



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

**WEDNESDAY 29 MAY 2019
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 C McGinn
Councillor K McLeod

Police Scotland

Chief Superintendent J McKenzie
Inspector A Harborow

East and Midlothian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Mr S Gourlay, Area Manager
Mr D Ward, Station Manager

Council Officials Present:

Mrs A Leitch, Chief Executive
Mr A McCrorie, Depute Chief Executive – Resources and People Services
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy
Mr D Oliver, Service Manager – Protective Services
Mr K Black, Manager - Safer Communities Team

Clerk:

Ms F Currie

Apologies:

Councillor F Dugdale

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 12 DECEMBER 2018

The Committee approved the minutes as a true record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

The following matters arising were discussed:

Rural Crime Action Plan – Inspector Andrew Harborow highlighted the Rural Crime Action Plan which had been shared with the Committee prior to the meeting. Chief Superintendent John McKenzie informed members that the Plan had been welcomed by a number of organisations including the National Farmers' Union (NFU). He added that it was a live document which was designed to address trending issues and to provide feedback to the national group.

Inspector Harborow responded to questions on enforcement of fly-tipping offences and poaching.

Derek Oliver, Service Manager – Protective Services, advised members that in relation to fly-tipping the clearance of rubbish from private land was the responsibility of the landowner and on public land it was the responsibility of the Council. However practical arrangements were in place to assist landowners with waste disposal.

The Convener welcomed the Plan as an excellent partnership initiative.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES, LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR EAST LOTHIAN, 1 OCTOBER 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019

Prior to presenting his report Stephen Gourlay, SFRS Area Manager, introduced David Ward, Prevention & Protection Station Manager for East Lothian, and informed the members of the appointment of the new Chief Fire Officer and other changes within the Strategic Management Team.

Mr Gourlay summarised the key points of the performance report. There had been 1,635 incidents in East Lothian during the financial year 2018/19, an increase of 28 compared to the previous year. He drew particular attention to the increase in the number of deliberate fires, noting that East Lothian's were in line with the Scottish average. He also highlighted the number of accidental dwelling fires; 80% of which occurred in single occupancy households and 30% of those involved residents over the age of 65. He drew attention to a number of elements of partnership working and initiatives and events aimed at reducing accidental dwelling fires.

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 and there was little evidence which made detection very difficult. Inspector Harborow advised members that in 2018/19 49 crimes of this nature had been recorded and 10 had been solved.

In relation to queries about training of staff, Mr Gourlay outlined the number of personnel and frequency of training provided to crews in East Lothian. In respect of the number of partner referrals, Mr Gourlay said that he was pleased to see high risk referrals coming forward

through the Contact Centre. He added that training was being given to multi agency partners to encourage further referrals to be put into the system. Responding to questions about the increase in road traffic incidents, he advised that a number of factors may be involved and it was difficult to pinpoint one specific cause.

Chief Superintendent McKenzie confirmed that the number of road casualties in East Lothian and the Borders was an ongoing challenge but that proactive measures were in place to increase the policing presence.

Mr Ward summarised the prevention and protection activities section of the performance report. He highlighted the number of fire safety visits and in particular the level of engagement with care providers over the past six months. In relation to deliberate fires, he advised that officers had targeted areas where spikes activity had been identified and were working with schools and local community groups to reduce the figures in future years.

Mr Ward responded to a question from Councillor McLeod regarding protection of council house stock. He advised that this would usually involve ensuring that all mains wired detectors were in working order and reporting any faults to the Housing Officer.

Mr Oliver agreed to provide further details on the action being taken to protect older council housing stock. In the meantime, he advised members that a new Fire Safety officer had been appointed and would be working with the Corporate Health & Safety Team to maintain the safety of the Council's public buildings.

Angela Leitch, Chief Executive, added that that the Council's priority was the safety of its tenants and following the events at Grenfell Tower, the Community Housing Team was working to ensure that appropriate safety measures were in place, including a revised policy for new tenants.

The Convener welcomed the report, noting that the new training facility was nearing completion, that actions was being taken on the numbers of deliberate fires and that there continued to be an excellent level of partnership working.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

4. SFRS DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-22 CONSULTATION

Mr Gourlay presented the SFRS draft Strategic Plan 2019-22 and advised members that consultation was due to end on 18 July. He said that the draft plan was presented for noting and that further information was available online.

Mr Gourlay responded to questions. He advised that the SFRS transformation agenda was looking at rebalancing the frontline to adapt to the challenges of an increasing population within East Lothian. In relation to support for officers following incidents, he explained that the Chief Fire Officer had recently signed up to a mental health pledge to support staff who were involved in incidents where they may know victims or where the circumstances were particularly difficult. The Service was also looking to train staff in Mental Health First Aid as a supplement to professional mental health support.

Mrs Leitch suggested that outcome 2 in the draft plan offered significant opportunities to build on current levels of partnership working. She referred to discussions already taking

place within existing partnerships on how to best to train, utilise and deploy resources in the most effective way.

Responding to questions on the use of technology, Mr Gourlay indicated that Tablets were now being used on call outs as they were able to provide officers access to a wealth of information about a particular premises and software within appliances was reducing the risk of collisions. However, he acknowledged that keeping up with advances in technology was a challenge.

In response to a question from the Convener, Paolo Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy, confirmed that a summary of the discussion would be prepared and circulated to Members prior to the consultation deadline of 18 July.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the draft plan and provide feedback on the proposals.

5. TACKLING 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 (1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019) 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 3.6-3.9 of the report, highlighting the slight decrease in antisocial behaviour complaints compared with the same period last year and the nature of those complaints. There were currently 48 live ASBOs in place in East Lothian. He drew attention to 5 of these which related to individuals with links to serious organised crime gangs in England. Mr Black detailed some of the range of measures in place to reduce antisocial behaviour and advised members that the new three year Antisocial Behaviour Strategy would go out to public consultation in the summer.

Mr Black responded to questions. In relation to the geographic spread of the live ASBOs he said that they stretched across the county rather than focused in any one area. He outlined the process in place for enforcement of any breaches and agreed to provide the Members with further details of the outcome of referrals to the Mid and East Lothian Resolution Service.

Councillor McLeod said that he had made use of the resolution service for some of his constituency cases and it had worked very well.

Mr Black also responded to questions on the funding of four additional police officers within the county. Chief Superintendent McKenzie said that it was not unusual for local authorities to fund additional officers and their focus would depend on the priorities identified in that area. Inspector Harborow added that the four officers in East Lothian were based in Tranent but had a division-wide remit.

The Convener thanked Mr Black for the report, which was another good example of partnership working, and he noted the positive feedback from Councillor McLeod on the mediation service.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

6. POLICE SCOTLAND SCRUTINY REPORT, 1 APRIL 2018 – 31 MARCH 2019

Chief Superintendent McKenzie informed Members that he was delighted to be the new Lothians and Scottish Borders Divisional Commander. He looked forward to working with local partners and to continuing to tackle priority areas of violent and acquisitive crime and antisocial behaviour. He also affirmed his commitment to supporting the Committee in its scrutiny role. He provided details of personnel changes at Executive level within Police Scotland, referred Members to the Annual Policy Plan which was available online and advised that the annual budget had been agreed. He also drew attention to the overall reduction in budgets at national and local level since 2012. Lastly, he outlined some changes to call assessment and resource deployment which would come into force in East Lothian in early 2020 and he reiterated the importance of partnership working to tackle more complex issues such as antisocial behaviour.

Chief Superintendent McKenzie responded to questions. He agreed to provide further detail on the reduction in specific budgets but indicated that, overall, it equated to almost 18%. In relation to overprovision of alcohol he stated that there was often a link between this and violence and that overprovision was more common in areas of deprivation. He said that Police Scotland supported minimum pricing on alcohol as an important step but it was only one factor and the issue of overprovision also needed to be tackled.

Inspector Harborow then gave the Committee a detailed summary of the performance report which covered the full year 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. He outlined the performance results for each of the eight categories compared with the previous year. He also highlighted some notable successes from the 'Achieving Priorities and Outcomes' section of the report.

Inspector Harborow and Chief Superintendent McKenzie responded to questions on the report and provided further background to some of the statistics. They confirmed that all officers had been trained in relation to the new crime of 'coercive behaviour' and that incident statistics would appear in future performance reports. In relation to rogue traders coming door-to-door and travelling groups they advised that prevention work was underway.

Chief Superintendent McKenzie advised that around 20% of incidents resulted in a crime being recorded and that Police Scotland's remit reached beyond simply tackling crimes. It included the safety of communities and the protection of vulnerable people, such as missing people and those suffering mental health related crises, and partnership working was an important part of managing this remit.

Councillor McLeod praised the report as a very informative and easy read. However, he agreed that additional detail would be welcome.

Councillor Henderson reiterated her request from the previous meeting that these reports be drawn to the attention of other Elected Members. The Committee agreed with this proposal.

In reply to a question from the Convener, Inspector Harborow confirmed that officers could include additional routes within in their road safety policing priorities.

Councillor McGinn welcomed the report and praised the level of support Police Scotland provided to initiatives within his own Ward. He said that East Lothian was a great place to live and a safe place to live and he was personally very grateful for the support he received

in his role as a Councillor. He added that this level of support was all the more remarkable when set against the significant reduction in budgets highlighted by the Chief Superintendent.

The Convener also welcomed the report echoing the comments made by his colleagues. He commended the local Division on its problem-solving partnerships and other initiatives aimed at reducing crime levels within the county.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the report.

7. LOCAL AUTHORITY VIEWS ON THE YEAR IN POLICING 2018/19

A report was submitted by the Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services) providing the opportunity for the Committee to respond to the Scottish Police Authority annual review of policing 2018/19.

Mr Vestri presented the report inviting Members to consider responses to questions 5, 6 and 8 of the questionnaire. He provided some suggested responses and examples of good practice for each, drawn from some of the discussions earlier in the meeting:

Q5 –Partnership Against Rural Crime; Problem-solving Partnerships re ASBOs

Q6 – response times to emergency calls; parking at schools; and lack of funding for CCTV

Q8 – Performance Report & information provided to the Committee; improve links between the Committee and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) by encouraging occasional attendance from SPA representative?

The Convener asked Members to indicate if there were any of the proposed responses which they would like to see revised and if they had additional comments or examples to put forward.

Councillor McLeod said that he was not uncomfortable with any of the proposed answers but that he would offer further comments to Mr Vestri following the meeting.

Councillor Gilbert suggested that speeding by included in the response to question 6. Councillor Henderson concurred but suggested that it be widened to include road safety more generally. Mr Vestri indicated that this could be included as one issue: speeding/road safety/parking & road congestion near schools.

Inspector Harborow asked where this information had come from and all three Councillors indicated that these issues were a regular feature of discussions at Parent Council meetings within the Wards.

Mr Oliver suggested that for the response to question 5 should include: strong collaborative ethos within the Local Authority and the Police; engage and embrace innovative solutions.

Councillor Findlay welcomed the suggestion of a representative from the SPA attending Committee meetings. This was also supported by the other Members.

Councillor McGinn suggested an addition to Mr Oliver's proposed comments to include 'participation at SAG of great benefit'.

Mrs Leitch highlighted the redevelopment of the old court building for use by Police Scotland and as part of a collaborative hub as an example of maximising resources.

In relation to examples of good practice for question 7, the Convener said that at a recent CoSLA meeting it was noted that East Lothian were ahead of the curve in terms of co-location. The Convener then thanked everyone for their contributions and Mr Vestri agreed to include this information in the completed questionnaire.

Decision

The Committee agreed the proposed responses to the questions submitted by the Scottish Police Authority on policing in 2018/19.

8. DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The draft work programme for 2019/20 was approved; no additional reports were proposed.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 14 November 2019.

Signed

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