

FALKIRK COUNCIL

**Subject: FALKIRK CRUISE PARTNERSHIP AND ASSOCIATED
FALKIRK TOWN CENTRE ISSUES - UPDATE**
Meeting: COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
Date: 13 MAY, 2008
Author: DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this Report is to update members on relevant developments and initiatives involving officers from Development Services, in conjunction with partner agencies, across issues arising from the Falkirk Cruise Partnership and specific vehicle nuisance issues in Falkirk Town Centre.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Falkirk Cruise Partnership was set up around 1998 by the then Central Scotland Police Community Safety Sergeant. It was instigated by complaints from residents of Galloway Street who were being disturbed by people gathering in cars, dropping litter, playing loud music etc, in the Central Retail Park Car Park near to their homes.
- 2.2 Since then the problem has moved around for a variety of reasons, not least being the building of the Millennium Link and its associated car parking and the expansion of the Central Retail Park.
- 2.3 Consequently, the complainers and their locations have varied, but the complaints remain relatively consistent as those of noise, litter, urinating, drinking and road safety.

3. RESPONSE ACTIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

- 3.1 Over the years much has been done by the Police and partner agencies in an effort to address the concerns raised by residents and others including:
- Closing the section of car park next to Galloway Street outside peak hours;
 - Setting up a temporary (now permanent) traffic order closing Manor Street / Bank Street to through traffic;
 - Closure of the “upper” Millennium Wheel Car Park;
 - Regular additional police patrols on “Cruise” nights (first Thursday of each month);

- Measurement of speed and volume of traffic particularly in Park Street and Millennium Wheel Drive;
 - Council clean-up team picking up litter around West Carmuir's Loan / Millennium Wheel Drive car park;
 - Attempts to assist / encourage Cruisers to find a more suitable or permanent site.
- 3.1 In general, feedback about Police and partner activity has been positive. The closure of part of the Central Retail Park car park and additional high visibility police patrols in particular have led to significantly reduced complaints.
- 3.2 However, the recent focus of attention has centered on noise from modified exhausts fitted to the participating cars and to nights other than "official" "Cruise" nights.
- 3.3 In response to this issue, officers from Development Services have assisted the Police in conducting noise assessments of vehicle exhausts suspected of being modified. This assessment involves the lowest recorded noise level taken from three readings being compared to the noise levels from a standard exhaust. In the event of a failed test the Police may take appropriate action in terms of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended).

4. CURRENT ACTIONS

- 4.1 Officers are currently reviewing and assessing report information in respect of the impact of vehicle exhaust testing on the number of vehicles attending "Cruise" nights.
- 4.2 Field survey work will continue in respect of conducting noise assessments of vehicle exhausts suspected of being modified.
- 4.3 The Antisocial Behaviour Team will continue to record and pass to the Police the registration numbers of vehicles with noisy exhausts witnessed during their late night patrols.
- 4.4 Officers from Development Services will continue to support the Police and other partners in minimising the disturbance caused by vehicles on "Cruise" night and at all other times within Falkirk area.

5. UPDATE

- 5.1 A downward trend in attendance at "Cruise" nights has been identified from an average attendance of 700 vehicles in early 2007 to currently 200 vehicles per event. It should be noted however that these figures are subject to seasonal variation.

- 5.2 This decrease may be the direct result of the new Police procedure of reporting vehicle owners with modified exhausts to their insurance companies combined with the introduction of fixed penalty Notices as referred to in para 5.6 below in April 2007.
- 5.3 Analysis of air quality data on "Cruise" nights at Hope Street and Park Street automatic monitoring stations has established that "Cruise" vehicles are not causing exceedences of the nitrogen dioxide air quality objective.
- 5.4 A partnership initiative to reduce vehicle emissions from stationary "Cruise" vehicles is being explored. The initiative would involve officers from the East Central Scotland Vehicle Emission Partnership, involving Falkirk and the Lothian's Councils advising drivers at "Cruise" nights to switch off their engines when stationary.
- 5.5 A Fixed Penalty Notice (£20 fine) can be issued in terms of, The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (Scotland) Regulations 2003 if drivers fail to desist. This option is currently under consideration and a report will be brought to Members' in the future.
- 5.6 Approximately 20-30 Fixed Penalty Notices (£30 fine) are being issued by the Police on "Cruise" nights for excessively noisy exhausts and other contraventions of The Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (as amended).
- 5.7 Town centre residents are still reporting disturbance from noisy exhausts on normal week nights. The Police have requested that they continue reporting these incidents in order that they can be investigated.
- 5.8 The Cruiser Working Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Members note the contents of this Report and note the intention to submit regular Update Reports to this Committee as appropriate.**

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Director of Development Services

Date: 02 May, 2008

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