

Police and Fire and Rescue Committee
14 August 2023

At a Meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m. involving a combination of participation by remote electronic means and physical attendance within the Council Chambers, Irvine.

Present (Physical Participation)

Donald Reid, Nairn McDonald, Stewart Ferguson, Angela Stephen and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Attendance)

Jean McClung and Donald L. Reid.

Also Present (Physical Participation)

Cameron Inglis.

In Attendance

R. Lynch, Senior Manager Legal Services, S. Wilson and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Superintendent S. Baber and Inspector S. Dougan (Police Scotland); Area Commander I. McMeekin and Station Commander N. Shearer (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Donald Reid in the Chair.

Apologies

John Glover and Davina McTiernan.

1. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 11 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

2. Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee held on 19 June 2023 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

3. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance and Service Update

Submitted report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) which provided information on progress against the North Ayrshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the period 1 April 2023 – 30 June 2023 including an analysis of the performance across six indicators, using the rolling three-year average as a basis of measuring performance.

The statistical information identified an increase in total incident activity levels together with primary and secondary fires, false alarms and non-fire casualties. Decreases were indicated for special services and fire casualties. Additional contextual information was provided by Area Commander McMeekin to the meeting.

Updates were also provided in relation to HM Fire Service Inspectorate conducting a review of operational and service delivery with the Ayrshire review commencing in August, and the current review of the Local Fire Plan which would be brought to Committee for consideration and comment.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:-

- resilience appliances and operational cover available across Local Authority areas to mitigate risk throughout the Service;
- challenges faced in relation to recruitment of on-call personnel; and
- partnership working and early intervention initiatives to tackle heightened instances of deliberate fire setting.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Scottish Fire and Rescue for the recent Briefing at Kilwinning Fire Station.

Noted.

Councillor Inglis left the meeting during consideration of this item.

4. Police Scotland Performance Update

Submitted report by Police Scotland on performance in relation to the North Ayrshire Local Policing Plan for the period 1 April 2023 – 30 June 2023. A summary of current local policing plan priorities was also detailed.

The report provided information on North Ayrshire's performance, including an 8.6% increase in the total number of crimes. The report further outlined progress in the areas of serious crime, violence against women and girls, safer communities, community wellbeing, road safety and public confidence with additional contextual information provided by Superintendent Baber to the meeting.

Superintendent Baber further advised on personnel changes including that Chief Superintendent Faroque Hussain had been temporarily promoted to the role of Assistant Chief Constable, temporary Chief Superintendent Raymond Higgins had assumed the role as Ayrshire Divisional Commander, and Jo Farrell would commence the role as Chief Constable on 9 October 2023.

Members asked questions and were provided with further information in relation to:-

- age and height restrictions for children travelling in the front seat of cars and on the use of car and booster seats;
- any offence criteria in relation to the use of motorised scooters and bicycles in different areas such as roads, private land, parks and common ground;

- the rise in hate crime in comparison to the other Ayrshire Local Authorities;
- plans to tackle the increase in transphobic hate crime;
- the impact on anti-social behaviour statistics resulting from the reduction in late hours opening venues across North Ayrshire; and
- any expected local changes following the announcement of Police Scotland staff cuts.

At the invitation of the Chair, Superintendent Baber also provided further information on:

- the establishment of a multi-agency command structure for the July 2023 'Car Cruise' event following major congestion and disruption caused by an earlier event in May 2023. Contact was made with organisers who were co-operative and engaged with road policing partners in an attempt to ease disruption. A total of 54 offences were identified and Superintendent Baber thanked all involved partner agencies in connection with the joint approach to manage the event and to mitigate disruption for future events;
- the 999 and 101 average response times and discontinued call numbers across the service and on the recent update to Android mobile devices which resulted in silent 999 calls being triggered accidentally. Superintendent Baber advised that the modernisation programme in connection with the online reporting system was ongoing; and
- the Safer Shores initiative where the partnership approach adopted by Prevention First continued to have a positive impact.

Noted.

Councillor McClung left the meeting during consideration of this item.

The meeting ended at 16.20 p.m.