

Minute of Meeting



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
9 November 2020	11.05 am	Virtual Meeting by MS Teams

Present:

Councillor Curran (Chair up to and including Item 5.2)	Councillor Muirhead
Councillor Munro	Councillor Parry
Councillor Smail	

In attendance:

Midlothian Council Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place	Verona MacDonald, Democratic Services Team Leader
Alan Turpie, Legal Services Manager (for Item 5.3)	
Police Scotland Chief Superintendent John McKenzie	Chief Inspector Arron Clinkscales
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Stephen Gourlay, Area Commander	Andy Anderson, Group Commander
Midlothian Taxi and Private Hire representative Angela Reid (for Item 5.3)	

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apology

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Councillor McCall.

2. Order of Business

The Chair advised the order of business was as per the agenda circulated. He further drew Members attention to the separate circulation of the Quarter 4 2019-20 report from the Police.

3. Declarations of interest

The Chair intimated his intention to declare an interest in Item 5.3 and advised this was due to his business interest in the taxi and private hire trade.

4. Minute of Previous Meeting

The Minute of Meeting of 31 August 2020 was unanimously approved and the Chair was authorised to sign it as a correct record.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1.	Fire and Rescue Service – Scrutiny Report Quarter 2 2020 - 2021	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
Stephen Gourlay by way of an update advised of a few matters worthy of noting:-		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Bonfire night – relatively event free but there had been an attack on a fire crew on 4 November in Danderhall. He praised the quick response from the Police; (ii) Sale of fireworks – would like to see tighter legislation regarding the sale of fireworks to the public; (iii) Covid-19 pandemic – remains challenging but service continuity remained in place; (iv) Introduction of legislation for fire safety detection – the introduction date has been moved to 2022 and this will not be enforced by the Fire and Rescue Service. 		
<p>Andy Anderson then spoke to the terms of the Quarter 2 and noted the main cause of fire remained cooking with all 14 accidental fires during the quarter being relatively small and contained to one room. He then addressed the remainder of the report. He noted 110 home fire safety checks had taken place and the low figure reflected the arrangements put in place for officers and public safety in light of the pandemic.</p>		
<p>Thereafter, Councillor Parry thanked the Fire and Rescue Service for all of the work undertaken in the lead up to bonfire night and also a recent fire in Loanhead. She also drew attention to the consultation on the review of fireworks published a couple of weeks ago. In response Mr Gourlay advised his own personal opinion was there should be stricter controls on the sale of fireworks to the public. The Chair agreed with the comments made about the sale of fireworks and asked Mr Gourlay to comment on the introduction of legislation for fire safety detection in homes. Mr Gourlay advised any house with a gas appliance should already have a detector in place and the Fire Service has received funding to provide alarms for the most at risk but this will not cover all houses. He advised the responsibility for rented accommodation lay with landlords. Mr Oliver then provided further information regarding the introduction whereby he advised it would be adopted as a tolerable standard and sit with Environmental Health and would also be checked and highlighted in home reports when properties are for sale. He confirmed the Council will be linking with the Fire and Rescue Service to raise awareness. The Chair advised that over 99% of the housing stock was already compliant.</p>		

Decision
The Board noted the content of the report

Report No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Police Scotland Midlothian Area Command Quarter 2 report 2020 - 2021	Police Scotland
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>Chief Superintendent McKenzie addressed the Board and echoed the opinion expressed by Mr Gourlay regarding stricter controls on the sale of fireworks to the public. He further paid tribute to the close partnership working between the Fire and Police Services. He also provided further detail with regard to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Covid-19 – Strategic Framework – Enforcement of the 5 tiers would consist of engagement with enforcement being a last resort. He advised common law powers would be used. He drew attention to the Quarter 2 report and noted the significant increase in anti-social behaviour reporting attributed to the public health crisis and reports regarding social gatherings. He advised such reporting was no longer a weekend or evening issue but 24/7. He further noted the reduction in the other crime categories and; (ii) Local Policing Priorities – He referred to the meeting of the Board on 31 August 2020 and advised the Plan had since been signed off by Scottish Borders Council and published. <p>Arron Clinkscales then spoke to the Quarter 2 report. He noted a 22% decrease in crime and advised Covid was playing a part. He paid tribute to the work undertaken in the communities by officers in the Community Action Team. He advised the Council, Fire and Police services had come together and the aim was to make Midlothian a hostile place to criminals. He advised of the weekly meetings with Mr Oliver and the exceptional partnership working now in place. He then went through each separate category of crime within the report.</p> <p>Thereafter, Councillor Parry noted the increase and intensification of neighbour disputes and asked what could be done to stop them from escalating. She noted the likely impact of courts being closed/the court process being slower including a reduction in unpaid work orders. She also wondered whether anything further could be done regarding hidden domestic abuse.</p> <p>Mr Clinkscales responded and advised funding had been given for the purchase of a mobile cctv unit which will be used in areas where residents are being targeted. Chief Superintendent Mckenzie advised that White Ribbon Day happened each November. He further advised that the courts would not return to normal for a long time and therefore the increase in the need to police local conditions used up more officer time particularly when managing violent offenders in the community. Nevertheless he felt it was being managed well in Midlothian.</p> <p>Councillor Muirhead in his capacity of Chair of the Community Planning Partnership advised there is now a much better and closer link between the Council, Fire and Police Services and whilst he appreciated this has come about because of the pandemic, he was keen to see it continuing.</p> <p>Councillor Smaill commented that the trends outlined in the report were encouraging but there may be clusters within Midlothian which are causing</p>		

concern. He highlighted incidents in Mayfield and concerns expressed at community council meetings regarding lack of connectivity with the Police. He further mentioned the regular incidents of fly-tipping

In response, Mr Oliver advised each incident of fly-tipping is investigated in an attempt to look for and secure evidence. He outlined a “whole systems approach” being considered whereby Economic Development, Trading Standards and Environmental Health would introduce a trusted trader type system with local companies being accredited and in effect approved by the Council. It was hoped that this would contribute to a reduction in fly-tipping.

The Chair raised the point made by Councillor Smaill regarding community councils and Mr Clinkscales advised he would provide the Chair with an up-to-date list of local officer contacts for circulating to the other Board Members. Mr Mckenzie agreed with the comments made by Councillor Smaill and advised Mayfield continued to be an area of priority for the Police and he would arrange a meeting with him to discuss further.

Decision

The Board noted the content of the report.

Sederunt: At 12.20 pm prior to the next item, the Chair, declared an interest in the matter. He left the meeting and did not return

The Clerk invited nominations for an acting Chair. Councillor Muirhead was nominated by Councillors Munro and Parry and subsequently took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Agenda No.	Subject Matter	
5.3	Midlothian Taxi and Private Hire Trade – email of 18 August 2020 – unlawful pick-ups	
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>The Legal Services Manager advised the matter was before the Board because it was not within the jurisdiction of the General Purposes Committee because the concern related to vehicles not licensed by Midlothian Council but by neighbouring authorities. He suggested the Board may wish to hear from Angela Reid, the author of the email who was present.</p> <p>Ms Reid summarised the terms of the email and advised the main cause for concern was the activities of out of authority licensed taxi and private hire vehicles. Chief Superintendent Mckenzie advised he would need to research the enforcement aspects of the concerns raised. Councillor Munro, in his capacity of Chair of the General Purposes Committee wondered whether it was worth him having a discussion with his counterpart in City of Edinburgh Council. The Chair suggested the Council, trade representatives and Police meet to discuss a way forward. Ms Reid suggested the Community Action Team had a role to play in terms of there being a nominated single point of contact for the trade. Chief Superintendent Mckenzie confirmed Chief Inspector Clinkscales would take ownership of the issue and pull together a meeting of interested parties within the next 4 weeks.</p>		

The Board noted Chief Inspector Clinkscales would make arrangements for a meeting between the appropriate Council officers, trade representatives and Police within the next 4 weeks.

The meeting terminated at 12.38 pm