

#### **S46. POLICE SCOTLAND – FALKIRK AREA COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the local performance report by the local commander for the period April to September 2014. The report by the local commander provided additional information on road traffic collisions.

The committee asked how often Police Scotland would report to committee in 2015. Colin Moodie stated that at the meeting of Council on 8 October 2014 a six weekly timetable of meetings for the committee had been agreed. As there would be less meetings of the committee in the coming year both Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would report twice annually.

Chief Superintendent Flynn gave a short presentation which provided a summary of his report.

The committee asked how detected crimes were defined. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that a detected crime was one for which Police Scotland had detected the perpetrator and charged them. However, as the matter was then passed to the procurator fiscal not all cases would progress to court as a sufficiency of evidence was required to take action.

Members asked about the challenge of gathering evidence in cases of domestic abuse. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that there were a number of issues in this regard. In some cases after making an initial report the victim may be unwilling to proceed to prosecution and that due to the nature of domestic abuse incidents there were often no supporting witnesses. However, investigations would look at other sources of evidence such as background noise on the phone call to the police, injuries sustained and the statements of neighbours. Chief Superintendent Flynn advised that if the police had to release an accused person due to lack of evidence then a safety plan was put in place for the victim.

The committee asked how reorganisation had impacted on local resources. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that following reorganisation a number of specialist services were now more available to local operations including: Police Scotland Mounted Branch; the Operational Support Unit, and other support services. Central Scotland Police was resourced by 868 officers prior to reorganisation. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that following reorganisation there were 625 officers in Forth Valley Division and that these officers were supplemented by officers from the East Regional Resource Unit and centralised resources. For special events local officers could be called to support colleagues in other areas, for example to police international football matches and this arrangement was reciprocal. Further, it was stated that the number of officers would not decrease but that reorganisation had created flexibility to police where demand arose. Although there had been changes to the structure of the police force, the number of frontline officers was the same as before reorganisation.

Members asked for information on community policing and retaining local knowledge. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that an Inspector had been specifically selected to work in Grangemouth because of their background local knowledge. Community Investigation Units had provided increased local ownership and utilised local knowledge.

The committee asked about the use of 'Stranger Danger' talks in schools. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that historically reporting increased following the delivery of these talks in schools and that the police investigated all reports fully. She further stated that in cases where information was being shared through social media that it was important people pass information on to the police.

Members asked about work done with young people on domestic abuse. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that school based officers were involved in education work to increase the awareness young people had of the issue and promoted positive relationships. Officers also worked with abusers, as in many cases these young people were reflecting behaviours witnessed at home. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that Police Scotland were one of a number of partners involved in this work and that schools, social work and the voluntary sector all had an important role to play.

The committee asked what had caused the reduction in shop lifting. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that the Community Investigation Unit had been key to the reduction as they had carried out dedicated work to target shop lifters. They had worked to break individuals' offending cycles. Early intervention with high risk repeat offenders was found to be effective.

Members asked how complaints made about the police were responded to. Chief Superintendent Flynn advised that all complaints were responded to in writing. Although only a small number of complaints were upheld, the police viewed all complaints as an opportunity to learn lessons and reflect on how people felt they were treated. Each complainant received a full written explanation and a written apology would be issued where appropriate. In cases where complaints were upheld disciplinary action could be taken.

The committee asked which groups most often made complained about the police. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that complaints were received from a mixture of groups with many coming from individuals who had been charged or from people complaining on their behalf.

Members asked for further information on the work with young people to prevent low level disruption. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that every crime file for a person under 18 years old was reviewed by the public protection unit. They then decided whether to refer to the Reporter or intervene with diversionary actions. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that early and effective intervention was important and was delivered through partnership. Young people at risk of offending were referred to SACRO.

The committee asked for further information on the level of repeat offending by registered sex offenders. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that he would provide members with this information after the meeting.

Members asked for further information on circumstances which led to adult at risk referrals. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that referrals were made in a variety of instances concerning individuals identified as adults at risk. These could include being the victim of crime, domestic abuse or bogus workmen.

The committee asked what role the night time economy played in the number of petty assaults. Chief Inspector Paterson stated that analytical work was carried out regularly in this area and that around half of all violence took place in private accommodation.

Where a number of violent crimes occurred near licensed premises license checks were carried out. The police had responded to concerns about the town centre, charging 70

people for drug use and issuing 40 fixed penalty notices for minor anti-social behaviour incidents. She also referred to the success of using the mounted police; that staffing would be doubled for the festive period, and that 3 extra crews would be on duty after midnight on Saturdays.

Members asked for information about the change to the drink drive limit in Scotland on 5 December 2014. Chief Superintendent Flynn stated that many people who had been breathalysed recently would produce a fail after the implementation of the lowered limit at their current level. He stated that Police Scotland would maintain its focus on the causation factors of car crashes.

## **Decision**

**The committee noted:-**

- (1) the performance on the local policing plan, and**
- (2) the additional information provided on road traffic collisions.**