

Minute of Meeting

Police and Fire and Rescue Board
Monday 27 May 2024
Item No 4.1



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 29 January 2024	2.00pm	Council Chambers/Hybrid

Present:

Councillor McKenzie (Chair)
Councillor Alexander
Councillor Curran (Attended virtually)
Councillor McEwan
Councillor Smail

In Attendance:

Midlothian Council	Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
	Lucy Roddie, Democratic Services Officer
	Hannah Forbes, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Police Scotland	Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector
	Catriona Paton, Chief Superintendent
	Cheryl Blanch, Inspector
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Mark Landels, Group Commander
	Hilary Sangster, Area Commander
	David Morrison, Station Commander

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair, Councillor McKenzie, 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.

2. Order of Business

The order of business was as set out in the agenda previously circulated. As per Standing Order 7.8, notices of meetings, which specifically includes the reports and papers to be considered, are to be published not less than 3 working days before the meeting. Item 5.1 was issued on Wednesday 24 January, and therefore did not meet the test. The Standing Orders state that the Chair has the final decision as to whether the Item should be allowed as urgent business. The Chair agreed to accept Item 5.1 as urgent business.

3. Declarations of interest

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

4. Minute of Previous Meeting

The Minute of the Meeting held on 15 November 2023 was submitted and approved as a correct record.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Police Scotland Midlothian Area Command – Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Quarter 3 2023/24	Police Scotland
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector, introduced the Police Scotland Midlothian Area Command – Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel Quarter 3 2023/24 report and highlighted the salient points.		
Jim Robertson responded to comments and questioned from Elected Members. Jim Robertson confirmed he would investigate complaints in relation to speeding lorries along Polton Road West. It was noted that Officers work within school settings to mitigate hate crime in schools, with all reports investigated fully. Jim Robertson highlighted the success of the East Fraud Hub in identifying persons responsible for carrying out fraud and cyber crime, and offered to bring back a report in Quarter 4. It was noted that Police Scotland work in partnership with CLLE and other youth groups to reach and engage with these populations.		
In relation to ensuring pedestrians are visible, Jim Robertson offered to consider preventative measures and suggested raising via social media. It was noted that attendance at School had dropped, and bullying incidents were escalating. In relation to violence within schools, Jim Robertson offered to cascade a paper to the Committee. Regarding vandalism of bus shelters, Jim Robertson reported that		

Police Scotland works in partnership with the Council and commented that targeted patrols are deployed to deter this behaviour. Jim Robertson agreed to investigate the possibility of displaying posters within bus shelters enabling members of the public to report offences. Catriona Paton acknowledged the importance of police presence as a deterrent and would consider opportunities to increase visibility.

Some discussion took place in relation to police attendance at community council meetings. Jim Robertson confirmed that an officer should be in attendance quarterly. Catriona Paton commented that, given the number of meetings, it would not always be possible for an officer to attend in person, but in the absence of an officer, a written report would be submitted. Catriona Paton agreed to ensure these expectations were communicated to community councils. It was suggested that thematic reports would be more useful as opposed to a focus on crime data.

Jim Robertson confirmed that corrective measures in relation to safety checks consisted of corrective advice instead of fixed penalty notices. Jim Robertson confirmed that Straiton Park & Ride would be included in the weekend deployment plan going forward to provide police presence. Other areas of concern can be added when required.

Post-meeting, Jim Robertson provided the following information:

- 1) Police Attendance at Community Council Meetings: APS Howarth is co-ordinating with Community Policing Officers to ensure attendance at these meetings on the agreed quarterly pattern. Both Jim Robertson and Community Policing Inspector David Rourke attended the last AGM (a few months ago) of the Federation of Midlothian Community Councils and clearly explained the rationale for this quarterly attendance. During this meeting the Federation confirmed that they understood both the rationale and timing of this change. We have not received any communications from the CC's indicating otherwise. There is potentially an issue with CC's accessing their mailboxes (to which our officers submit their monthly updates). Furthermore, as requested, APS Howarth has provided clear instruction to our Community Officers attending CC meetings that the intention should be a conversational approach rather than reading out their reports verbatim.
- 2) Violence in Schools Data – as requested, Jim Robertson provided the report which was circulated to Committee members on 14 February 2024.

Decision

The Board noted the contents of the report.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Quarter 3 ML Performance Report	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
Hilary Sangster, Area Commander, introduced the report. The report provides information on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's prevention, protection and operational response activities within Midlothian for Quarter 3 of 2022-23 (1 October 2023 – 31 December 2023) including information on the year-to-date figures. Mark Landels highlighted the salient points. David Morrison highlighted the		

success of bonfire night due to partnership working and thorough planning. David Morrison reported that partners can make referrals for home fire safety visits via the Fire Scotland online portal. Mark Landels agreed to provide an update at the next meeting regarding the Tomorrow's Driver programme.

The Chair expressed congratulations to Commander David Gibson who had recently been awarded the Kings Fire Service medal.

Some discussion took place regarding fireworks dispersal zones and Police Scotland/SFRS agreed that no fireworks dispersal zones were warranted within Midlothian. Some discussion took place regarding chip pan fires and SFRS colleagues noted that there had been a reduction in incidents. Some discussion took place around faulty alarm systems with SFRS colleagues reporting that SFRS cannot impose a ban of certain alarm systems. SFRS engage with responsible persons where a trend is noticed, with corrective action being taken where possible.

Decision

The Board noted the update.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Protective Services Quarter 3 Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Place
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The Chief Officer Place introduced the Protective Services Quarter 3 report and provided an update on the Protective Services functions which overlapped activities carried out by the Police and Fire and Rescue Services, highlighting the work which had been undertaken during the course of Quarter 3.</p> <p>The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and opened it up to questions.</p> <p>Some discussion took place regarding the planned introduction of disposable vape legislation. The Chief Officer Place advised on the considerable resource commitment which will be required from the Council to enforce the legislation, once it is introduced. The Chief Officer Place provided an update on civil contingency and reported that plans are reviewed regularly and proactive measures taken.</p>		
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 would be held on Monday 22 April 2024 at 11.00am.

The meeting terminated at 15:35 pm.