



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

**WEDNESDAY 29 NOVEMBER 2017
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor L Bruce
Councillor J Findlay
Councillor N Gilbert
Councillor J Goodfellow (Convener)
Councillor J Henderson
Councillor K McLeod

Police Scotland

Chief Superintendent L Clark
Chief Inspector M Paden

East and Midlothian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr D Girrity, Group Manager - Protection and Prevention
Mr S Gourlay, Area Manager

Council Officials Present:

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

Clerk:

Mrs L Gillingwater

Apologies:

Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor C McGinn

Declarations of Interest:

None

The Convener welcomed everyone present, particularly those representing Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, to the first meeting of the new Committee.

1. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTE CONVENER

The Convener sought nominations for the position of Depute Convener of the Committee.

Councillor Findlay, seconded by Councillor Bruce, nominated Councillor Henderson. There were no other nominations, and Councillor Henderson was duly appointed as Depute Convener of the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 1 MARCH 2017

The Committee agreed to note the minute of the meeting held on 1 March 2017. Councillors McLeod and Goodfellow, as the only returning members of the Committee, confirmed that the minute was a true record of the meeting.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Councillor McLeod asked for an update on improvements to CCTV facilities. Mr Shearer, Head of Communities and Partnerships, advised that although there was an intention to move from an analogue to a digital CCTV system, he had not been able to take this forward for financial reasons. He noted that East Lothian's CCTV facility was funded wholly by the Council, and it was likely that the Council would have to fund any system upgrades. He assured Members that all cameras were functioning. Councillor Goodfellow added that CoSLA was looking at the funding of CCTV across Scotland in conjunction with Police Scotland.

4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES (SFRS) LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT, 1 APRIL – 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

Stephen Gourlay, SFRS Area Manager, updated the Committee on national and divisional matters, noting that the main focus for this meeting would be the SFRS transformation programme and that a consultation on the Local Plan was underway. He then summarised the key points of the report, drawing particular attention to the service's performance for each indicator.

Councillor Bruce asked if businesses could be penalised financially for false alarms. Mr Gourlay advised that the legislation did not provide for such charges. He noted that education and higher education establishments accounted for the majority of false alarm calls, and that the SFRS was working with the Council to reduce such calls.

Responding to questions from Councillor Henderson, Mr Gourlay indicated that Musselburgh and Haddington had the highest number of incidents, and offered to get a breakdown of incidents per ward. He reminded Members that there was only one full-time fire station in East Lothian (Musselburgh). He added that East Lothian was also supported by crews from Dalkeith and Edinburgh, as required.

On road traffic collisions (RTCs), Mr Gourlay clarified that trunk roads and local roads were covered by the SFRS, and he agreed to provide information at a future meeting on SFRS involvement in RTCs on rural roads.

Councillor Gilbert asked about response times. Mr Gourlay indicated that official attendance times were not available, but that response times varied from 3 to 8 minutes.

Councillor McLennan asked questions in relation to risk registers and deliberate fires. Mr Gourlay advised that the SFRS had a national risk register, which was reviewed annually. In addition, Torness Power Station had its own risk register. On deliberate fires, he reported that 80% of incidents involved young people, and that there had been an increase in such incidents across Scotland. Councillor Goodfellow commented that he hoped better community engagement would lead to a decrease in deliberate fires.

Mr Gourlay closed the debate by advising that future performance reports would be presented in a different format and that he would seek Members' comments on the new format in due course.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

5. SERVICE TRANSFORMATION PRESENTATION

Stephen Gourlay, SFRS Group Manager, delivered a presentation on service transformation. He highlighted the risks and challenges facing the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, before focusing on the service's Transformation Strategy, which would result in a more efficient and effective service, with firefighters trained and equipped to meet new risks and contribute more to the protection of communities, as well as the introduction of new technology. He drew attention to the efficiencies achieved since the inception of the single service, but noted that there remained significant financial challenges ahead. He advised that there would be increased efforts to strengthen the retained service, through local recruitment campaigns. He also warned of the likelihood of station closures, although he anticipated that East Lothian's stations would not be affected. He concluded his presentation by urging Members to participate in the forthcoming public consultation on the transformation proposals.

Councillor McLeod sought reassurance on the recruitment and retention of retained firefighters, especially given the projected increase in population. Mr Gourlay spoke of the benefits of local recruitment campaigns, and advised that a crew manager would be appointed in Haddington to strengthen the retained service.

Responding to a question from Councillor Henderson as regards technology, Mr Gourlay alluded to methods being used by other UK fire and rescue services, including tracking systems and drones. He advised that there was technology available that was not currently being used by the SFRS, and highlighted the need for the service to keep up with technological advances.

Councillor Gilbert asked if the shift system was affecting service improvements. Mr Gourlay reported that a new shift system had now been implemented across Scotland which would have benefits, but anticipated that there may be opposition to further changes in shift patterns. He confirmed that daytime staff were employed on the same terms and conditions as shift workers, which would allow for a range of shift systems to be considered and implemented in accordance with the requirements of specific areas. He highlighted the importance of the retained service within East Lothian.

Councillor Findlay expressed concern that rural communities may suffer as a result of budget reductions. Mr Gourlay commented that recruiting retained staff at North Berwick had been challenging in the past, but that the situation was now improving.

Sederunt: Mr Gerrity left the meeting.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the presentation and transformation proposals.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND SCRUTINY REPORT, 1 APRIL – 30 SEPTEMBER 2017

Chief Superintendent Clark advised that she was working closely with Council officers to deliver the best possible services in East Lothian. She advised of potential changes to shift patterns and to the autonomy of local area command, as well as improvements in communications.

Chief Inspector Paden advised that following a consultation exercise, a local policing plan had been developed for East Lothian, focusing on local priorities. He went on to provide a detailed summary of the report, advising of measures taken/proposed as regards prevention, intervention and enforcement for each category of crime. He concluded by advising that East Lothian continued to be one of the safest places in Scotland to live and work, and that the Police had an excellent working relationship with the Council and other partners. He invited the Committee to visit the Police Control Room.

Councillor Henderson asked if the new legislation on minimum alcohol pricing would lead to a reduction in violent crime. Chief Inspector Paden anticipated that there would be a reduction in anti-social behaviour and violent crime if higher prices deterred people from consuming alcohol in higher quantities.

Councillor McLeod asked for further information on proactive measures to reduce domestic abuse. Chief Inspector Paden advised that a follow-up process was in place to ensure the safety of the victim, such as carrying out checks to ensure that offenders were adhering to their bail conditions.

Councillor Findlay expressed concern as regards car theft through housebreaking. Chief Inspector Paden confirmed that there had been an increase in this crime and that the Police were trying to educate householders using various media as to how to prevent their cars being stolen.

Councillor Gilbert expressed concern that calls made to the Police were not always followed up with a response to the caller. Chief Inspector Paden undertook to look into this matter.

As regards sexual crime, Councillor Goodfellow asked if historical crimes and recent crimes could be reported separately. Chief Inspector Paden agreed to this.

The Committee welcomed the invitations from Chief Inspector Paden and Mr Gourlay to visit the Police and Fire & Rescue Service's call centres.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

7. ONGOING MEASURES TO TACKLING ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive, Partnerships and Community Services, advising the Committee of the number of anti-social behaviour complaints made to the Council during the reporting period, and advising on action undertaken by local partner agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Kenny Black, Safer Communities Team Leader, presented the report, highlighting in particular anti-social behaviour statistics (outlined in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of the report), actions taken to address anti-social behaviour (set out in Sections 3.6-3.10 of the report), partnership working activities with the Police and other agencies, and increased CCTV monitoring at weekends.

Councillor Findlay questioned the possibility of having councillor representation on the Anti-social Behaviour Overview Group. Monica Patterson, Depute Chief Executive, advised that this group dealt with operational matters, some of which were very sensitive, and felt it was therefore inappropriate to have councillor involvement. She did, however, offer to provide further information to Members on anti-social behaviour cases.

In response to questions from Councillor McLeod, Mr Black advised that complaints about anti-social behaviour made by repeat complainers were recorded separately. He noted that the service level agreement with Midlothian Council for resolution/mediation services was reviewed quarterly, and as regards cases where parental advisory letters had been issued, these were followed up and interventions made by Children's Services, where required.

Councillors McLeod and Goodfellow commended the work undertaken by the Safer Communities team and their partners, including Police Scotland and local traders.

Ms Patterson indicated that officers were happy to take suggestions from Members on particular lines of inquiry, or to provide further information on anti-social behaviour matters where requested.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

8. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

Councillor Goodfellow asked if Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service could prepare reports on their resources within East Lothian. He also asked if the Police could provide information on access to other resources.

Chief Superintendent Clark indicated her reluctance to provide such a report, suggesting that making information on policing numbers available in the public domain could have a negative effect. She advised that assessments were made as regards risk, threat and harm, and resources deployed accordingly. She did, however, undertake to report on special constable numbers and recruitment. Mr Gourlay agreed to provide similar information as regards retained firefighters.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 30 May 2018

Signed

Councillor Jim Goodfellow
Convener of the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee