



**NOTICE OF THE MEETING OF
POLICE, FIRE and COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2015
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor T Day (Convener)
Councillor J Gillies
Councillor J Goodfellow
Councillor P MacKenzie
Councillor F McAllister
Councillor M Libberton
Councillor K McLeod
Councillor J Caldwell

Police Scotland

Chief Supt G Imery
Chief Insp M Paden
J Fleetwood, Local Authority Liaison Officer

East and Midlothian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr A Perry, Local Senior Officer
Mr D Mack, Group Manager

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)
Mr T Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager - Corporate Policy and Improvement

Observer

Mr J Beresford, Scottish Police Authority

Clerk:

Mrs F Stewart

Apologies:

None

Declarations of Interest:

None

Councillor Tim Day, Chair, welcomed everyone present to the inaugural meeting of the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee.

He stated that, following major changes to Police and Fire Services, Members had wished to establish a Committee which would provide East Lothian with the most robust scrutiny arrangements possible. Whilst the primary aim of the Committee would be to scrutinise performance, the role of the committee would also extend to commenting on, with a view to influencing, national decisions which would impact on East Lothian.

1. MEMBERSHIP AND REMIT OF COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the membership and remit of the Committee.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CONVENER

Councillor Libberton proposed Councillor Gillies for the position of Vice Convener and this was seconded by Councillor Caldwell.

3. POLICE SCOTLAND SCRUTINY REPORT, 1 APRIL-30 SEPTEMBER 2015

Chief Supt Gill Imery provided a context for the report on both national and divisional matters. She advised that, nationally, the main issue was terrorism and the threat level remained 'severe' following the recent terrorist attacks in Paris. She had no knowledge of any threat specific to Scotland, but she reported an increase in incidents of tension in the community. Chief Supt Imery also informed Members that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS), which provides scrutiny of Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority, was conducting an enquiry into call handling at the Bilston Glen Centre. This enquiry was not specific to one incident but more wide ranging. Chief Supt Imery also advised that the name of the new Chief Constable was due to be announced next week.

Divisionally, Chief Supt Imery advised that she had completed a 6 month review, following changes to the Police operating model to see if the distribution of resources was correct. The Review showed that there were issues with the proportion of officers in response and also community policing roles. She advised that Chief Inspector Matt Paden, who had operated in a number of roles within the Division, would be overseeing the next stage of implementation of the review's recommendations. It was unlikely that any changes would be made before February 2016.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Councillor Caldwell enquired if there were any particular areas of concern in relation to potential terrorist attacks. Chief Supt Imery replied that intelligence now indicated that there was a deliberate shift away from areas of vulnerability previously identified and a deliberate shift towards recreational and sporting activities. The Police were now reviewing safety procedures for such events. Councillor Caldwell also raised concerns regarding the service provided by the Bilston Glen Call Centre. Councillor Goodfellow had also been disappointed at the call handlers' lack of local knowledge and other Members spoke of unsatisfactory experiences. Chief Supt Imery agreed to look into their concerns and offered to arrange a visit for Members to the call centre. Members could also access performance statistics for the call centre online.

The Chair recalled a TV news item on Police armed response and Chief Supt Imery stated that there had been a misconception regarding police firearms. She explained that there was a complement of Police Officers who had access to arms and armed response vehicles, a resource that continues to be provided for East Lothian, but the issue of armed response had never been about officers routinely walking the street with firearms.

Councillor McAllister referred to Chief Supt Imery's 6-month review and enquired about the impact operational changes had had on police officers serving in the community. Chief Supt Imery replied that her review indicated that there had been an impact on what was previously known as local beat officers. However, there were now more locally deployed officers than before providing more resilience in communities. Findings had also indicated that additional resource was required to handle all emergency calls. Chief Supt Imery added that a summary of her internal review would soon be made available to Members.

Councillor McLeod noted that there were many acronyms in the Police report and considered that some of the information was presented in a complex form. He stated that the reports in this format were difficult for members of the public to understand and requested if future reports could be clearer.

Chief Inspect Matt Paden summarised the Police Scrutiny Report. In the Local Priorities Section, he advised that the detection rate for crimes which included violence, indecency, dishonesty and malicious mischief offences had increased 6.1% on last year (to 37.3%). In respect of Domestic Housebreaking Offences, Operation Greenbay had been targeting all high profile groups to help reduce the number of domestic housebreaking offences and there had been a significant reduction across all housebreaking activity. For Priority 1, Protecting People, there had been a reduction in the number of Domestic Abuse Incidents reported following a wide range of multi-agency activity. The detection rate for Sexual Offences had fallen but there was an improving figure moving into Quarter 3. Chief Inspector Paden was also pleased to report that there had been a significant fall in the number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents (Priority 2). Of particular note was the reduction in Hate Crimes (down 52.5%). The detection rate for Hate Crime was 90.9%, one of the highest detection rates in the East of Scotland. Statistics also showed that, for Priority 5, Making our Roads Safer, there had been a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on East Lothian roads and fewer people had committed drink/drug driving offences. The data for Priority 6, Tackling Serious Organised Crime, indicated that there had been an increase in the number of people detected for supplying drugs. The report concluded with figures on complaints against the Police.

The Chair invited questions for the Police representatives.

Councillor Goodfellow enquired how the decision was made on which indicators would be included in the report and Chief Supt Imery advised that the Indicators came from the Police Plan Priorities. She also explained that some Indicators, for example those relating to sex crimes, did not show the number of reported offences when it was not evident whether that statistic was good or bad; the aim was to reduce offending but it was important to encourage everyone to report the crime. The Chief Supt also advised that figures for all Indicators were available on line.

The Chair stated that, from a scrutiny point of view, it would be useful to see hard figures and suggested that discussions could take place with the Police to discuss the best format for presenting information to the Committee.

Councillor MacKenzie sought clarification on the Indicator for Detection of Domestic Abuse Crimes. He asked if 'couples living together' referred to reported cases. Chief Insp Paden explained that these figures indicated that there had been sufficient evidence for the Police to charge an individual and report that person to the Procurator Fiscal. He added that support was provided to victims to help them report crimes to the Police. Councillor MacKenzie also requested homicide figures for East Lothian and requested that figures for those killed on roads were split into adults and children.

Councillor Caldwell enquired if the Police anticipated an increase in hate crime with the expected arrival of refugees into the county. Chief Supt replied that there was likely to be a transition period after their arrival and she was confident that communities would be welcoming to the refugees. However, she acknowledged there was a small minority of people who did resort to racist abuse. Tom Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships, advised that there was already a multi-agency group established and working in East Lothian that would be able to offer support to refugees. Pro-active work was also being done in schools, and training carried out across the relevant public services. A date for the arrival of refugees had yet to be determined.

The Chair raised the issue of doorstep crime targeting older people in the community. He requested a report which would include information on the work being done by Trading Standards to address these crimes and Chief Inspector Paden advised that a report had already been prepared on Police activity in this area, including measures in place to protect older and vulnerable people. He would circulate copies of this report to Committee members.

Councillor Libberton enquired what was being done to combat people selling drugs on the street in our communities and Chief Supt Imery replied that work in this area was a local priority for the Police as it impacted on the quality of life for people living in the vicinity. She outlined the strategy employed by the Police and advised that this was continually reviewed.

The Chair referred to Priority 5, Making our Roads Safer, and commented on the number of drivers still using mobile phones, which in his view, can be as dangerous as drunk driving. Chief Insp Paden replied that there had been an increase in the number of detections of people using mobile phones whilst driving in the county and advised that East Lothian was well supported with Police traffic vehicles.

Councillor Goodfellow congratulated the Police on the positive report they had presented. Councillor MacKenzie described the report as encouraging and welcomed the improvement in the detection of a number of crimes. He also advised that the Council was about to employ a Police Officer to assist with those people who were guilty of re-offending and he would watch this development with interest. Generally, however, he was pleased to say that East Lothian was a safe environment in which to live.

The Chair echoed the views of his colleagues.

Sederunt: Councillor McLeod left the meeting

4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR EAST LOTHIAN, 1 APRIL-30 SEPTEMBER 2015

Prior to presenting his report, Alasdair Perry, Local Senior Officer, spoke on how the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) prepared to respond in the event of a terrorist attack. He advised that nationally, the three emergency services worked together and Fire Officers were trained to work with Police at all levels in preparedness for such events.

Mr Perry highlighted two major projects. The first was the Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest Pilot where the Fire Service would respond to an emergency call to ambulance services if they had a closer resource (the ambulance service would also attend at the earliest opportunity). The aim of this pilot was to increase the survival rates of cardiac arrest sufferers in Scotland from 4%; survival rates in Scandinavia were 34%. Members of the public were also receiving training on cardiac arrest using dummies, and training DVDs were available. The second project concerned work being carried out at a national level on public safety and the risks to the health of the community. This initiative aimed to advance preventative measures. Councillor Goodfellow welcomed any measures which would increase the cardiac arrest survival rate and enquired if there were established protocols on who takes command in an emergency situation if all three emergency services arrive on the scene. Mr Perry advised that there were and expected that an ambulance crew would take the lead when they arrived at an incident.

Mr Perry advised that the three Fire Service control centres at Johnstone, Dundee and Edinburgh would soon be merged into one new state of the art centre at Tollcross, Edinburgh. The new control centre would begin operating on 26 January 2016 and Mr Perry offered to arrange a visit to the new centre for Members.

Mr Dean Mack, SFRS Group Manager, summarised the Local Plan Performance report for Quarter 2 and advised that the SFRS had responded to 436 incidents in East Lothian, an increase of 55 incidents over the same period last year. Mr Mack reported 46 domestic fires and 22 accidental fires in East Lothian and advised that the Service was working to identify single occupancy households which might be at risk. There had been a reduction in the number of fire casualties and there had been no fatalities. The main causes of fires were smoking and cooking. Mr Mack was also pleased to report that smoke detectors had been fitted at every fire they had attended in East Lothian this year. This was very significant as it meant that fires were being extinguished at an earlier stage and there was less impact on the health service.

Mr Mack advised that the Service had attended 11 Road Traffic Collisions for the same period, reporting 11 casualties and 1 fatality. The report also outlined the extent of the partnership working the Service was involved in.

The Chair invited questions from Members.

Councillor Caldwell enquired how many false alarms and deliberate fires there had been. Mr Mack replied that, of 130 calls, there had only been 1 malicious call made and fire fighters continued to work pro-actively with schools on this issue. With regard to deliberate fires, he could not recall anyone being charged with this offence in the past year.

Councillor McAllister asked if it was known how many of the Accidental Dwelling fires were alcohol related and Mr Mack replied that he did not have that information but it was recorded.

The Chair stated that dementia was a growing issue in communities and asked if there was more which could be done to identify these vulnerable people. Mr Perry advised that progress was being made in this area in a number of ways, including multi-agency work and risk analysis. The Service was also looking at ways to improve circulation of information on vulnerable groups and fire crews often made referrals.

The Chair thanked Mr Perry and Mr Dean for their comprehensive report and advised that he would like to accept their offer to visit the new control centre in the New Year.

Any Other Business

Councillor McAllister stated that the withdrawal of the Police School Liaison Officer in Musselburgh had been keenly felt in the community. The Chief Supt acknowledged the benefits of having Officers working in the Community with young people, but advised that such Officers were provided subject to available resource. Chief Insp Paden stated that he would speak to the Chair of the Parent/Teacher Association to ensure their views were incorporated in future reviews.

5. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2015-16

The Chair advised that, following today's meeting, the Work Programme would be updated.

6. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday 24 February 2016

Wednesday 25 May 2016