

Police and Fire and Rescue Committee
14 November 2022

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

Present (Physical Participation)

Donald Reid, Nairn McDonald, Scott Davidson, Jean McClung, Davina McTiernan and John Sweeney.

Present (Remote Attendance)

John Glover.

In Attendance

W. Turpie, Senior Manager (Waste Operations) (Place); R. Lynch, Senior Manager (Legal Services), Claire Cochrane, Solicitor (Legal Services), D. McCaw and H. Clancy, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Chief Superintendent F. Hussain and Police Inspector S. Dougan (Police Scotland); Area Commander I. McMeekin, and Group Commander S. Nesbit (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Donald Reid in the Chair.

Apologies

Donald L. Reid 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 Audit and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 August 2022 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 2022 – 30 September 2022. Appendix A to the report provided an analysis of the performance across six indicators, using the rolling three-year average as a basis of measuring performance. The Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2025 was detailed at Appendix B to the report.

The statistical information identified a 7.3% decrease in activity levels across the local authority when compared to the corresponding period in 2021. A further review of the three-year average indicated a 0.3% decrease in overall operational activity during a similar timeframe. Data on false alarms accounted for 56.3% of all demand within North Ayrshire, with fire related and special service activity accounting for 30.5% and 13.2% respectively.

Updates were also provided in relation to publication of the Strategic Plan for the period 2022-2025, the appointment of Ross Haggart as Interim Chief Officer of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, pre budget scrutiny evidence provided to the Criminal Justice Committee on the organisation's planning assumptions for the period 2022/23-2026/27, work with partners to deliver programmes and initiatives to support the safety of local residents during the period 4-6 November 2022 and the recent successful visit to the National Training Centre, Cambuslang, Glasgow and the Command and Control Centre in Johnstone.

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

- the provision of updated Ward information to correspond with the launch of the new Strategic Plan;
- the variations within Wards relative to unwanted fire alarm signals;
- heightened instances of deliberate fire setting within the Stevenston area; and
- community engagement and partnership working in place to tackle deliberate fire setting.

Councillor Glover intimated a question from a Local North Coast Member regarding willful fires in the North Coast area. The Chair asked Councillor Glover to have the Local Member email the question to the Chair and this would be processed and a response provided.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Group Commander for the informative visit to the Fire and Rescue National Training Centre and Operations Control Centre.

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 2022 - 30 September 2022 together with an overview of performance for year end 2021/22. A summary of current local policing plan priorities was also detailed.

The report provided information on North Ayrshire's performance, including a 0.5% decrease in the total number of crimes. The report further outlined progress in the areas of serious crime, safer communities, acquisitive crime, community wellbeing, road safety and public confidence with additional context being provided by Chief Superintendent Hussain to the meeting.

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

- young people accessing vaping equipment which would be monitored by Campus Officers;
- partnership working to deal with instances of reckless parking and vehicle obstruction;
- reporting and monitoring in connection with assaults on retail workers;
- the slight increase in transphobic hate crimes and plans to monitor incidents;
- potential under-reporting relating to instances of fraudulent emails, texts and phone calls;
- instances of violence with regard to public transport; and
- plans in place to target instances of serious crime and violence.

The Chair, on behalf of the Committee, thanked the Chief Superintendent for the informative visit to the Police Scotland C3 Division in Glasgow.

The Committee was then provided with verbal updates from the Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and the Council's Streetscene Service in relation to Operation Moonbeam, Police Scotland's national response to a variety of offences and incidents arising in relation to Bonfire Night. Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service jointly patrolled streets and the Council's Streetscene Service provided early identification of bonfire locations in order that material at some sites could be safely removed. It was highlighted that the planned events at Kilwinning, Dreghorn and in the Three Towns were well attended and well organised.

The Council's Streetscene Service was praised by the Committee in relation to the clear up across North Ayrshire following Bonfire night.

The Committee agreed (a) that the Senior Manager, Legal Services prepare a Briefing Note on (i) Legislation surrounding the provision of fireworks; and (ii) Operation Moonbean, including information from Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Streetscene, for circulation to Members and also for addition as an item to the Agenda for the next meeting of the Committee; and (b) otherwise, to note the content of the report.

5. Urgent Items

In terms of Standing Order 10.8, the Chair agreed that the following item be considered as urgent to allow a response to be submitted by the 16 November 2022 deadline.

5.1 Local Police Plans: A Framework for Scrutiny

The Senior Manager, Legal Services, advised the Committee on a request from COSLA for feedback on the draft framework in connection with the development of COSLA-SPA Police Scrutiny Guidance for Elected Members prior to it being considered by the COSLA Community Wellbeing Board and presented to the COSLA Scrutiny Conveners Forum.

The Committee was advised that the framework would be expanded upon and adapted as appropriate at Local Authority level in recognition that local scrutiny arrangements vary across the country.

Councillor McDonald, seconded by Councillor McTiernan moved to remit to the Senior Manager, Legal Services, in conjunction with the Chair, to finalise the response in terms of the draft framework for submission to COSLA by the deadline of 16 November 2022. There being no amendment the motion was declared carried.

The meeting ended at 3.30 p.m.