

MORAY COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee

Thursday, 09 February 2023

Council Chambers, Council Office, High Street, Elgin, IV30 1BX

PRESENT

Councillor James Allan, Councillor Peter Bloomfield, Councillor Tracy Colyer, Councillor Theresa Coull, Councillor John Divers, Councillor Jérémie Fernandes, Councillor Donald Gatt, Councillor Neil McLennan, Councillor Shona Morrison

IN ATTENDANCE

Superintendent Neil McDonald, Chief Inspector Simon Reid, both Police Scotland, Mr Chay Ewing, Area Commander, Local Senior Officer and Mr David Hendry, Group Commander, both Fire and Rescue Services Scotland, Head of Economic Growth and Development and Mrs Lissa Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the Committee, both Moray Council.

1 Chair

Councillor Bloomfield, being Chair of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee, chaired the meeting.

2 Condolences

The Chair asked that LSO Ewing pass on the condolences of the Committee to Firefighter Barry Martin's family following his untimely passing whilst carrying out his duties.

LSO Ewing thanked the Committee and agreed to pass on its condolences to Barry's family.

3 Declaration of Group Decisions and Members Interests

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillor's Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from group Leaders or Spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of member's interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

4 Resolution

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the items of business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this minute as specified below,

so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraphs of part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

Paragraph No. of Minute	Paragraph No. of Schedule 7A
10	14 – Information relating to any action taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

5 Minute of Meeting dated 1 September 2022

Under reference to paragraph 7 of the Minute of this Committee dated 1 September 2022, Councillor Divers stated that, during discussion of this item, he had raised the continued problem of illegal parking in Elgin High Street and asked that this be included in the Minute as he had intended to raise it at Question Time however had raised it during discussion of the Police Performance report as it made reference to illegal parking.

In response, the Clerk agreed to review her notes and the Webcast and amend the Minute accordingly.

Thereafter, the Minute of the meeting of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee dated 1 September 2022 was approved subject to the inclusion of Councillor Divers' comments in relation to illegal parking on Elgin High Street.

6 Written Questions

The Committee noted that no written questions had been submitted.

7 Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Moray Performance Report 1 April 2022 - 1 January 2023

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 18 February 2022, a report by LSO Chay Ewing, Local Senior Officer, Aberdeen City Aberdeenshire and Moray, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), informed the Committee of the performance undertaken by the SFRS locally in respect of the Moray Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2021-2024.

LSO Ewing provided a summary of recent performance which reported a decrease in all accidental dwelling fires and related casualties and fatalities as a result of thematic reporting and home fire safety checks, an increase in Special Service Calls assisting partners follow incidents such as RTCs, a decrease in deliberate fires and an increase in false alarms due to many returning to the workplace following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee joined the Chair in thanking Officers for the comprehensive performance report and thereafter agreed to note performance outlined in the report applicable to annual performance for 1 April 2022 to 1 January 2023.

8 Police Performance

Under reference to paragraph 6 of the Minute of the meeting of this Committee dated 19 November 2020, a report by Chief Superintendent Graeme Mackie, Divisional Police Commander, North East Division, Police Scotland, informed the Committee of the performance of Police in respect of the Local Policing Plan 2020-23 and other key indicators.

During discussion surrounding the increase in recorded incidences of hate crime, it was queried whether further information could be provided in relation to the number of recorded incidences for specific protected characteristics.

In response, Superintendent McDonald advised that he would give further consideration to future performance reports relating to hate crime including a further breakdown to differentiate between the various protected characteristics.

During further discussion surrounding staffing levels, the challenges as a result of the recent change in pension regulations were noted and it was queried whether there were any initiatives to address this.

In response, Superintendent McDonald advised of plans the Scottish Police Authority may have to retain or re-employ police officers and that he would provide further information following the meeting in this regard.

In response to a query in relation to road traffic offences and whether a further breakdown could be provided to differentiate between vehicle types ie car, HGV, Superintendent McDonald advised that he would give further consideration as to whether this further breakdown could be provided in future performance reports.

The Committee joined the Chair in thanking Officers for the comprehensive performance report and thereafter agreed:

- (i) to note performance outlined in the reports;
- (ii) that the Local Commander will continue to report to the Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives as articulated in the 2020-23 Local Policing Plan;
- (iii) that consideration be given to future performance reports relating to hate crime including a further breakdown to differentiate between the various protected characteristics;
- (iv) that further information be provided in relation to plans the Scottish Police Authority may have to retain or re-employ police officers; and
- (v) that consideration be given to future performance reports relating to road traffic offences include a further breakdown to differentiate between vehicle type ie car, HGV.

9 Question Time

Councillor Divers again raised the problem of illegal car parking in Elgin which appears to also be problematic in other areas in Moray and stated that it is raised at every meeting of the Elgin Community Council. He stated that he appreciates

that police manpower is reduced and that priorities have to be made however asked if there was anything further that could be done to address the problem.

In response, Chief Inspector Reid advised that the Police had approached retailers to raise awareness of illegal car parking however stated that the police could not be present all the time and that the issues of threat, risk or harm would always be prioritised. He did however state that the Elgin Community Officer and Special Constables in Elgin would continue to patrol the area when available.

The Chair stated that he had asked Chief Superintendent Mackie why Moray Council did not have the power to enforce parking regulations and asked the Head of Economic Growth and Development to explain this.

In response, the Head of Economic Growth and Development advised that parking enforcement falls within the remit of the Police and the only area the Council could use enforcement is for parking on a pavement. He further advised that there is a process where this could be deregulated which would involve the Council building a business plan and taking this to the Scottish Government for consideration. The Council did consider this a number of years ago however this was not taken forward due to cost.

Councillor Fernandes stated that he had read recent reports in relation to the health of fire fighters in Scotland specifically in connection with contaminants on PPE being linked to an increased risk of cancer and an increase in mental health illness and asked if there were any actions to address these concerns.

In response, LSO Ewing advised that the SFRS had established a Contaminant Group to prepare policies and procedures to ensure equipment is cleaned, fire fighters avoid smoke plumes and that fire equipment is sent away to specialist cleaners for cleaning. With regard to mental health illness, there are several ways in which an officer can reach out such as Mental Health Contacts within stations, the River Centre for counselling follow any difficult incidents and other agencies such as the Samaritans.

Councillor Coull queried whether Police Officers were aware of the Hollie App, an app that had been developed to keep people safe when walking alone, which had been shared by Derbyshire Constabulary and whether this is available in Moray.

In response, Superintendent McDonald advised that he was not aware of this app in particular however there were several that had been used in the past and that he would look into whether this was one of them.

Councillor Morrison stated that she welcomed the work undertaken by Fochabers Fire Station with their Mental Health Café and Menopause Café and thanked all those involved with these initiatives.

10 Police Scotland Operational Update [Para 14]

Superintendent McDonald and Chief Inspector Reid provided a confidential update in relation to operational matters within Police Scotland.