

MINUTE of MEETING of the SERVICES FOR THE COMMUNITY POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL of WEST LoTHIAN COUNCIL held within COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CIVIC CENTRE, LIVINGSTON, on 11 APRIL 2017.

Present – Councillors George Paul (Chair), Harry Cartmill, Frank Anderson, Lawrence Fitzpatrick, John McGinty

Apologies – Councillor John Muir, Jessie Duncan (Tenants Panel Representative), Bridget Meisak (WL Voluntary Sector Gateway), Maureen Finlay (Senior People's Forum).

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel approved the minute of its meeting held on 7 February 2017. The minute was then signed by the Chair.

3. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE LOCAL PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report had been circulated by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the Local Plan Performance for the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in West Lothian for the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2016.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair referred to the forthcoming retirement of Eddie Ritchie (Scottish Fire and Rescue Service). The Chair thanked Eddie for his contribution to the Panel.

Gary Laing, Local Senior Officer presented the report, highlighting a number of improvements for the reporting period. It was noted that the number of accidental dwelling fires for the period April to December 2016 was 79, compared to 104 for the same period in 2015.

The Panel was informed that SFRS had attended 198 deliberate fires in Quarter 3 2016/17. This was an increase of 12 incidents compared to the same reporting period in 2015/16, reflecting a 6% increase. While wheelie bins contributed to secondary fires, other types of deliberate fire setting included grass, woodland and road vehicles.

Finally, it was reported that work was ongoing with partners and other stakeholders to reduce Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. The service aimed to reduce false alarms in West Lothian by 5% per year.

In response to a question raised, the Panel was informed that organisations could not currently be charged for false alarm incidents.

The Panel was asked to note the contents of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

4. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE REPORT - CHANGE OF WHOLETIME FIRE FIGHTER DUTY SYSTEM

A report had been circulated by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing the Panel of a change in Duty System, which came into effect on 17 April 2017 that affected whole-time firefighters at Bathgate and Livingston Fire Stations. The report also advised of a reduction in the total number of whole-time firefighters in the West Lothian area due to the introduction of the new Duty System.

The Panel heard that, with a view to harmonising working arrangements across the SFRS, there was a desire to move to a single Duty System for whole-time firefighters. As with all public sector organisations, there was a requirement to work efficiently and effectively against a background of financial pressures, and there were financial efficiencies to be gained from moving to a single Duty System.

The report then provided details of the Legacy Duty System and the New Duty System. In addition, Gary Laing amplified aspects of the information contained in the report.

The report concluded that the introduction of a 5 Watch Duty System within the West Lothian area demonstrated a commitment on behalf of SFRS to secure efficiencies whilst maintaining service delivery.

The Panel was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. SCOTTISH FIRE RESCUE SERVICE - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE SPECIAL EQUIPMENT REVIEW AT BATHGATE FIRE STATION

A report had been circulated by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the implementation of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Special Equipment review in relation to the resources based at Bathgate Fire Station.

The report recalled that, in December 2013, the Local Senior Officer for Falkirk and West Lothian had presented a report to the Panel outlining some changes to resources and assets based in the West Lothian area which were planned to be undertaken through implementation of the SFRS Service Special Equipment Review. The report provided an update

on the change to resources based at Bathgate Fire Station. It was noted that, on 8 March 2017, the dedicated water rescue vehicle, boat and trailer entered into operational use at Bathgate Fire Station. A photograph of the resource was attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

The Local Senior Officer considered that having a dedicated Water Rescue Unit based at Bathgate Fire Station assisted in supporting the SFRS strategic objectives and West Lothian Local Fire Plan priorities of:-

- More equitable access to specialist resources throughout Scotland
- Standardisation of resources and equipment across Scotland
- Having a dedicated resource based in West Lothian that met an anticipated increase in local risk in terms of increased localised flooding through climate change
- Having a dedicated resource based in West Lothian that could be rapidly deployed to deal with localised flooding/water related rescues.

The Panel was asked to note the content of the report.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

6. 2026 SERVING A CHANGING SCOTLAND - 10 YEAR STRATEGY FOR POLICING - CONSULTATION

A report had been circulated by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services informing the Panel of the Police Scotland and Scottish Police Authority (SPA) consultation with Local Authorities on 2026 Serving a Changing Scotland – 10 Year Strategy for Policing. The report attached a proposed response to the consultation and noted that the consultation would close on 29 May 2017.

The 10 Year strategy for Policing in Scotland explained why Police Scotland would make further changes and transform from the current model to one that would better support the quality of service provided whilst ensuring that there was sufficient capacity to maintain the delivery of service and improve on outcomes for the safety and wellbeing of communities.

The seven Policing priorities consisting of Localism, Inclusion, Prevention, Response, Collaborative Working, Accountability and Adaptability, would be at the core of the delivery by Police Scotland. They would work to these priorities whilst focusing their strengths around five new strategic areas that had been identified as being; Protection, Prevention, Communities Knowledge and Innovation.

The implementation of the 10 year strategy would enable Police Scotland to transform and reshape their corporate support and would prioritise their

budget on frontline policing activities. They would look to benefit from economies of scale by joining up services with other public sector agencies in order to pool capacity and spending power. The transformational plan would generate more policing hours that were more productive for officers by freeing them from administrative duties. It had been recognised that these changes and improvements along with further introduced efficiencies and new technology would be key to achieving a financially sustainable position by the end of 2019/20 without reducing the operational capability or capacity of service delivery.

Panel members were asked to consider the proposed response to the Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), and refer the response to the Council Executive.

Referring to traffic management issues, and enforcement issues, Councillor McGinty suggested that the response be amended to reflect the view that Police Scotland should consider re-introducing traffic wardens as part of service delivery.

Decision

1. To note the terms of the report; and
2. To note that the draft response would be forwarded to the Council Executive for approval, but with the suggested amendment about traffic wardens.

7. SCRUTINY OF POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE IN WEST Lothian

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Superintendent Craig Smith and Area Commander Barry Blair, Police Scotland.

A report had been circulated by the Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services providing an update on the Performance of Police Scotland in West Lothian for the period 1 October 2016 – 31 December 2016.

The Panel was informed that Police Scotland Strategic Plan outlined the local Policing priorities and objectives for West Lothian and was a statutory requirement of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. It had been agreed that the monitoring of performance against the plans would be reported and considered on a quarterly basis by the Services for the Community Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel. The performance report for the period 1 October 2015 to 31 December 2016 was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The report showed that overall, anti-social behaviour in West Lothian had seen a 5% increase in the current year compared to the previous year. Wards experiencing an increase were Bathgate, Linlithgow, Livingston North and South and Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh. There had been 402 more incidents than in the previous year. The nature of these incidents varied from noise and other issues with domestic properties to

vandalism, youth disorder and public space disturbances. Joint intervention visits to known anti-social behaviour perpetrators and victims had meant issues were addressed swiftly with reassurance given to victims and ASB warnings issued to perpetrators. Direct liaison with youth justice services had also led to a more co-ordinated approach in dealing with youth offenders. A review was also being undertaken of processes with partners with a focus on young people including High Tariff missing children and repeat offenders to ensure the best possible interventions, education and support were in place.

In relation to Priority 7 (Drug Supply), it was noted that West Lothian had seen a decrease of 10.1% in drug supply detections, with 125 crimes detected compared to 139 in the previous year.

The report set out the current position relating to Priority 5 (Making Our Roads Safer). It was noted that a 'Parksmart' scheme was an initiative in conjunction with West Lothian Council regarding inconsiderate parking near to school premises and community resources. This was a week long initiative and there was ongoing engagement with Local Community Councils and Parent Teacher Associations.

Finally, the Area Commander responded to questions raised by Panel members.

The Panel was asked to note the content of the report covering the period 1 October 2016 to 31 December 2016.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. HOUSING, CONSTRUCTION AND BUILDING SERVICES MANAGEMENT PLAN 2017/18

A report had been circulated attaching a copy of the 2017/18 Management Plan for Housing, Customer and Building Services.

The Management Plan took account of corporate objectives, the Single Outcome Agreement, the efficiency agenda, and the agreed level of budgetary provision.

The Management Plan set out the work that the service would undertake during the 2017/18 financial year. The plan also provided a summary of the work undertaken in previous years and the improvements achieved by the service. It would act as the control document against which the service would monitor progress during 2017/18.

The Panel noted that tenant representatives were consulted on the service performance targets and actions as part of consultation and performance reporting arrangements.

The Panel was asked to consider the plan and provide comment as appropriate.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

9. WORKPLAN

A copy of the workplan had been circulated for information.

Decision

To note the workplan.

10. CHAIR'S CLOSING REMARKS

Referring to the end of the administrative term, the Chair recorded his appreciation of the contribution by representatives from Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland, council officers and Panel members.

On behalf of the Panel, Councillor McGinty thanked the Chair for his contribution to the Panel.