

Minute of Meeting



Police and Fire and Rescue Board

Date	Time	Venue
26 August 2019	11.00 am	Council Chambers, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith

Present:

Councillor Curran (Chair)	Councillor McCall
Councillor Muirhead	Councillor Munro
Councillor Parry	

In attendance:

Midlothian Council Verona MacDonald, Democratic Services Team Leader	Alison White, Head of Adult Services
Police Scotland Chief Superintendent John McKenzie	Chief Inspector Aaron Clinkscales
Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Stephen Gourlay, Area Manager	Dean Mack, Group Manager

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and intimated an apology on behalf of Councillor Smaill.

2. Order of Business

The Clerk advised the order of business was as per the agenda circulated.

3. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were intimated.

4. Minute of Previous Meeting

The Minute of Meeting of 3 June 2019 was unanimously approved and the Chair was authorised to sign it as a correct record.

5. Public Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1.1	Fire and Rescue Service – Local Plan Performance Report for Quarter 1	Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>Stephen Gourlay by way of an update advised of a few matters worthy of noting:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) negotiations regarding pay and conditions – he was fairly confident there would be more clarity regarding this in the next 3 – 4 weeks; (ii) the training centre at Newbridge – close to completion with staff now moving in; (iii) business case to get some additional resources which would support, amongst others, the Penicuik station – bid had been successful and would provide support to the retained officers. The post would be filled during January 2020; (iv) Dalkeith Fire Station – part of the building has been isolated due to structural issues <p>Mr Gourlay also advised Dean Mack would be retiring from the Service towards the end of October and therefore this would be his last time at the Board. He paid tribute to the work undertaken by Dean. In response, the Chair, on behalf of the Board, thanked Mr Mack and wished him well in retirement.</p> <p>Dean Mack then provided a summary of the Quarter 1 report. Referring to Page 4 of the report, he advised the figures showed a slight increase but were still below the average for the east area and nationally. He advised 60% of accidental fires related to cooking and listed contributing factors for this being age and persons living alone. He further advised only 11 of the properties where fires had occurred had smoke detectors fitted but the Service continues to undertake fire safety visits. With regard to deliberate fires, he noted the increase and the work undertaken with Council colleagues in terms of educating young persons. He further advised this was an increasing trend across Scotland. He noted the decrease from last year in false alarms and advised the majority of these were due to human error but the figure was still below the east of Scotland average. Finally, in terms of Page 19 of the report, he advised fire safety enforcement audits were off target due to a change in personnel but would be back on target shortly. He noted home safety visits were on target.</p> <p>Questions were then put by Members. Councillor Munro enquired about the use of dedicated fire pits the purpose of which was to facilitate safe areas for fires. Mr Gourlay advised he was personally not supportive of this because many of the incidents the Service were called to happen as a result of alcohol being consumed and were often malicious fire-raising such as wheelie bins being set alight where there is a cost and danger to nearby buildings. He did not consider dedicated fire pits would stop malicious fire-raising.</p> <p>Councillor McCall stated she was disappointed in the referral numbers and asked what the Council could do and also had the Citizens Advice Bureau been approached. Mr Gourlay advised the local Area Liaison Officer will be providing training to Council officers about the referral system and he will also ask the Liaison Officer to contact CAB. Alison White advised the Liaison Officer had visited staff and there was a big push to learn from a recent incident in East</p>		

Lothian. Councillor McCall commented Council property staff visited houses every year and wondered whether they were aware of the referral system. Alison White advised she would check this with Property Services.

The Chair noted the Board would not meet again until after bonfire night and asked Mr Gourlay if there was anything which needed to be done. Mr Gourlay advised it was planned at national level and waste amnesties played a big part with waste being removed before the day. He further noted considerable partnership working went into planning for the day.

Decision

Noted

Report No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2.1	Police Scotland Midlothian Area Command Quarter 1 report 2019 - 2020	Police Scotland
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
<p>Chief Superintendent McKenzie addressed the Board. He referred to his advice at the June meeting, whereby he undertook to provide additional information within his report to the Board. He advised the report style and content had been revised with specific information being provided in terms of crime type with multi-ward data being available shortly. He advised of the various summer events which impacted upon the Police service and the work being undertaken with regard to contingency for Brexit. He further advised, in comparison to the previous year, solvency rates had increased, that overall crime figures were down but violence related crime had increased. He highlighted 2 specific areas of work (a) mobile working – mobile data would be introduced during Quarter 3 which would allow officers to use handheld devices meaning they would not have to go back to a station to check information and (b) analysing how calls are graded which had reduced call demand by 20% when introduced at national level. Commenting on the dedicated Community Action Team, he advised crime has reduced due to the work undertaken by CAT officers in communities across Midlothian. He then handed over to Chief Inspector Clinkscales who went through the terms of the quarter 1 report.</p> <p>Chief Inspector Clinkscales advised the figures were positive with a total decrease in crime of 10.3%. He then went through each individual category in the report. He advised there continued to be high demand levels with mental health and missing persons being given priority. He noted a dramatic fall in crimes of dishonesty whilst also noting detection rates remained low. He advised of daily meetings between officers in the east regarding known criminals released from prison. He advised the increase in lewd and libidinous crimes may be linked to the Scottish Child Abuse Enquiry. He commented alcohol played a big part in many violent crimes and with that in mind the Pubwatch scheme is being relaunched. He advised the largest capacity premises in the area is Woodburn Miners Club and officers encountered significant problems relating to the dispersal of persons at closing time where the key to dispersal was to get taxis into the area to take people home. He noted the figure for road casualties had reduced by 42.5% and advised national campaigns for drink driving and the “close pass” initiative had contributed to the reduction. Finally, with regard to the CAT, he noted officers had dealt with 836 incidents during the quarter.</p> <p>The Chair acknowledged the change in format and content of the report and thanked the officers for the additional information and breakdowns provided.</p>		

Councillor Parry, with regard to the figures relating to domestic abuse, commented that Midlothian did not appear to fair well when compared to national figures. She drew attention to the 120% increase in sexual crimes and commented that even if historic cases were not included this still equated to a considerable increase. She further noted the Board would not meet again until after the proposed date for the United Kingdom to leave the European Union and asked what plans are in place locally for this.

Chief Superintendent McKenzie, with regard to domestic abuse, acknowledged the figures were not good. He further advised that between 50 to 80% of cases are underreported. He confirmed he could look at doing more by way of a breakdown of the figures to allow further scrutiny in the future. With regard to sexual crimes, he advised regardless of the figure no-one should be satisfied; that historic cases amounted to about 40% of the increase and it is often the case an investigation into one case led to further crimes being detected. In relation to Brexit, he advised this was dealt with on a national level by a Brexit Resilience Task Force but to-date he had not seen anything which suggests there would be a significant number of issues.

Decision

Thereafter, the Board noted the content of the report.

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2.2	Strategic Police Priorities – Consultation	Chair
Outline of report and summary of discussion		
The Chair drew attention to the terms of an email dated 16 July 2019 regarding the Scottish Government consultation on a new set of Strategic Police Priorities to set a high level strategic direction for policing in Scotland. He further advised that a second consultation was underway relating to human trafficking. In noting the deadlines for responses was prior to the next meeting of the Board, he suggested Board members feed into the process by way of forwarding any comments they have to Alison White who, in consultation with him, will finalised and submit responses prior to the deadline dates set.		
Decision		
Members agreed to proceed on the basis suggested by the Chair		

The meeting terminated at 12.10 pm.