

Minute of Meeting

Police and Fire and Rescue Board
Thursday 8 May 2025
Item No 4.1



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 18 November 2024	11.00am	Council Chambers/Hybrid

Present:

Councillor McKenzie (Chair)
Councillor Alexander (virtual)
Councillor McEwan
Councillor Smaill (virtual)

In Attendance:

Midlothian Council	Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
	Iina Jaara, Democratic Services Team Leader
	Nicola Thorburn, Democratic Services Officer
Police Scotland	Greg Banks, Superintendent
	Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	David Girrity, Group Commander
	Marc Pincombe, Area Commander

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Board, advising that the meeting was open to the public and would be webcast live.

Apologies were received from Councillor Curran, David Morrison, Fire Scotland and Mark Landels, Fire Scotland.

2. Order of Business

The order of business was as set out in the agenda previously circulated.

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were intimated at this stage of the proceedings.

4. Minute of Previous Meeting

4.1 The Minute of the Previous Meeting

The minute of the meeting on the 26th of August 2024 was submitted for approval. The Chief Officer Place requested an amendment to the minute in section 4.5, paragraph 3, which should state that if the fixed penalty goes to court this would be in the public domain.

The Chair also noted an incorrect abbreviation within section 5.1 & 5.2 and asked for this to be updated to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR).

Democratic Services to amend the minute of 26 August 2024 accordingly.

Following these amendments, the minute was moved as the correct record by Councillor McEwan and seconded by Councillor Smail.

4.2 Action Log

Item 1 – The Chief Inspector, Police Scotland confirmed that the information was sent to Elected Members on 12 November 2024 and the item is therefore recommended for closure.

Item 2 – The Area Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service confirmed that the information was sent to Elected Members on 13 November 2024 and the item is therefore recommended for closure.

Item 3 – The Chief Officer Place confirmed that, as per the amendment to the previous minute noted above, if a person is in receipt of Fixed Penalty Notice this would not be in the public domain. It would only be in the public domain if it is contested in court and therefore it would appear on the court roll. The item was recommended for closure.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Police Scotland Q2 Performance Report 2024/25	Chief Inspector Police Scotland
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
The Chief Inspector Police Scotland presented the Quarter 2 Police Scotland Performance Report for 2024/2025 and highlighted the salient points within.		

The Chair thanked the Chief Inspector Police Scotland and opened the item for questions.

Following discussion regarding speed gun checks on rural roads, the Chief Inspector Police Scotland confirmed that there will be a continued focus on road safety in December 2024 which includes driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

The Chief Inspector Police Scotland also confirmed that data on blue light incidents at school and attempted residential and non-residential break-ins can be included in future reports.

The Board asked Police Scotland to provide clarity on the law regarding the use of Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) in private properties. The Chief Inspector Police Scotland advised that area CCTV should be kept within a person's property boundary and noted that the Community Police Teams can assist in resolving disputes with neighbours.

The Board noted that parking continues to be an issue at Gladhouse Reservoir, which has continued since Covid. The Chief Inspector Police Scotland added that there has been good engagement with the local community recently and nothing had been highlighted, however Midlothian Community Action Team (MCAT) resources are being deployed in this area so this can be monitored.

The Chair referred to the Sexual Crimes data on page 12 of the Police Scotland report and asked whether historical cases were recorded at the date it was reported. The Superintendent confirmed that historical cases are recorded in the current figures and that while this may skew the data, it is encouraging that people feel supported to come forward. The Board asked Police Scotland if Midlothian Council was engaging and providing the support needed. The Superintendent confirmed that there is good engagement with Midlothian Council, services and other external agencies, which they are grateful for.

Following on from the update advising the 'THAT GUY' campaign will now include a podcast series, the Chair offered support with promoting the campaign within Education, so this message can be reinforced in schools, and that this would also apply for the Project Fearless campaign in relation to Sextortion.

The Chair asked for an update on Bonfire Night. The Chief Inspector Police Scotland advised that a formal report would be presented at the next meeting, but noted that there were 14 incidents between 1-14 November, including one adult male charged for using fireworks while under the influence of alcohol. The Chief Inspector Police Scotland added that the Mayfield Fireworks annual event, organised by Robert Hogg and Mayfield & Easthouses Community Council, was a safe and successful event and thanked the organisers. The Superintendent added thanks to Elected Members for their support and guidance during the community engagement in the run up to Bonfire Night and that work has already started for 2025.

The Group Commander, Fire Scotland added that their formal report will be submitted as part of the Quarter 3 Performance Report but highlighted that there were 13 secondary fires between 31 of October and 8 of November. Operation

Moonbeam had been effective, and Midlothian was quiet. The Group Commander, Fire Scotland also reported that there were no incidents of physical or verbal abuse to fire crews this year. The Board noted the positive news, and the Chair expressed their thanks on behalf of Midlothian Council to the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Police Scotland and the community groups.

The Chief Officer Place reported that the amnesty on furniture and large goods was well received in the community and bookings were full. The Board recognised that this is one of the most polluting nights of the year due to chemicals from fireworks and various items being burned in unauthorised bonfires.

The Board highlighted the effect of fireworks on animals and pets, and agreed it is a matter of respect and civility to inform neighbours if there are plans to set off fireworks in gardens. The Chief Officer Place added that animal welfare is a concern and hopes that the promotion of safe public events will reduce the number of private displays. The Chief Officer Place also noted the increase in events where fireworks are displayed, such as Hogmanay and Diwali although events where there is no prior warning that appear to have the greatest impact.

Decision

The Board noted the update.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Q2 Performance Report 2024/25	Group Commander, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The Area Commander explained that David Girrity as had taken over from Mark Landells as Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and would be presenting the report.</p> <p>The Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) introduced the report which provides information on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's prevention, protection and operational response activities within Midlothian for Quarter 2 of 2024-25 (1 July 2024 – 30 September 2024) and highlighted the salient points.</p> <p>The Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) provided an overview of the total number of incidents in Midlothian. Quarter 2 of 2024/25 saw an overall reduction of 11% in incidents in the Midlothian compared to last year's Quarter 2 total. The Group Commander also provided a brief update on each of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) as detailed in the report.</p> <p>The Board thanked the Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) for the report and welcomed them to the meeting. The Board asked for</p>		

details on the outcome of the water incidents that were reported as part of Action Log Item 2. The Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) confirmed that of the 7 water incidents reported, 4 resulted in casualties and there were 0 fatalities.

In responding to a question regarding a new contract with Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Motorola, the Area Commander advised that these funds would be used for internal communications, equipping firefighters with handheld radios and improving the operation centres across Scotland.

In terms of high risk and vulnerable persons in Midlothian, the Chair asked the Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) if they were working with Midlothian Council and external agencies on referrals and lists. The Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) confirmed that there is a good working partnership between the services, but work is ongoing to improve this further.

The Board asked if a Scotland-wide podcast would be possible, including live examples on how to prevent further fires. The Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) advised that in a bid to enhance awareness, social media is being used to support direct engagement. Their webpage includes extensive information, and the Group Commander Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) will take the podcast idea back to the Communication Team.

Decision

The Board noted the update.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Protective Services Quarter 2 2024/25 Report	Chief Officer Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Place introduced the Protective Services Quarter 2 report for 2024/25 and provided an update on the Protective Services functions, highlighting the main sections contained within the report.

The Chief Officer Place advised that the report in relation to Bonfire Night will be brought to the next meeting but added that the work done in advance with retailers was well received and that there is no intelligence to suggest that illegal fireworks are being offered in Midlothian.

The Board noted an update in the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for Section 50 Parked on Pavement and asked if communities are embracing this. The Board also added that pavement parking continues to be an issue in Pathhead due to some homeowners owning the pavement. The Chief Office Place confirmed that there are currently no exceptions and the ban on pavement parking covers all of Midlothian. The Chief Office Place added that a report may go to Council in the future to consider exemptions.

The Board asked if there had been a reduction in speeding convictions in Midlothian. The Chief Inspector Police Scotland replied that they will review the statistics and advise the Board after the meeting.

The Chair thanked Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, the Chief Officer Place and colleagues in Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability for their efforts and teamwork to ensure a safe and successful November.

Decision

The Board noted the contents of the report.

6. Private Reports

No private items for discussion

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 4 February 2025 at 14.00.

The meeting terminated at 12.31.