



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

**WEDNESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2018
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 S Duncan

East and Midlothian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr S Gourlay, Area Manager
Mr S Scott, Station Manager

Council Officials Present:

Ms M Patterson, Depute Chief Executive – Partnerships and Community Services
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships
Mr K Black, Safer Communities Team Leader

Clerk:

Ms A Smith

Apologies:

Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor C McGinn

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 13 JUNE 2018 AND 28 NOVEMBER 2018

The Committee agreed to approve the above minutes.

2. MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES, LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR EAST LOTHIAN, 1 APRIL- 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Prior to presenting his report Stephen Gourlay, SFRS Area Manager, introduced Steve Scott, part of the Area Management Team based in Dalkeith but with a partial East Lothian footprint. He also informed Members that Martin Blunden had been appointed as the new Chief Fire Officer for Scotland and would be joining the SFRS early in the New Year. He highlighted that this was a critical period as regards the Transformation Budget, national pay negotiations and the new role for firefighters.

Mr Gourlay summarised the key points of the performance report. There had been 876 incidents in East Lothian during the financial year to date, an increase of 122 compared to the previous year. He drew particular attention to fire casualty data, noting that East Lothian was below the Scottish average. He highlighted the number of home fire safety visits carried out. He drew attention to a number of elements of partnership working and gave details of other work completed or in progress.

Mr Gourlay responded to questions from Members. Regarding questions in relation to deliberate fires, he stated that usually the perpetrators had left the scene when the fire crew arrived so recording their age was not possible however Scottish Government research indicated that underage children set around 80% of deliberate fires. He clarified that some areas tended to always be problematic whereas others could have an occasional spike; the SFRS was working on changing young people's attitude to fire setting. He confirmed that East Lothian fire crews had not encountered the aggressive behaviour that some other areas in Scotland had experienced.

In relation to queries about the increasing amount of electrical equipment in homes permanently switched on and the potential fire hazard, Mr Gourlay advised that most of this type of equipment was a low fire hazard. White goods principally tumble dryers and dishwashers and fake mobile phone/laptop chargers were the highest fire hazards. In respect of the cost to the SFRS of unwarranted fire calls, he stated this was in excess of £1,000 per call. Responding to questions about youth engagement, he advised that a fireskills course had been held at Dunbar Grammar School last week; programmes in the form of short vocational courses also took place at Recharge in Tranent. Regarding home fire safety visits, he clarified that these visits were not necessarily about the property but rather about providing safety advice to householders.

The Convener welcomed the report, noting the prevention and partnership working.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

4. SFRS SERVICE UPDATES EAST LOTHIAN

Mr Gourlay updated the Committee on SFRS progress with elements of transformation and partnership working in East Lothian. He provided information on the rapid response unit (RRU) vehicle which had now been delivered to the North Berwick station. Training had been carried out and feedback from the crew was extremely positive. The RRU vehicle would be operational by the end of January 2019. Mr Gourlay also provided Members with details of the rural fulltime post and the referral pathway for reducing risk in East Lothian.

Responding to questions, Mr Gourlay advised that the Ultra-High Pressure Lance was used in Sweden, it was tried and tested technology. Some fire stations in England had also used it. He clarified that there was only the one RRU, which would be deployed primarily in the North Berwick station area. However if it was the most appropriate resource then it may be used further afield. He clarified that the RRU could take four firefighters. All staff at the North Berwick station had been trained on all aspects of this new vehicle. He outlined the criteria required for a fire station to have an RRU.

The Convener welcomed the new RRU vehicle in North Berwick; he also welcomed the referral pathway and the fact that there was a route forward if consent was denied.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

5. SFRS NEWBRIDGE TRAINING PROJECT

Mr Gourlay provided an update on the SFRS project at Newbridge to build a dedicated training facility. He outlined progress to date, advising that ICT staff would be onsite this month. He gave details of some of the facilities that would be provided. This location would be much more accessible and it would be an excellent facility for the east of Scotland. A visit would be arranged for next year, there would also be the official opening ceremony late spring/early summer.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND SCRUTINY REPORT, 1 APRIL- 30 SEPTEMBER 2018

Chief Superintendent Lesley Clark informed Members of recent appointments at a senior level in Police Scotland. She also provided an overview of national issues in respect of preparation for Brexit. A workshop was planned for 6 February 2019 for Chairs of local authority scrutiny committees, further details to be provided in due course.

Chief Inspector Steven Duncan then gave the Committee a detailed summary of the performance report. He outlined the performance results for each of the eight categories compared with the same reporting period in the previous year.

Chief Inspector Duncan responded to questions. He stated that the 2% figure for common assaults on licensed premises within East Lothian was lower than other areas in Scotland. He clarified that driving under the influence of drugs was not a particular issue in the county. He responded to queries about shoplifting and whether theft of food items had increased. Regarding Domestic Abuse and the new psychological abuse legislation, effective from

March 2019, he said that by the end of February every officer would be retrained as regards evidence gathering. He clarified that retrospective cases would not be considered. He also responded to points raised about the use of social media in relation to crime prevention/detection.

Turning to the remainder of the report, Chief Inspector Duncan gave an overview of the various Achieving Priorities and Outcomes, drawing particular attention to several aspects including Fearless, Problem Solving Partnerships, Reducing Re-offending (Transform) and the Rural Crime Partnership. In relation to Road Safety, he highlighted the A1 Wind Management Plan. He also referred to Unauthorised Encampments.

Cllr Henderson, referring to the Rural Crime Partnership, asked if Police Scotland could attend a meeting of the Local Access Forum, Chief Inspector Duncan said this would be possible. Responding to Councillor Findlay, he confirmed that the Rural Crime Action Plan would be shared with the Committee. Regarding Community Speed Watch, this had been piloted in Fife and in England. There was now a national position to support this and community officers had been asked to bring this to the attention of community councils and other local groups. Police Scotland would support any groups that wished to support this scheme but he added that a financial commitment was involved.

Cllr Bruce referred to thefts from construction sites asking if there was an issue with sites not taking the necessary security measures. He remarked that perhaps through the planning process some precautions could be put in place. Chief Inspector Duncan indicated that early prevention, from a planning perspective, would be helpful. He gave details of the kind of thefts that occurred. Officers had engaged with and identified all construction sites in the county but ultimately security decisions were for the individual site manager.

Cllr Gilbert asked about timescales for responding to a crime report referring to concerns raised at his surgery. Chief Inspector Duncan advised that it depended on other issues, resources and the nature of the crime. He outlined the process following receipt of a crime report. Responding to questions from Cllr McLeod about Pubwatch, he stated that Police Scotland supported this scheme, but added that participation was on a voluntary basis and could not be compelled. He also responded to questions about test purchasing operations, advising that this was currently under review nationally.

The Convener welcomed the report, particularly the Road Policing Base at Dunbar Police Station, which would be a significant addition to policing the A1.

Councillor Bruce expressed thanks for the very useful visit to the Bilston Glen Control Centre; other Members echoed this. Chief Inspector Duncan indicated there would be another visit scheduled for January 2019 for anyone that had not yet been able to attend.

Councillor Henderson, referring to information contained within these performance reports, stated that this would be useful for all Members; she queried how best to draw this to the attention of those Members not on this Committee. Monica Patterson, Depute Chief Executive, indicated she would take forward how best to disseminate this information.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

7. DEALING WITH ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) advising of the number of antisocial behaviour complaints made to the Council during the reporting period (April to September 2018) and advising of ongoing actions being undertaken by local partner agencies in tackling antisocial behaviour.

Kenny Black, Safer Communities Team Leader, presented the report. He drew specific attention to sections 3.7-3.8 of the report, highlighting the slight increase in antisocial behaviour complaints and the nature of those complaints. There were currently 40 live ASBOs in place in East Lothian. He drew attention to the referrals made to the Resolution Service. He reported that acute problems unique to specific geographical areas were addressed via temporary multi-agency Problem Solving Partnerships (PSPs). There were currently three PSPs in existence; he gave further details of these. He detailed measures in place to reduce antisocial behaviour. He indicated that in early 2019 Police Scotland and the Council would consult publically on the new three year Antisocial Behaviour Strategy.

Mr Black responded to questions. Councillor Bruce, referring to complaints per ward, asked if comparisons for the ward areas by year could be provided; Mr Black confirmed this would be issued. Sharon Saunders, Head of Communities and Partnerships, advised that in future the report format would be different; the data would be provided graphically which would show trends. Councillor Henderson, referring to the impending public consultation, raised issues in relation to wider low-level antisocial behaviour, which could cause upset, querying whether this would be included in the consultation. Mr Black outlined the legislative definition of antisocial behaviour, clarifying that the consultation would cover all aspects of antisocial behaviour. Responding to a query from the Convener, he reported that it took 7-9 days from lodging an antisocial behaviour writ to the hearing date at the Edinburgh Sheriff Court.

The Convener praised the report, which was another good example of partnership working.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

8. ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The work programme for the next meeting was noted; no additional reports were proposed.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Wednesday 29 May 2019.

Signed

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