

Minute of Meeting

Police and Fire and Rescue Board
Monday 26 August 2024
Item No 4.1



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
Monday 27 May 2024	1.00pm	Council Chambers/Hybrid

Present:

Councillor McKenzie (Chair)
Councillor McEwan
Councillor Smaill

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
	David Rourke, Depute Local Commander
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 received from Councillor Alexander and Councillor Curran

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

The Minute of the Meeting held on 29 January 2024 was submitted and moved as a correct record by Councillor Smail, seconded by Councillor McEwan.

Actions from the previous Minutes:

Mark Landels confirmed with regards to Item 6 – Tomorrow’s Driver this was on today’s agenda.

Jim Robertson confirmed that with regards to Item 4 Police Scotland linked in with bus companies including LRT and the ownership of bus stops was unclear but the bus companies confirmed that they do not have any posters prepared and it was also confirmed that the responsibility of this did not sit with Police Scotland. Chief Officer Place confirmed that the ownership of bus stops was passed to the transport and network team.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Quarter 4 ML Performance Report	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
Mark Landels, Area Commander introduced Elliot Whitson, Station Commander for Prevention, Protection and Preparedness and will speak in terms of any relevant information regarding reporting figures.		
Mark Landels, 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 1 of 2024-25 (1 April 2024 – 30 June 2024) including information on the year-to-date figures and highlighted the salient points. The Area Commander highlighted the reduction in fire casualties and that there were no reported fire fatalities in this period and that the trend line for Midlothian was performing below the Scottish average and the		

East Service delivery that Midlothian forms part of. He further provided a brief update on each of the KPI's as detailed in the report.

In responding to a question raised with regards to fire risk and fire appliances, the Area Commander advised on the procedure for a risk assessment and alarm system set up independently and this will go through the contact centre and when an alarm rings the fire service will be contacted. He confirmed that although they are there to provide fire safety advice if requested the responsibility sits with the responsible person for the shop, building etc. On a follow up question regarding the monitoring of ensuring the correct and adequate fire equipment is in shops, restaurants etc, the Fire Service Officers advised on the process of fire safety inspections and what can be done when these premises are not compliant. A further question was also raised on the increasing use of lithium batteries and was this an added risk for the fire service. In responding the Area Commander noted that there were energy storage sites being built all over Scotland and although the Fire Service has no legal powers, they have been involved in the planning stage. He also advised on the correct disposal of lithium batteries and emphasised that these should not be disposed of at a waste management site. The Chief Officer Place advised on what they have in place to ensure that these are disposed of appropriately and that they were proactive in addressing this and advised on the service they are looking to put in place where residents can dispose of textiles and electrical appliances from their house.

The Area Commander, Mark Landels advised on the retirement of Hilary Sangster and passed on her thanks to the Board. The Chair thanked the Fire Service for the report and expressed his thanks on behalf of the Board to Hilary Sangster and her input to the Police Fire and Rescue Board.

Elliot Whitson Station Commander provided a brief update on the main sections of the Prevention, Protection & Preparedness Activities as contained within the report and highlighted some of the partnership working with schools and young people. The Station Commander also provided a brief outline of the Midlothian Road Safety Campaign, The Tomorrows Driver which is aimed at S6 students who are already driving or just about to be learning to drive and they will be support also by Police Scotland. The Chair commented positively on this campaign also going into Colleges.

The Area Commander, Mark Landels advised that Dalkeith Fire Station experienced an event on 6 April when a tree fell on top of the roof of the station and the station was in risk of having to be evacuated and the implementation of business continuity plan would have reverted fire appliances moved to Dalkeith Police Station and although they did not have to go ahead he formally thanked Police Scotland and the Chief Inspector for making the offer for them to work at Dalkeith Police Station and highlighted the good partnership working the emergency services have.

The Area Commander also highlighted the live public consultation until 30 June – Shaping the future Service and it was confirmed that communication had been sent to the council and other agencies.

Decision

The Board noted the update.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Protective Services Quarter 4 Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Place

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chief Officer Place introduced the Protective Services Quarter 4 report and provided an update on the Protective Services functions and highlighted the main sections contained within the report.

The Chief Officer Place advised on the close working with Police and Fire colleagues with regards to the weather episodes and the significant rainfall in Midlothian. The Chief Officer also expressed his thanks to Hilary Sangster for the partnership working and wished her all the best on her retirement.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and opened it up to questions.

In responding to a question regarding an increase in pavement parking the Chief Officer advised that activity was ongoing and will bring back further details on this.

In responding to further comments, the Chief Officer provided clarity with regards to tobacco and vaping sales and the disposal of vapes. Also highlighted was the untidy area at the back of Jarnac Court and the Chief Officer Place explained the issues of inappropriate disposal of waste and advised on the engagement with local businesses and the monitoring of the fly tipping in this area.

It was noted that the fly tipping will now be reported on a yearly basis and the Chief Officer advised on the level of engagement and investigation with the community and the reason why some of the numbers of fixed penalty notices are not higher.

Councillor McEwan expressed his thanks on behalf of Elected Members on the work that Chief Officer and his team, the Police and Fire service in keeping roads open in Midlothian during the bad weather.

Decision

The Board noted the contents of the report.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Police Scotland – MCAT Workshop	Police Scotland

Outline of report and summary of discussion

The Chair explained that due to the issue with data embargo the Police Scotland data could not be provided for this meeting and that for today's agenda it would focus on the work done by the MCAT team.

Jim Robertson, Chief Inspector that he was accompanied today with Superintendent Greg Banks and Police Inspector David Rourke who will be

presenting with him today and advised that they will provide a 'deep dive' on MCAT performance over the last 3 months.

Superintendent Greg Banks in introducing himself provided a brief overview of his role and also expressed Police Scotland's' gratitude to Hilary Sangster for her long-standing contribution and close partnership working and wished her all the best for her retirement.

Chief Inspector, Jim Robertson advised that the MCAT vision remains the same to provide a positive impact on the quality of life within Midlothian and seek to reduce anti-social behaviour through prevention, disruption and enforcement. This focusses on the 6 key activities – high visibility patrols focussing on offenders including those involved in anti-social behaviour and serious and organised crime; target and engage with youths; prioritise licensed premises'; support partners and colleagues and focussing on road safety. The Chief Inspector then introduced his deputy Police Inspector David Rourke who had day to day ownership and line management of MCAT.

Police Inspector, David Rourke provided an update on the operations in Midlothian which included work in partnership with Lothian Buses to reduce the anti-social behaviour on the buses and reported that there has been a reduction in this behaviour on the buses, but they will step up the activity over the summer holidays to ensure this continues.

He also provided a brief overview of the Operation Jarnaca which is led by the Community action team and links into several of the priorities including crimes of dishonesty, road safety, reducing reoffending and drugs misuse. This is a joint operation involving Roads Policing, DVSA, DWP and Trading Standards from the local authority and provided details of the scale and effectiveness of this operation.

Another long running Operation was in response to reducing reoffending and crimes of dishonesty and provided an update on the work with community councils to find out their three priorities and the top priority was theft by housebreaking and provided the outcome of the work done on this.

Lastly, he provided an update on Operation Jewel which is linked to reducing antisocial behaviour and improving road safety and advised that this has been successful in Midlothian, and they have seized 25 off road motorcycles and provided a brief update on how this issue had been tackled and the response from other areas in replicating how this was tackled. He further advised that there had been a big reduction in calls relating to off road motorcycles.

The Chief Inspector, Jim Robertson also provided an update on the project taking place to raise awareness of sharing spaces safely with cyclists on footpaths, addressing cycling at excessive speed and engaging with young people in Midlothian to raise this awareness. The Chief Inspector further advised as part of these plans they will also be stopping drivers who drive too close to cyclists on the road and raising the awareness of sharing spaces with road drivers and cyclists and horses. He further advised that the mounted section will be coming to Midlothian in the coming weeks to target the hotspots where drivers have been noted going too close to horses. This will also be highlighted on Social Media to raise this awareness across Midlothian.

Following the presentation by Police Scotland a discussion took place with regards anti-social behaviour and where surveillance has been useful. The Chief Officer advised on the CCTV upgrade and that a report on this will be coming forward in the next couple of weeks. In responding to a question raised with the issues of cameras in train stations and not always identifying the person when damage has been done to vehicles and the Chief Inspector, Jim Robertson advised on the limitations of fixed cameras and the advantage of mobile cameras. He also advised on the CCTV uplift and the technology coming to Midlothian which will be able to identify individuals and that Police Scotland will be working with the Council Officers in identifying the best locations for these cameras. The Superintendent, Greg Banks also provided further information on how these systems can be more flexible and how CCTV has progressed. It was also noted that ring doorbells are a huge benefit to Police Scotland and the Chief Inspector advised that Police Scotland are always looking to use new technology and techniques and advised on the specialist team at Fettes which have been trained to use drones and the benefit of using this service in Midlothian.

In responding to a further question regarding the demands on the Police, the Superintendent, Greg Banks advised on some of the work they do with NHS24 to understand how they can make an initial assessment with a vulnerable person with a focus on ensuring the member to the public is directed to the correct service. The Chief Inspector further advised on the systems in place in recording incidents with vulnerable people and the close working with partner agencies to ensure the correct service is provided to the person.

The Chair commented positively on the work done in reducing the off-road motorcycles' activities and the planned activity on operation close path and operation blinkers.

In responding to a comment with regards to the Operation blinkers Chief Inspector advised on the challenges with the horses based in the west of the country and explained the process in getting this specialist resource to assist in Midlothian with the issues relating to horses on the roads.

Police Inspector, David Rourke in responding to a comment raised by the Chair regarding Operation close path confirmed that this Operation and the other Operations in place are about educating the members of the public and raising awareness. He further commented that in Q3 there were zero calls regarding off road motorcycles and that this was a huge success for the MCAT team.

Councillor Smail enquired as to the number of drugs taken off the market in the last 12 months, in responding the Police Inspector advised he would need to get back on the exact figures but it was in the 100,000s.

The Chair thanked Police Scotland for taking the time to bring this to Members today it was highly informative and very much appreciated.

Decision

The Board noted the contents of the presentation.

6. Private Reports

No private items for discussion

7. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting would be held on Monday 26 August 2024 at 11.00am.

The meeting terminated at 14.17 pm.