



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

**TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2022
VIA DIGITAL MEETINGS FACILITY**

Committee Members Present:

Councillor N Hampshire (Convener)
Councillor J McMillan (Depute Convener)
Councillor S Akhtar
Councillor L Allan
Councillor C McGinn
Councillor G McGuire
Councillor L Menzies
Councillor T Trotter

Police Scotland

Local Area Commander J O'Connor
Superintendent A Clinkscales

East and Midlothian Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Ms H Sangster, Area Commander
Mr D Girrity, Group Commander

Other Councillors Present

Councillor R Bennett
Councillor C McFarlane

Council Officials Present:

Mr D Proudfoot, Executive Director for Place
Ms S Saunders, Head of Communities
Mr P Vestri, Service Manager – Corporate Policy and Improvement
Mr C Grilli, Service Manager – Legal and Procurement
Ms L Crothers, Service Manager – Protective Services
Mr K Black, Safer Communities Team Leader
Ms L Gillingwater, Team Manager – Democratic and Licensing
Ms B Crichton, Committees Officer

Clerk:

Ms S Birrell

Apologies:

None

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. POLICE SCOTLAND SCRUTINY REPORT – THE LOTHIAN AND SCOTTISH BORDERS – Q3 AND Q4 2021/22

Police Scotland had submitted a scrutiny report to update members on their work during Quarters 3 and 4, 2021/22.

Local Area Commander Jocelyn O'Connor, Police Scotland, spoke in detail to the report, highlighting the local policing priorities of:

- i) Protecting the most vulnerable people;
- ii) Reducing violence & anti-social behaviour;
- iii) Reducing acquisitive crime;
- iv) Improving Road Safety; and
- v) Tackling serious and organised crime,

and providing a thorough outline of the report's contents.

In response to three questions from Councillor Trotter, Commander O'Connor and Supt Clinkscales confirmed replacements to the local team, advising that it was difficult to quantify the number of officers on duty at any one time, partly due to the number of court appearances that officers were regularly called to attend, most of which would not last for a full shift. A further breakdown on what constituted a 'youth' anti-social behaviour incident would be requested from Police Scotland's analyst.

In response to a question from Councillor Akhtar, Commander O'Connor advised that Police Scotland would support national campaigns around domestic abuse reporting, provide visibility at local events, and in the future hoped to educate at secondary school level as to what constituted acceptable behaviour in a relationship, working to change archaic attitudes around domestic abuse.

In response to three questions from Councillor McMillan, Commander O'Connor confirmed that the PSYV programme would restart in the autumn, with a small group of selected young people from across East Lothian. Officers would prioritise attendance at Community Area Partnership meetings, but Commander O'Connor agreed to send the report under discussion to all Community Councils for their information. Far from receiving repeat complaints from a small number of individuals, Commander O'Connor indicated that under-reporting was more of an issue, particularly when incidents were posted multiple times on social media but not brought to the attention of the Police.

In response to two questions from Councillor Menzies, Commander O'Connor and Supt Clinkscales agreed to speak further with her regarding gathering information on encouraging the reporting of sexual crimes from survivor groups, and that collaboration with LRT buses to minimise anti-social behaviour was a possibility during the summer months.

In response to three questions from Councillor McGinn, Commander O'Connor and Supt Clinkscales agreed that arrangements allowing officers to retire after 25 years service had impacted the local team but that senior teams were more likely to be affected. The Disclosure Scheme for Domestic Abuse Scotland, which informed individuals of the risk of domestic violence in existing or new relationships was difficult to quantify in terms of success, but children involved in these relationships would be carefully monitored. It was confirmed that the service was open to any member of the public, including family/friends of a person suspected of being at risk.

In response to two questions from Councillor Allan, Commander O'Connor explained that roads policing was divided between policing of the A1 and fast county roads; and quieter roads in and around towns and villages, with a focus on those around schools. In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Menzies, she stressed that it would not be possible for Police Scotland to enforce the 20 mph limits in East Lothian towns and villages at this time.

In response to three questions from the Convener, Commander O'Connor and Supt Clinkscales agreed to bring information on 999 and 101 call response times to a future meeting, and confirmed that 999 calls were usually answered within the target time of 15 seconds. Removing bus passes from individuals suspected of travelling in order to participate in anti-social behaviour was rejected as contravening the human rights of young people. After a further suggestion from Councillor Menzies, Supt Clinkscales agreed to provide the services of a liaison officer to discuss potential fly-tipping issues with travelling communities in the East Lothian area.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the Scrutiny Report.

2. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE STRATEGIC PLAN, 2022-2025 (VERBAL UPDATE)

Hilary Sangster, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Area Commander, gave a verbal update on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan, 2022-2025.

She highlighted that the Strategic Plan, which set out the vision and priorities for the service, was out for consultation until 9 July 2022, and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would welcome feedback, particularly on the use of clear language within the plan.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the verbal report.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE, LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR EAST LOTHIAN, Q1 AND Q2 2021/22

David Girrity, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Group Commander, presented a report on the performance of the Fire and Rescue Service in East Lothian over Quarters 1 and 2 of 2021/22. He spoke in detail to the report, highlighting the six key Fire & Rescue indicators of:

- i) All accidental fires;
- ii) All fire casualties (fatal and non-fatal);
- iii) All deliberate fires excluding dwellings;
- iv) Special Service: Road Traffic Collisions;
- v) Special Service Casualties: all; and
- vi) False Alarms: Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals,

and providing a thorough outline of these parts of the report.

In response to a question from the Convener, it was confirmed that it was not possible to separate A1 trunk road incidents from others in the East Lothian area.

David Girrity continued his report, drawing the Committee's attention to Prevention and Protection Activities carried out by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in East Lothian, including Fire Safety Enforcement Audits, Home Fire Safety Visits and Partnership Working. He gave background information concerning the new plans around unwanted Fire Alarm Signals, which would come into force in April 2023, whereby an automatic fire alarm would be challenged by Fire & Rescue, and teams would only be mobilised after confirmation was received. This change would not apply to any buildings with sleeping facilities, such as hospitals and care homes, and it was hoped would save a significant amount of resources mobilised for unwanted and unnecessary signals.

In response to a question from Councillor Menzies, the Convener confirmed that East Lothian Council ran a care and repair service through East Lothian's Housing Association, and this team was able to install required fire safety equipment, which had been described as: a smoke detector in every hallway and the main living area, usually a living room, all of which should be networked to each other either by hardwiring or Bluetooth/battery.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the contents of the performance report.

4. TACKING ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The Executive Director for Place had submitted a report to advise the Committee on the number, type and geographical breakdown of antisocial behaviour complaints received by East Lothian Council during the reporting period (1 October 2021 to 31 March 2022) and to advise on actions taken in response to same.

Kenny Black, Team Manager - Safer Communities Team, spoke to the report in detail, highlighting the overall number of Antisocial Behaviour Complaints, the number of repeat complaints, the overall downward trend in the number of complaints received since 2012, themes for complaints (noise, youth, drug misuse, and others including shouting, swearing and neighbour disputes), a breakdown of complaints by place, comparisons to the equivalent reporting period in 2020/21, the work of Problem Solving Partnerships, that there were 8 live Antisocial Behaviour Orders in East Lothian and 67 adult and child cases receiving multi-agency monitoring, the planned refresh of the Antisocial Behaviour Strategy, that 31 parental advisory letters had been sent within the reporting period, the work of the Night Time Noise Service including the planned purchase of a noise app for individuals to record noise levels, and the work of the Community Warden Team.

In response to a question from Councillor McGinn, Mr Black confirmed that the primary use for the noise app would be measuring and recording antisocial noise.

In response to a question from Councillor McMillan, Mr Black advised that there was flexibility built into local Community Warden Teams, who could be sent to a particular area if required during busy periods.

Councillor Akhtar praised the work of early intervention, diversionary and prevention projects via joint working with outside agencies.

The Convener thanked Mr Black for his report and the work of the Antisocial Behaviour Team, highlighting that the majority of young people in East Lothian were well behaved, and only a few individuals required intervention from the unit.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the terms of the report.

5. PFCSSC DRAFT ANNUAL WORK PROGRAMME

A draft annual work programme was presented to Committee.

Decision

The Committee agreed to note the programme.

Signed

Councillor Norman Hampshire
Convener of the Police, Fire and Community Safety Scrutiny Committee