

**Police and Fire and Rescue Committee**  
**17 August 2021**

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.

**Present**

John Glover, Jimmy Miller, Ellen McMaster, Davina McTiernan, Donald L. Reid and Angela Stephen.

**In Attendance**

A. Craig, Head of Service (Democratic), A. Little and H. Clancy, Committee Services Officers (Chief Executive's Service).

**Also In Attendance**

Chief Superintendent Hussain and Temporary Chief Inspector A. Paterson (Police Scotland); Area Commander I. McMeekin and Station Commander K. Rennie (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

**Chair**

Councillor Glover in the Chair.

**Apologies**

Todd Ferguson.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were noted.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

**3. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Standing Order 10 and Section 5 of the Code of Conduct for Councillors.

**4. Minutes**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 17 May 2021 were confirmed and the Minutes signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

**5. Chair and Vice Chair Verbal Updates**

The Chair reported on traffic issues at Howden Avenue, Kilwinning as a result of the increased use of this route by heavy duty vehicles. Chief Superintendent Hussain undertook to investigate and report to the next meeting.

## **6. Presentation: Time for Change – Reducing Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals**

Station Commander Rennie, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service provided a presentation on reducing unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS). A report was also provided on a consultation on options for responding to automatic fire alarms and outlined the case for change and developing the options.

The presentation provided information on:-

- The difference between automatic fire alarms (AFA) and unwanted fire alarm signals (UFAS);
- The case for change;
- The impact of UFAS;
- Targets set to reduce UFAS;
- Impact of Covid-19;
- Benefits of reducing UFAS;
- Developing the options – where we are, how we got here, the staff and stakeholder workshop and the options for public consultation;
- Option A – call challenge all AFAs (sleeping premises exempt), Option B - call challenge all AFAs (no exemptions) and Option C – non-attendance to all AFAs unless receipt of a backup 999 call confirming a fire;
- Mitigating the risk;
- Public consultation that will commence on 19 July 2021 and run for 12 weeks and end on 11 October 2021.

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

- Confirmation that there is no legal obligation for the fire service to attend calls from AFA systems;
- The responsibility of the duty holder of the building to alert the fire service when there is a AFA and to clarify whether there is a need for attendance by the fire service;
- Whilst there is no protocol for AFAs from schools, contact is made with schools on the activation of a fire alarm to ascertain whether there is a need for the fire service to attend; and
- The impact of the pandemic on the workforce and new ways of working that were put in place that included the attendance of one appliance to AFAs, rather than two as had been normal practice.

The Committee considered that a further meeting was required to consider the proposals in more detail. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service advised that an officer would be available to provide any further information required by the Committee in considering the proposals outlined.

The Committee agreed to (a) arrange a further meeting to discuss the proposals outlined in the consultation for responding to automatic fire alarms and agree a response for submission to Scottish Fire and Rescue Service; and (b) to otherwise note the report.

## **7. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report**

Submitted report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) which provided information on the progress against the North Ayrshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan for the period 1 April 2020 – 30 June 2021. 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.

Review of performance against the six indicators identified five indicators were below, one indicator was above the three-year average. Two indicators had seen a reduction in the three-year average by more than 91% and 34%. The statistical information illustrated a 7% increase in activity levels across the local authority when compared to the corresponding period in 2020. A further review of the three-year average indicated a 3% increase in overall operational activity during a similar timeframe. Data on Home Fire Safety Visits, Fire Safety Audits and the retained duty system was also provided within the report.

Noted.

## **8. Police Scotland Performance Report**

Submitted report by Police Scotland on performance in relation to the North Ayrshire Local Police Plan for the period from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2021.

The report provided details of North Ayrshire's performance including a 10.4% decrease in the total number of crimes. The executive summary outlined progress in the priority areas of serious crime, safer communities, acquisitive crime, community wellbeing and road safety. Statistical and contextual information was provided in respect of recorded incidents that included: -

- Operation TALLA, Police Scotland's operational response to the pandemic and regular meetings of the Ayrshire Local Resilience Partnership to respond to changing restrictions;
- a reduction in housebreaking, dishonesty, domestic abuse, road traffic casualties and missing people;
- the launch of the Ayrshire Assault Pledge by Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NHS Ayrshire and Arran, SERCO, British Transport Police and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency to improve reporting of violence and assaults against staff;
- an increase in common assault, overall violent crime, disorder complaints, frauds and sexual crimes; and
- data on complaints about the Police and satisfaction surveys.

The Committee was provided with an update on the attempted murder of a Police Officer. A vehicle had deliberately been driven at the Police Officer in Kilwinning in June 2021. The Police Officer is making slow progress in their rehabilitation after sustaining serious leg injuries. Individuals have been arrested and reported for this incident.

The Committee was also advised of an unofficial car cruise event that took place on 25 July 2021 at Irvine Beach Park. Police Scotland received information on the

event a few days in advance of the event and were able to put plans in place with relevant partners to ensure the event went ahead safely.

The Committee had previously requested information on the use of Tasers and were advised that Tasers were deployed on 24 occasions and on those occasions 6 were used (1 drawn, 1 aimed, 3 individuals red dotted and 1 discharged).

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

- the operation of Police Scotland call centres under strict health and safety restrictions during the pandemic;
- the effects of Covid restrictions and social distancing on workstation capacity in the call centre that resulted in reduced staffing and impacted on call waiting times, which averaged 5.17 minutes to answer calls to 101 and 7 seconds to answer calls to 999 in June 2021;
- the use of landline and mobile phones to the call centre that prevents a geographical breakdown of calls;
- the use of social media by Police Scotland to advise and steer the public to the appropriate agencies to contact in various situations and reduce unnecessary calls to the call centre;
- the deployment of officers to other units, such as the digital devices unit and central units which can temporarily reduce officer numbers but that the overall number of officers has not reduced; and
- an increase in drug supply charges compared to last year and work that continues with partners to target drug dealing and develop local intelligence to progress issues identified by members of the community

Noted.

Area Commander I. McMeekin and Station Commander K. Rennie (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service) left the meeting at this point.

## **9. Police Scotland Consultation on Body Worn Video Cameras**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the request for submissions to the consultation on extending the use of Body Worn Video Cameras to all frontline police officers. The proposed response was attached at Appendix 1 to the report and provided high level feedback and concluded that, subject to the necessary training of officers, an operating code of practice and adherence to legislation in respect of data protection, the proposal would represent a valuable step forward in modern day policing.

The Committee agreed to submit the response attached at Appendix 1 to the report to Police Scotland.

## **10. Police Scotland Consultation on the Review of Development of Local Police Plans**

Submitted report by the Head of Service (Democratic) on the consultation request from Police Scotland on a review of the development of Local Police Plans to identify areas of development and best practice which will inform future local

planning processes. The survey questions were attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Police Scotland advised that further information on the level of engagement that had been undertaken could be provided to assist the Committee in preparing its response to the consultation.

The Committee agreed to arrange a further meeting to discuss the proposals outlined in the consultation on the Review of Development of Local Police Plans, consider the further information that will be provided in relation to engagement and agree a response for submission to Police Scotland.

The meeting ended at 4.10 p.m.