. Operational crews also carried out targeted local initiatives, including leaflet drops to identify the areas where there had been more than one accidental dwelling fire. Early intervention by partnership referral appeared to reduce the occurrence of this type of incident. This emphasised the importance of the continued application of the make the call campaign to partners and public.

In terms of accidental dwelling casualties there had been no increase year on year and a reduction of 71% on the three-year average indicator. He noted in this period East Renfrewshire fire crews gained a minimum of one home fire safety visit following on from each post domestic incident response, the highest attainment rate of this type of activity across Scotland.

In terms of unintentional injury and harm, year on year there had been an increase of 150% in special service casualties, which equated to an additional three casualties. It was noted that this increase was measured against significantly low figures the previous year and despite the increase there was a positive substantial reduction of 17% against the three-year average. During this reporting period, crews attended 4 road traffic collisions which all resulted in minor injuries to the five casualties which were involved.

The Community Action team carried out a total of 25 multi-agency engagement activities across the area during this period with a focus on road safety campaigns, including promoting Road Safety Scotland and Project Edward. This was a campaign which focused on the behaviour of other drivers on the road, including road rage and driver intolerance, and teams were currently engaging with local schools to deliver the Young Driver Initiative, an educational programme focussing on young and new drivers. It was also pleasing to note that in this reporting period, there were no water related incidents or casualties. SFRS had continued to develop and progress actions to reduce the potential for this type of incident by working with our partners in the East Renfrewshire Water Safety Group and by delivering a bespoke programme to local schools.

He reported that there had been a significant reduction in deliberate fire setting of 13% year on year with the three-year average highlighting only a slight increase. The majority of these were secondary fires involving grass and woodland during a period of dry weather in this reporting period. Deliberate fire setting and fire related antisocial behaviour continued to be a challenge for SFRS and data showed that the highest instances of grass, woodland and refuse fires occurred during the school holidays, early evening, weekends, and periods of good weather. Reduction of this type of incident was a key priority, and as such operational crews were actively involved in identifying the highest incident areas and implementing reduction strategies through youth engagement activities and by providing relevant advice to local businesses. These initiatives were supported by enforcement and Community Action teams as well as Police Scotland.

It was reported that there had been a significant reduction in non-domestic fires in relation to the previous reporting period and against the three-year indicator. The two reported incidents were both accidental and firefighter action was only required at one. The damage in the property was minimal with only heat and smoke damage.

Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) continued to increase. The majority of these were in educational facilities with the cause predominantly accidental, deliberate acts or system faults which again highlighted that the majority were avoidable and being caused by either human error or deliberate action. The impact of human behaviour continued to challenge SFRS, and even without direct engagement through crews attending incidents and the phased reduction of appliances through the UFAS strategy, the main contributors were humans failing to follow procedures when testing alarms, deliberately setting off fire alarms and poor housekeeping causing detector heads to become contaminated. UFAS champions had been appointed in each station to monitor activity and highlight this to the enforcement team to allow them to engage at the earliest opportunity and investigate the most appropriate solution, whether it be mechanical, staff training, or replacement of equipment or if deliberate pursue through the appropriate channels.

Area Commander McCarrey then provided an overview on some of the areas outlined in the report, advising that under the heading of unintentional injury and harm the SFRS assisted partner agencies and wished to continue to do so, that deliberate fire setting continued to be an issue across the country, and that education continued in the area of non-domestic fire safety through providing information to businesses. He outlined the benefits of reducing the number of UFAS and provided further information on the strategic plan whilst emphasising the partnership working of the SFRS within East Renfrewshire.

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

The report was noted.

CHAIR

