

SE5. Police Scotland – Falkirk Area Performance

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services which provided, as an appendix to the report, a briefing on the Falkirk Area Performance for the year April 2016 to March 2017 from the Chief Superintendent. Fiona Campbell provided an overview of the report. The committee then heard from Maggie Pettigrew who provided an overview of the submission.

The committee heard a short presentation on the introduction of new stop and search procedures which had been introduced following a national review.

The committee considered the format of the police performance information. It was the intention of Police Scotland to revise the format and content to make it more accessible, relevant and informative. This would be developed in consultation with the clerk with a new format presented to the committee for approval.

During her introduction Superintendent Pettigrew also noted that the Local Policing Plan for the area would be submitted to Council on 20 September for approval, in accordance with Standing Orders.

The committee discussed engagement behaviour, citing local examples. Damian Armstrong explained the local engagement mechanisms aimed at working with committees to tackle antisocial behaviour. In addition to local police officers, Police Scotland was able to draw upon officers from the National Violence Prevention Task Force to tackle antisocial behaviour.

In regard to parking enforcement members highlighted an increase in on road parking since Police Scotland withdrew its wardens. Members highlighted concerns around illegal parking around schools and in the town centre, which was having a detrimental impact on local businesses. Mr Armstrong conceded that the issue was the number of officers available and frequency in which parking could be enforced. He also cited ongoing work with local member and officers from Development Services. Drivers were prepared to park illegally and accept the subsequent parking ticket, with only 8% of tickets appealed. He then summarised initiatives to tackle speeding and gave an overview of the work of the Drug & Task Force and schools based officers on tackling drugs in schools.

The committee returned to antisocial behaviour, citing an issue of disruption caused by youths at Hallglen Sports Centre. Chief Inspector Armstrong summarised actions taken in response to calls from the centre which included officers in attendance and working with local groups. He noted that there was no community council in place and cited the value in working with community councils and local members in tackling antisocial behaviour. In response to a question on the Local Police Plan and local work plans, Chief Inspector Armstrong summarised the relationship between plans and other key strategic documents such as SOLD. Members requested an overview of local policing arrangements. It had been intended that this would be provided as part of the new members' induction programme following the

local government elections. The Democratic Services Manager agreed that introductory briefing sessions would be arranged and that all Members would be invited.

The committee discussed public satisfaction and how this was measured. This was measured in two ways through members of the public who have had contact with the police and through more general surveys. In the case of the former satisfaction was high whereas more generally public satisfaction was lower. This suggested to members that the public is reluctant to call the police but those who do report satisfaction with the way in which they are dealt.

In regards to road traffic accidents members sought clarification on the mechanism for informing local members of an accident. Chief Inspector Armstrong accepted that there may be delays in informing members but explained that there was a need to investigate incidents beforehand and it was not possible to inform members of incidents and causes until the necessary investigations have been completed.

The committee again discussed parking issues, reiterating examples of non enforcement, Superintendent Pettigrew explained the force's partnership approach to addressing known and potential areas where illegal parking is prevalent and highlighted the multi service approach to this and other local issues. Members restated that the issue had become worse following Police Scotland's decision to withdraw its warden service.

In response to a question in regard to a reduction in drugs misuse detection rates and the impact of this on public confidence in reporting instances, Chief Inspector Armstrong explained the process by which information from the community is analysed and actions taken. He could not comment on a statement that the numbers of convictions reflected poorly on the judicial system. He also explained the process and place to support people with issues, citing Signpost as an example. Superintendent Pettigrew confirmed that if information from the community is reliable the police will act, in fact 8 warrants had been enforced over a recent 2 day period.

The committee sought clarification of Police Scotland's approach to policing marches. Members highlighted a lack of consistency nationally. Chief Inspector Armstrong confirmed the local position, which reflected the national policy, which is that the police will be present for public order but not for traffic management. The latter would be dealt with through a Temporary Traffic Road Order. In regard to a specific question in regard to the Council's position the Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the force's national response to a report by Dr Michael Rosie on marches had been awaited by the Council since late 2016.

The committee discussed domestic abuse reporting. The detection rate for this had decreased significantly. Superintendent Pettigrew explained that the context was important and reiterated this was a high priority area. Chief Inspector Armstrong explained factors which made detection difficult, such as lack of witnesses. Members observed that the factors would be the same at any given time and therefore this did not explain a drop in detection rate.

Superintendent Pettigrew confirmed there had been no change in approach and that a factor may have been an increase in reported historic incidents.

The committee then sought clarification of Police Scotland's position in regard to CCTV. Chief Inspector Armstrong stated that the service involved peak time monitoring, but within this there was flexibility. The system which had been operated in partnership with Stirling and Clackmannanshire Council required upgrading and approaches had been made nationally to the Scottish Government for funding. The cost of digital provision was £500k with funding partners being sought.

Decision

The committee noted the report and acknowledged progress by Police Scotland in meeting its priorities.