



**Agenda Item**

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**Minute**

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**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (External) held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 8 March 2018 at 9.30 a.m.**

**Councillors:** David Balfour  
Lorna Binnie  
Jim Blackwood  
Niall Coleman  
David Grant  
John McLuckie  
Depute Provost Ann Ritchie

**Councillors in Attendance:** Laura Murtagh, Public Protection Portfolio Holder

**Officers:** Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology and Improvement  
David MacKay, Head of Education  
Stuart Murray, Trainee Governance Assistant  
Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager

**Also Attending:** Constable Mervyn Almedia, Police Scotland  
Chief Inspector Damian Armstrong, Police Scotland  
Chief Superintendent Tony Beveridge, Police Scotland  
Detective Chief Inspector Vicky Watson

**SE22. Apologies**

An apology was intimated on behalf of Councillor Nicol.

**SE23. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest at this point.

**SE24. Minute**

**Decision**

**The minute of meeting of the Scrutiny Committee (External) held on 11 January 2018 was approved.**

## **SE25. Police Scotland – Falkirk Area Performance**

The committee considered a report by the Director of Corporate and Housing Services presenting Police Scotland's local performance report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 December 2017.

Chief Superintendent Beveridge gave an introduction to the report highlighting notable specific areas of interest such as an antisocial behaviour initiative in the Bonnybridge area. Chief Inspector Armstrong gave a detailed summary of police performance during the reporting period, highlighting parking issues in the area and an increase in the number of tickets issued and providing detail on the joint work with partners to tackle antisocial behaviour by youths in Bonnybridge.

Chief Superintendent Beveridge gave an overview of divisional issues, including the formation of a public service team in Stirling to address issues which do not require officer attendance and which can predominantly be resolved by telephone. He also advised that officers were being trained to carry and use TASERS. Additionally, an enquiry team had been established to manage how the force responds to and reports on licensing issues.

Detective Chief Inspector Watson then gave a presentation on the role of the Protection Unit, highlighting the scope of the work managed by the unit and the partnership work carried out in prevention and management of offenders.

The committee highlighted that it was International Women's Day and sought information on gender balance in the police service including historical context. Chief Inspector Armstrong provided a short summary of the current gender balance, recognising that historically, the police service had been a male orientated service. He undertook to provide a summary report and a briefing to members at a later date.

Members then discussed parking in the area. In the period, 500 parking tickets had been issued, which was welcomed. However, members expressed concern in regard to parking at schools at drop off and pick up times. Chief Inspector Armstrong agreed that it remained an issue and stressed the need for parties, including parents, to work together to reduce the instances of dangerous or thoughtless parking.

He then explained the apparent anomaly where detection rates exceeded 100%. This was due to crimes being recorded in a particular time period and detected at a late date and recorded in a different reporting period.

Following questions on stop and search, Chief Superintendent Beveridge explained that the stop and search criteria had changed. Of 660 stop and searches carried out, 220 yielded positive results. The process was not consensual but should be based on reasonable common sense. It was key to record every search to reassure the community that the procedure was transparent and undertaken for the correct reasons. This also allows for

analysis of the reasons for searches and where required action can be taken.

In response to a question on the increase, from 50 to 162, in the carrying of offensive/bladed weapons, Chief Superintendent Beveridge explained that this was mainly due to a change in how crimes were recorded. Previously an assault where the assailant had a knife was recorded as assault. Now it was assault and carrying an offensive/bladed weapon. As a consequence, there had been an increase in the number of crimes recorded.

Members then praised the introduction of weekend emails to elected members.

### **Decision**

**The committee approved the report and acknowledged progress by the organisation in meeting their priorities.**