

SE4. POLICE SCOTLAND – FALKIRK AREA COMMAND PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Neighbourhood Services presenting the local police performance report by the Local Commander.

Local Commanders are required, in terms of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, to report performance of local policing as measured against the Local Policing Plan and to provide information about complaints against the police or in regard to policing.

Chief Superintendent Hawkins gave a presentation on the detail of the report which covered the period from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 and highlighted the performance of policing in the Falkirk Council area in accordance with the local policing plan priorities:-

- Protecting People and Places;
- Dealing with Antisocial Behaviour;
- Violent Crime;
- Disrupting Organised Crime;
- Crimes of Dishonesty; and
- Making Roads Safer.

The Committee discussed the reduction in the number of speeding offences and road safety issues in general. Members asked for information on the local approach to raising awareness in regard to road safety including bike safety and school road safety campaigns. Members then highlighted concerns in regard to road safety around schools at drop off/pick up times and sought clarity of Police Scotland's role in this. Members specifically highlighted instances of irresponsible parking and asked for Police Scotland's position on policing parking offences.

The Committee commented on local community engagement, highlighting the increase in police attendance at community council meetings and the value in this. Members remarked on the increase in the percentage of positive stop and searches conducted. Chief Inspector Patterson confirmed that the number of searches had decreased and the percentage of positive searches had increased attributably making to a proactive and intelligence led approach. Chief Superintendent Hawkins confirmed the force's emphasis on community engagement and highlighted a targeted partnership approach to tackling social issues, citing examples in the Grangemouth, Bo'ness, Bainsford and Camelon areas.

The Committee highlighted concerns over the instances recently when Falkirk Police station has been closed to the public during office hours. Chief Inspector Patterson confirmed that, due to staff absence the office had been closed on a number of occasions. Following a review the office will be staffed and open during office hours only.

Chief Superintendent Hawkins explained the force's approach to tackling high impact/high victim crimes. In response to a question in regard to the drop of 9% in the detection rate of acquisitive crime, he pointed to an increase in the detection rate of residential housebreaking as an example where such an approach, which had been successful.

The Committee discussed the impact of excessive alcohol consumption on victim vulnerability and sought information on the force's approach to both supporting

victims of crime. Chief Inspector Patterson explained that a range of interventions, with a range of partners, are available and where vulnerability is identified the public protection unit will look to identify the most appropriate intervention. Similarly in custody, where a large proportion of detainees have substance issues a range of interventions are available, citing, for example, an increase in referrals of detainees with addiction needs to the SIGNPOST support organisation.

In regard to the reporting of performance the Committee sought clarity on why performance information was measured against the previous year and against the preceding 5 year average. Chief Superintendent Hawkins stated that comparisons against both were of value, noting that overall crime in Scotland was at a 40 year low. The Committee then discussed instances where the Prosecutor Fiscal takes determines that there a no proceedings on drugs supply cases put forward by the police. Chief Inspector Patterson explained that fiscal policy had changed in regard to the evidence required to prosecute. As a consequence the number of cases which fall has risen.

Decision

The Committee noted the performance of Police Scotland against the priorities set out in the Local Policing Plan.