

MINUTE of MEETING of the COMMUNITY SAFETY BOARD held within MSTEAMS VIRTUAL MEETING, on 21 JUNE 2021.

Present – Councillors Lawrence Fitzpatrick (Chair), Kirsteen Sullivan, Andrew McGuire, Graham Hope (Chief Executive, West Lothian Council); Graeme Struthers (Depute Chief Executive, West Lothian Council), Annmarie Carr (Head of Housing, Customer and Building Services, West Lothian Council), Alison Smith (West Lothian Council), Brian Robertson (Scottish Fire & Rescue Service), Chief Inspector Alun Williams (Police Scotland) and Ashley Goodfellow (NHS Lothian).

Absent – Councillor Charles Kennedy

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

2. MINUTES

1. The Board confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 26 April 2021 as a correct record; and
2. The Board noted the Minute of the meeting of the Community Planning Partnership Board held on 22 February 2021.

3. COUNTY LINES IN SCOTLAND - PRESENTATION BY POLICE SCOTLAND

The Board was provided with a presentation by Chief Inspector Alun Williams, Police Scotland on the subject of County Lines and “Cuckooing”.

The purpose of the presentation was to learn what was meant by “county lines” and “cuckooing” and how they impacted on Scottish towns and cities; understand how children and vulnerable adults became involved and how to spot the signs; and explore collectively how to support those involved and to stop county lines and cuckooing in Scotland.

The presentation proceeded to explain how organised crime and drug dealing was driven from England across county lines and often involved children and vulnerable young people transporting drugs and money from England into Scottish towns and cities. The Chief Inspector continued to explain that often these young people did not realise they were being exploited and what signs to look out for when identifying the victims of these crimes and particularly the children being exploited.

The presentation continued by explaining the terminology “cuckooing” which was the act of criminals creating a secure base in a new area within the homes of these exploited children and vulnerable young people.

The presentation concluded by detailing some of the interventions and initiatives that were under way amongst partners, other council areas including those in England and Police Scotland.

The Board thanked Chief Inspector Alun Williams for the very informative and thought-provoking presentation.

Decision

To note the content of the presentation by Chief Inspector Alun Williams on Police County Lines and “Cuckooing”.

4. PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/21

The Board considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the West Lothian Community Safety Partnership providing an update on Quarter 4 performance 2020/21 for the indicators that supported the Community Safety Plan.

A range of 40 performance indicators were used to monitor progress across the five priorities for the life span of the current Community Safety Plan. The data presented in the report represented Q4 2020/21. Also contained in the report was a table which provided a summary of the performance indicators across each of the five priorities. Full details were set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

The Community Safety Board was asked to note the update performance data for Q4 2021/21.

Decision

To note the content of the report

5. WESTDRIVE 2021 - UPDATE

The Board considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by West Lothian Safer Communities Strategic Planning Group providing an update in relation to West Drive 2021.

The Board was advised that all parties remained committed to delivering West Drive 2021 and to meet safely. However, in a year of so many challenges associated with the global pandemic, contingency arrangements were being developed amongst partners to deliver West Drive later in the year.

The Board was asked to note the update in relation to West Drive 2021.

Decision

To note the content of the report in relation to the delivery of West Drive 2021.

6. WEST Lothian PARTNERSHIP AGAINST RURAL CRIME

The Board considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the West Lothian Safer Communities Strategic Planning Group providing an update on the development of the West Lothian Partnership Against Rural Crime (PARC).

Local partner agencies had recognised an opportunity to form a new local partnership designed to share expertise and tackle Rural Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour. The initial stakeholders in the discussions to date were:

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- National Farmers Union
- Police Scotland
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Forestry Land Scotland
- Zero Waste Scotland

A number of other agencies including Historic Environment Scotland, Scottish Canals and Woodland Trust were sighted to the formulation of the group, and involved in early discussion. PARC had met three times since February 2021, and was Chaired by Mr Jamie Smart from NFU.

The report concluded that the West Lothian PARC was a new and developing partnership group that would build upon existing strong relationships to focus activity on the reduction of rural crime and related anti-social behaviour.

The Community Safety Board was asked to note the existence of the West Lothian PARC and consider the opportunities to support the new groups in tackling rural crime and related anti-social behaviour.

Decision

1. To note the content of the report; and
2. To ask that consideration be given to community council representation on the group.