

Minute of Meeting

Police and Fire and Rescue Board
Monday 18 November 2024
Item No 4.1



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 26 August 2024	11.00am	Council Chambers/Hybrid

Present:

Councillor McKenzie (Chair)
Councillor Alexander
Councillor Curran
Councillor McEwan
Councillor Small

In Attendance:

Midlothian Council	Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
	Janet Ritchie Democratic Services Officer
	Hannah Forbes, Assistant Democratic Services Officer
Police Scotland	Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector
	Greg Banks, Superintendent
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service	Mark Landels, Group Commander
	Elliot Whitson, Station Commander for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness for Midlothian, East Lothian and Scottish Borders

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.

Apologies were intimated on behalf of the local Senior Officer, Marc Pincombe, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

2. Order of Business

The order of business was amended with two reports previously included being removed and the agenda was re-issued as detailed below.

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 Meeting held on 27 May 2024 was submitted and moved as a correct record by Councillor Smail, seconded by Councillor McEwan.

Councillor Smail in moving the minutes, highlighted an action on the Minutes with regards to the number of drugs taken off the market in the last 12 months. The Chief Inspector advised that they did not have those figures with them today but would pull the stats regarding this and send on to Members.

- 4.2 The Action Log was noted.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1 & 5.2	Police Scotland Q4 Performance Report 2023/24 and Police Scotland Q1 Performance Report 2024/25	Jim Robertson
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector advised that the Q4 Performance Report had been submitted for information and that prior to presenting the Q1 Performance Report would pass over to the Chief Superintendent who was also in attendance at the meeting. Chief Superintendent Greg provided an update on the appointment of Divisional Commander and expressed thanks to Catriona Paton as Divisional Commander for 2½ years and looked forward to working with the Council.</p> <p>The Chief Inspector presented the Q1 Police Report for Midlothian and highlighted the changes to the crime categories agreed by the Scottish Crime Recording Board to improve consistency in reporting and as a result Police Scotland made changes as recommended. The Chief Inspector advised that they will now be reporting on 8 groups instead of 7 groups and that the that stats will be reported over a 5-year</p>		

average, but today's report was only on the last year and highlighted the salient points within the report.

The Chair thanked the Chief Inspector and opened it up to questions.

In responding to comments, the Chief Inspector confirmed that he would add St. Mary's Primary School to the patrol matrix and passing attention will take place at the start and end of the schools day, the Chief Inspector also provided an update on the well-established MCAT operation that targeted motorcycles and anti-social behaviour and the success of this and confirmed that for Bonfire night there was an operation called Moonbeam and local plans are in place to support the fire rescue service as well as providing patrols in Midlothian, it was also highlighted that there had been no significant reports for last year and it was anticipated it would be the same this year.

Further comments were made on the very good report and the positive trends in Midlothian over the last few years and a question was raised on the number of crimes per 10,000 and how this relates to Midlothian compared to the rest of Scotland, in responding the Chief Inspector advised that as various agencies use various reporting would take this offline and report back on the statistics. Also raised was the continued vandalism on the bus shelter at King's Park and both the Chief Inspector and Chief Officer would investigate this further.

In responding to various questions and comments the Chief Inspector provided an update on manned Police Stations, crimes related to drug abuse or alcohol, crimes in relation to school violence and XL bullies. With regards to violence and schools, it was confirmed that this had been reported previously and that a re-run of this detail would be submitted again to Elected Members. The Chief Inspector also advised that any concerns regarding XL bullies should be reported to dog wardens or RSCP and all these XL bullies should be registered and that the police are working with dog wardens regarding this. The Chief Officer also confirmed that there was ongoing liaison with the police and dog wardens to ensure the appropriate response is taken in terms of safety of colleagues and the community.

Councillors also queried when investigating officers were leave how were incidents managed efficiently; electric scooters and the legislation; road safety and restricted parking at schools. The Chief Inspector advised that with regards to incidents every victim will be given a crime reference number, and any policer officer can provide an update or any officer's line manager can provide an update even if they do not have a crime reference number this can still be checked on the system. With regards to electric scooters, it was confirmed that any electric scooter on the road must have a license, tax and must wear a helmet and provided an update on the work they are doing to identify individuals not complying to this. The Chief Inspector also advised on the use of AMPR and that various departments within Police Scotland use this daily and it was a very handy investigative tool if the cameras are there. The Chief Officer advised that with regards to AMPR there is a future paper coming to council on the role of our CCTV and also provided an update on the restrictions on parking around schools and that it is very much site specific and highlighted the issues around the drop off and pick up times and that a further report could be brought back on the work that has been done and what is being proposed in going forward.

In response to a further comment with regards to AMPR, the Chief Officer noted the comments, and the Chief Superintendent advised it is not simply a reactive tool it is used in multiple policing investigations on a regular basis and was very much a proactive tool.

The Chief Inspector in responding to further comments provided an update on how drugs are brought into the country and how this is addressed, rural roads and speeding and advised that this initiative was predominantly MCAT officers supported by community officers and with regards A6904 actions will be taken into the next forthcoming quarter, the Chief Officer also confirmed that there is a second phase of speed limit work which will be brought back to Council looking at whether these are maintained or reduced. Further comments were made with regards to signage at the Rosslynlee junction and it was noted and would be addressed in discussion with the Council. It was also confirmed that no objections had been received in connection to reduction in speed limits.

With regards to voluntary redundancy the Chief Inspector confirmed he would provide the figures on numbers but reassured the committee that this was open to police staff and not applicable to police officers and there had been no reduction in police officers in Midlothian. In responding to further comments on this the Chief Superintendent provided a further clarification and an update on the ongoing review that is taking place.

The Chief Inspector in responding to a comment regarding a police helicopter being used to retrieve a stray dog, confirmed that the dog was found and was not an XL bully and that the helicopter was not drawn in to look for a dog but was in the area therefore used to see if the dog could be spotted.

The Chief Inspector provided an update on Travellers and the travellers liaison officers and the good engagement they have with the travellers daily, it was also noted that there is a statutory limit on how long they can remain in one place which they sometimes take to the limit before moving on. It was also highlighted that there is no designated area for travellers in Midlothian. The Chief Office advised that they do have an identified site for travellers which is in disrepair due to vandalism and that discussions are taking place with East Lothian on how to move forward with this.

Decision

The Board noted the update.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Q1 Performance Report 2023/24	Mark Landels

Outline of report and summary of discussion

Mark Landels, Group Commander introduced the report advising that this report was in a new format and would welcome any feedback on this format. The report provides information on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's prevention, protection, and operational response activities within Midlothian for Quarter 1 of 2024-25 (1 April – 30 June 2024) highlighting the salient points.

The Group Commander during his presentation introduced Elliot Whitson, Station Commander for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness for Midlothian who provided details on Section 10 Prevention and Protection & Station Activities within Midlothian highlighting the salient points.

The Chair thanked the Fire and Rescue Service for the report commenting positively on the new format and opened it up to questions.

In responding to a question raised by the Chair with regards to non-domestic fires being only fires and not including dangerous chemicals the Group Commander confirmed that anything to do with dangerous chemicals would be covered under Special Services. The Chair then enquired as to how the Fire Service works collaboratively with other services and it was confirmed that the request would normally be made to the control room when a risk has been identified and it is treated as an emergency when they are required to attend. The Superintendent, Police Scotland also confirmed that there was clear communication and an exceptionally good efficient working partnership between the services.

In responding to a question regarding fire prevention relating to license premises, the Station Commander advised that there is a team of fire safety officers and explained the process of inspections and audits which are carried out and that an enforcement officer will attend if there has been a fire a post audit will also be carried out. It was further confirmed that they work with the duty holders to ensure they are compliant with the legislation and with regards to equipment this depends on the premises and that the Framework documents are all set out is set out by the Scottish Government. It was further confirmed that the premises conduct their own risk assessment.

The Group Commander in responding to a question regarding the home fire safety visits and the change in the format, provided an explanation how the targets are set by individual fire stations and the National targets and how this is managed if targets are not met. The Group Commander noted the comments made with regards to the targets and how these are met and will discuss and take into consideration for the next report.

Regarding a question raised with regards to Bonfire Nigh, it was confirmed that the waste amnesty would continue this year, and bonfires would be monitored and any concerns raised with the Police ahead of bonfire night. It was also noted that incidents last year were extremely low in the Midlothian area and positive comments were made on the partnership working and how it was managed by all concerned.

Comments were raised with regards to batteries and some of these coming from outside countries which may not be up to the required standards and if there was any control on this. The Group Commander confirmed that unfortunately they have no control on this and highlighted that there had been several serious domestic fires due to batteries being charged in the home and advised that they do provide home fire safety guidelines and continue to raise awareness on the dangers of goods from other countries which may not be up to British Standards.

A question was raised with regards to water safety and the incidents that occurred, and the Group Commander confirmed he did not have a note of all incidents, but this can be looked at and brought back to the next meeting. The Station

Commander advised that he was not aware of any incidents at Gladhouse Reservoir but that this will be raised at Penland Hills Safety Group which covers all the Reservoirs. The Chief Inspector advised that the Police were aware of one incident, but it was a medical incident, a cold-water shock and signage will be put up with regards to the dangers of cold-water shock and a Defibrillator Station.

The Chair thanks the Fire and Rescue Service for the report and the Group Commander excused himself from the meeting due to another commitment.

Decision

The Board noted the update, the Group Commander to come back to the next Police Fire and Rescue Board with a note of all incidents in relation to water incidents.

Action

Mark Landels, Group Commander

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.4	Protective Services Quarter 1 2024/25 Report	The Chief Officer Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Place introduced the Protective Services Quarter 1 report for 2024/25 and provided an update on the Protective Services functions which overlapped activities conducted by the Police and Fire and Rescue Services, highlighting the work which had been undertaken during Quarter 1.

Comments were raised with regards to Liquor license and that the majority of these were renewals. The Chief Officer also explained the different legislation for different notices and the reasons why some of this is not in the public interest to issue and the reasons why this information would not be disclosed. It was also highlighted that there is a register of improvement notices which is in the public domain but with regards to health and safety issues relating to employees and workplace enforcement this would not be published.

The Chief Officer in responding to a question with regards to fly-tipping and fixed penalty notices being public, advised that he would check on the fixed penalty notice route and report back, he further advised that if the fixed penalty goes to court this would not be in the public domain.

In responding to a question regarding building standards and waste disposal advised that this would not go through building standards process but with regards size of the development this would come through planning and the waste would all be managed by the developer or landowner.

Clarification was requested on a license being granted and a permit being granted and the engagement in the consultation process when a permit is granted under delegated powers. The Chief Officer advised that a license under civic government act would be subject to the procedures and protocols of the General Purposes committee and in terms of the alcohol and liquor licenses these would be under the

procedures and protocols of the Licensing Board. The Chief Officer then provided an explanation on the number of different permits and the various routes would be dependent on the type of permit and some delegated to the Officer to undertake, however there may still be further partners involved. The Councillor further advised this was relating to a situation where a permit has been granted to an unlicensed family entertainment centre where the market traders have a license to trade why does it not need a license. The Chief Officer in responding provided a brief explanation on how this may have happened but as planning enforcement is involved further discussion must take place offline.

The Chair thanked everyone for their time and the meeting closed.

Decision

The Board noted the update, the Chief Officer to report back to on the fixed penalty notice route.

Action

Chief Officer, Place

6. Private Reports

No private items for discussion

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 18 November 2024 at 11.00am.

The meeting terminated at 13.00 pm