

Police and Fire and Rescue Committee
26 February 2024

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, Jean McClung, Davina McTiernan, Donald L. Reid and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Attendance)

Scott Davidson.

In Attendance

Wallace Turpie, Senior Manager (Waste Resources – Operations) (Place); R. Lynch, Senior Manager Legal Services, C. Cochrane, Solicitor (Legal Services) and C. Stewart and D. McCaw, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Chief Superintendent R. Higgins and Chief Inspector F. Normansell (Police Scotland); and Area Commander I. McMeekin (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Donald Reid in the Chair.

Apologies

Stewart Ferguson and Angela Stephen.

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 13 November 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 statistical information on progress against the North Ayrshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the period 1 April 2023 – 31 December 2023. The report provided an analysis of the performance across six indicators, using the rolling three-year average as a basis of measuring performance, together with a summary of priorities and current activity. Additional contextual information was provided by Area Commander McMeekin to the meeting.

An update was provided in relation to the decision to pause the Local Fire and Rescue Plan review until budget implications were fully known, with the 6 current local priorities continuing to be a focus to meet the needs of the North Ayrshire area. Consultation on the future priorities of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would commence at the end of March 2024 through engagement with Elected Members and Council officials.

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

- the role of home safety fire visits to highlight areas of concern through appropriate referral pathways;
- the risks and impact of deliberate fire setting in the Irvine West and Saltcoats and Stevenston areas;
- future joint action plans to tackle deliberate fire setting, including the ongoing work of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Team;
- the criteria regarding fire appliance attendance at road traffic incidents;
- risk management in connection with electric vehicle fires;
- retained duty system contracts and statistics; and
- unintentional injury or harm figures.

The Chair advised that the Committee would be happy to consult with the Area Commander on the future priorities of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and, if time allowed, that the consultation could be extended to all Members of the Council.

Noted.

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 – 31 December 2023. A summary of current local policing plan priorities was also detailed.

The report provided information on North Ayrshire's performance, including a 6.2% 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. Additional contextual information was provided by Chief Superintendent Higgins to the meeting.

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

- laws affecting owners to ensure their dogs were kept under control when not on a lead;
- measures to tackle the significant increase in detection and reporting rates for shoplifting in supermarkets in the North Ayrshire area;
- related links between shoplifting and youth disorder;
- the increase in violent crime primarily due to the number of minor assaults both on emergency workers and the public;

- whether any incidents were attributable to changes in street lighting on roads and footpath areas;
- the potential for Police quad bikes to be deployed to the Lochshore area of Kilbirnie during the forthcoming summer months;
- the routine carrying of tasers by trained Police Scotland officers;
- the Challenge 25 policy utilised by licence-holders;
- the use of future test purchasing initiatives as an additional tool to prevent illegal underage alcohol sales being reported by Police Scotland in future Committee reports;
- clarification on road traffic offences dealt with by Police Scotland and DPE provisions enabling NAC enforcement officers to administer parking penalties; and
- whether details of on duty officer totals could be quantified within future information provided to Committee.

The Chair advised that the Committee would be happy to consult with the Chief Superintendent on the future priorities for the next Policing Plan and also in connection with any requirement to amend timing of reports to Committee in line with Police Scotland reporting timelines.

Noted.

5. Update Reports: Operation Moonbeam

Submitted reports in relation to the North Ayrshire approach to Operation Moonbeam during October and November 2023 and on partnership work undertaken to identify problematic areas and tackle illegal bonfire locations in relation to reducing risks to communities.

Information was also provided in relation to offences against emergency services personnel responding to incidents and the main hotspot areas which were challenging in terms of the level of crime and incidents.

The Committee was also advised of work undertaken with Trading Standards to ensure retailers were aware of the new legislation in terms of the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles (Scotland) Act 2022 where Local Authorities had the ability to designate particular areas as a Firework Control Zone. Ongoing work was taking place to determine whether to designate any areas as Firework Control Zones in terms of this new legislation.

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

- individual and organised displays where public entertainment licences were not obtained;
- the number of locations where materials were unable to be removed due to the timing of intimation and availability of resources;
- weekend collection of combustible materials with the potential to cause storage and disposal issues and risks of fires at depots;
- finance costs for removal of materials; and

- the knock-on effect on customer service requests as a result of the clear-up exercise following bonfire night.

The Chair intimated thanks to all services for the partnership working approach taken in connection with Operation Moonbeam.

The Committee agreed (a) that a standing item be added to future Agendas in connection with preparation and follow up in relation to Operation Moonbeam; and (b) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

6. Valedictory

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, took the opportunity to thank Diane McCaw, Committee Services Officer, for the work undertaken by her with North Ayrshire Council and its predecessor, Cunninghame District Council, and wished her a long and happy retirement.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.