

Police and Fire and Rescue Committee
5 September 2017

IRVINE, 5 September 2017 - At a Meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

Present

Donald L. Reid, John Glover, Todd Ferguson, Davina McTiernan and Angela Stephen

In Attendance

A. Fraser, Head of Democratic Services, A. Craig, Team Manager (Litigation) and M. Anderson, Committee Services Team Leader (Chief Executive's Service).

Also In Attendance

Chief Superintendent P. Main and Chief Inspector B. Shaw (Police Scotland); and Area Manager J. Scott and Group Manager K. Hankinson (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service).

Chair

Councillor Donald L. Reid in the Chair

Apologies for Absence

Ellen McMaster.

1. Chair's Remarks

The Chair extended a welcome to those in attendance, referred to the recent appointment of Councillor Glover as Vice-Chair and, on behalf of the Committee, expressed his best wishes to Christine Andrew, Senior Manager (Legal Services) on her forthcoming retirement from the Council.

In terms of Standing Order 9.4, the Chair agreed to vary the order of business to allow Agenda Item 5 (Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Plan) to be considered in advance of Agenda Item 4 (Performance Reports).

2. 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.

3. Minutes

The accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 30 May 2017 was confirmed and signed in accordance with Paragraph 7 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

The Committee agreed to note that, with regard to Item 3.2 of the Minute, the planned visit to the Police Scotland Control Centre in Govan had been arranged and would take place on 13 November 2017.

4. Discussion Paper: Potential Presentation/Report Topics

Submitted report by the Chief Executive on a number of topics which might be the subject of reports or presentations to the Committee over the course of the current Administration. A list of potential topics was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The Head of Democratic Services highlighted the potential for some topics and visits to be combined, as well as the various mechanisms available for dealing with different types of subject-matter, such as all-Member briefing sessions, reports/presentations to meetings of the committee and, where appropriate, the delivery of reports/presentations to the Committee in private.

The Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service representatives in attendance suggested that:-

- service provision on Cumbrae and Arran, counter-terrorism and the training of personnel might be the subject of joint presentations from both services;
- the proposed visit to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre and National Headquarters at Cambuslang could be combined with a visit to the new Police Scotland Crime Campus at Gartcosh;
- the Cambuslang visit take place at a time when multi-agency training was being delivered;
- armed policing might be of interest to the committee;
- the issue of domestic abuse might be covered by a presentation from representatives of North Ayrshire's specialist Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Response Team (MADART);
- the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Transformation Agenda might be the subject of a presentation to the committee; and
- a future meeting of the Committee could be hosted by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The Committee agreed (a) that presentations be made to the next meeting on (i) the work of the Multi-Agency Domestic Abuse Response Team and (ii) the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Transformation Agenda; (b) that arrangements be made for a visit to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre and National Headquarters at Cambuslang, to be combined, if feasible, with a visit to the new Police Scotland Crime Campus at Gartcosh; and (c) that it be remitted to officers, in consultation with Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service representatives, to begin scheduling the presentation of the various topics set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

5. Scottish Fire and Rescue Local Plan

Submitted report by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the new Local Fire and Rescue Plan for North Ayrshire. The Plan itself was set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

The report advised on the outcome of the public consultation exercise on the new Plan which had concluded on 2 July 2017, and advised that the six key priorities for North Ayrshire remained unchanged as a result. Proposed arrangements for reporting on progress against performance indicators were also set out in the report.

The Committee agreed to approve (i) the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for North Ayrshire, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report and (ii) the proposed method of reporting performance as outlined at Sections 2.3 and 2.4 of the report.

6. Performance Reports

6.1 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

Submitted report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service which provided an update on progress against the North Ayrshire Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014-17 and gave other key Fire and Rescue updates. A copy of the North Ayrshire Performance report from 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017 was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Group Manager K. Hankinson highlighted that there had been 1% increase in overall activity levels compared to the same period the previous year and a 14% increase in activity over the three month period. It was noted that false alarms accounted for 46% of all activity across North Ayrshire.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- potential reasons for the apparent 8.00 p.m. 'spike' in accidental dwelling fires;
- the assistance provided to casualties pending the arrival of the ambulance service;
- the types of fires described as 'secondary';
- measures to combat deliberate fire-setting and possible reasons for the increase in these figures during the last two financial years;
- the effectiveness of automatic detection in commercial premises;
- the difficulties associated with recruiting adequate numbers of retained crew on Millport;
- North Ayrshire's performance in terms of the recruitment of retained crew, compared with that of East Ayrshire and South Ayrshire; and
- the value of the excellent preventative work undertaken.

Noted.

6.2 Police Scotland

Submitted report by Police Scotland on performance in relation to the North Ayrshire Local Police Plan for the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 July 2017. A copy of the performance report was set out in the appendix to the report.

Chief Superintendent P. Main highlighted that performance in North Ayrshire was improving year on year and reported on a continuing trend of reducing crime and increased incidents. He reported on a relatively small increase in anti-social behaviour, suggested that serious and organised crime may be of interest to Members, and drew the Committee's attention to the increased complexity associated with the investigation of sexual crime and domestic abuse. Chief Superintendent Main also referred to the positive findings of an academic study which noted North Ayrshire's successful and proportionate approach to 'Stop and Search'.

Members asked questions, and received clarification, on the following:-

- the usefulness of bottle marking schemes as a method of tackling the issue of young people accessing alcohol, compared with other arguably more effective tools such as 'test purchasing' and education;
- knife crime within North Ayrshire;
- whether there had been any cases of acid attacks within North Ayrshire, following press reporting of such attacks in the London area;
- the more sophisticated and targeted approach to 'Stop and Search';
- the various mechanisms for responding to calls to ensure the most effective and appropriate use of resources;
- the steady decline in incidents of violence and disorder in North Ayrshire;
- the significant decrease in housebreaking over the last 5 years; and
- the circumstances surrounding the small number of hate crimes which had taken place in North Ayrshire.

Chief Superintendent Main undertook to provide a more detailed breakdown of incidents of hate crime as part of his report to the Committee early in 2018.

Councillor McTiernan paid tribute to the work of Police officers recently in providing assistance to a constituent.

Noted.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.