

PARTNERSHIPS PANEL

Minutes of the Meeting held remotely on
9 February 2022 at 10.00am

Present: Councillors Arthur Spurling (Chair), Douglas Campbell, Ian Cavana, Ian Davis and Martin Dowey

Attending: L Reid, Assistant Director – Place; J Bradley, Assistant Director – People; M. Newall, Assistant Director – People; W Carlaw, Service Lead – Democratic Governance; A. Mutch, Co-ordinator (Sports and Leisure); I. McMeekin, Area Commander/Local Senior Officer for Ayrshire, Fire and Rescue Service, F. Hussain, Chief Superintendent – Divisional Commander - Ayrshire, K. Lammie, Chief Inspector – Local Area Commander South Ayrshire, C. Bilsland, Fire Scotland, J. McClure, Committee Services Lead Officer, F Maher, Committee Services Officer

1. Sederunt & Declarations of Interest

The Chair took the Sederunt and outlined the procedures for conducting this meeting and advised that this meeting would be broadcast live.

The Chair thanked Councillor Hugh Hunter for his contribution to this Panel during his time as Chair and also gave thanks to Siobhian Brown for her work in relation to this Panel.

There were no declarations of interest by Members in terms of Council Standing Order No. 17 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 (issued) were submitted and approved.

3. Action Log

The Assistant Director – Place provided the Panel with an update on the status of the Action Log and Work Programme.

A Member asked what the ultimate goal was in terms of the steeple, to which the Assistant Director – Place advised that if additional funding could be sourced, then the position would be reviewed and consideration given as to whether replacement of the steeple was viable, however there were insufficient funds at this stage.

4. Local Performance Report: Scottish Fire and Rescue

There was submitted a report (issued) of 1 February 2022 by the Assistant Director – People providing members of the Panel with information about the mid-year performance of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire.

The Assistant Director – People welcomed Ian McMeekin, Area Commander/Local Senior Officer for Ayrshire, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to the meeting and the Area Commander provided a comprehensive overview to the Panel.

Questions and comments from Members included:

- (1) Members thanked the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service for the quick response to the Kincaidston incident.
- (2) Concern that due to the cost of smoke/carbon detector alarms, there would be a shortage in the uptake of installation; and the Area Commander advised that the Scottish Fire Service were communicating widely with home owners and landlords. Additional funding would be available to home owners who were significantly at risk.
- (3) Linked alarms – would this be monitored or recorded in future reports; and the Area Commander advised that Scottish Fire and Rescue was the enforcing agency for commercial settings, however not for domestic settings, therefore this data would not be gathered;
- (4) Kincaidston – had the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, in conjunction with other agencies, investigated causes and prevention; and the Area Commander advised that it would be inappropriate to discuss the investigations, however he assured the Panel that they were working closely with Police Scotland and the Health & Safety Executive.

The Area Commander continued to provide an overview of the South Ayrshire Delivery Activity Summary (Appendix A, page 4) and invited further questions from the Panel.

Questions and comments raised by Members included:

- (1) The report was extremely detailed – would it be possible to reduce the report to South Ayrshire specifically, however could a link also be provided to access the national statistics too; and the Area Commander advised this will be provided at the next Panel;
- (2) Information on which areas/sites instigated deliberate fires; and the Area Commander commented there was a particular issue with Ayr North. Scottish Fire and Rescue had a Deliberate Fire Strategy, Action Plan and wished to provide the public with re-assurance that this would still be seen as a priority matter.
- (3) High number of deliberate fires and false alarms – how would this be dealt with; and the Area Commander assured the Panel that these continue to be investigated and some work had been undertaken in the Wallacetown area where Scottish Fire and Rescue had an embedded officer to address concerns.
- (4) Community Councils – would it be possible for Scottish Fire and Rescue to attend both Councils within Ayr North – perhaps once per year – to emphasise the serious and dangerous nature of these issues; and the Area Commander welcomed the opportunity to do this and would engage with the Councils to confirm dates.

The Panel, having scrutinised the 2021/22 mid-year performance report of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service in South Ayrshire

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

5. Local Performance Report: Police Scotland

There was submitted a report (issued) of 1 February 2022 by the Assistant Director – People providing members of the Panel with information about the mid-year performance of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire.

The Assistant Director – People introduced Faroque Hussain, Chief Superintendent – Divisional Commander – Ayrshire who then proceeded to give an overview of the report.

The Chief Superintendent also gave thanks to the Elected Members for their support during the Kincaidston incident and advised that the investigation, led by Police Scotland had been handed over to the Health & Safety Executive. There had been a multi-agency debrief and the conclusion was that the services reacted in an excellent manner, with only minor issues raised.

Members congratulated the Police, as well as Council employees, for the co-operation of everyone involved.

The Chief Superintendent also advised that Police Scotland were working with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service with regard to Wallacetown, which was identified as being a significantly deprived area. This was being led by Kevin Lammie, Chief Inspector – Local Area Commander South Ayrshire.

The Chief Superintendent advised that there had been an increase in fraud, including bogus callers. A Member asked for an explanation of this and the Chief Superintendent advised that this was a complex issue, whereby (for example) someone purporting to be a bank employee would contact a potential victim of an issue with their account, thereafter a bogus police officer would call at their home, resulting in the loss of significant sums of money in some cases. Police Scotland had raised awareness through social media, however they were trying to reach other members of the public through literature.

A Member asked how quickly Police Scotland obtained information on new types of fraud; and the Chief Superintendent advised there was a need to stay ahead of the curve and that the Chief Inspector – Local Area Commander would pick up anomalies in South Ayrshire at the daily meeting and, indeed, identified the bogus caller claiming to be a police officer, from day one and alerted other authorities.

The Chief Superintendent commented on sexual crimes against women and advised that more women were coming forward to report these crimes. Police Scotland would continue to target the perpetrators through the “Don’t Be That Guy” campaign. Police Scotland were absolutely committed to working with partnerships and were aware of the impact on the community of such serious crimes.

A Member asked if ‘spiking’ was being monitored to provide an indication if there was an increase or decrease in incidents and whether Police Scotland had considered issuing advice to licenced establishments and members of the public highlighting signs/symptoms of spiking and what should be done with suspected cases; and the Chief Superintendent advised of significant media interest in November and a number of incidents reported to police (not just spiking but injections too). Police Scotland were awaiting some toxicology reports, however there was concern that some members of the public may be reacting to media fears.

A Member noted an increase in hate crime/domestic abuse/drugs; and the Chief Superintendent advised that hate crimes had increased from 68 last year to 73 this year. Some of these had been homophobic and racially motivated crimes directed at police officers. Police Scotland had a zero tolerance approach and were trying to encourage members of the public to report such crimes and these would be taken very seriously.

The Panel, having scrutinised the mid-year performance report of Police Scotland in South Ayrshire

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

6. The Quay Zone Performance Report

There was submitted a report (issued) of 1 February 2022 by the Assistant Director – People inviting Panel members to scrutinise the performance of The Quay Zone.

The Assistant Director – People introduced the Co-ordinator (Sports and Leisure) to provide an overview of the report. .

Questions and comments raised by Members were:

- (1) Delayed maintenance of equipment – what was the lifespan of some of the more expensive pieces of equipment; and the Co-ordinator (Sports and Leisure) advised that, although he did not have all the details, the pool and filtration system would have a 7-10 year cycle before requiring significant maintenance works.
- (2) How had the adverse weather conditions affected the building; and the Co-ordinator (Sports and Leisure) advised that parts of the building were exposed to the elements and there were some leaks in the flat roof, some doors (fire exits) warping, however nothing too significant. These would be recurring issues.

The Panel, having scrutinised the performance of the Quay Zone, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report

Decided: to note the contents of the report.

General

The Chair asked ICT to report back by Friday, 11 February 2022 to Members and the Service Lead – Democratic Governance to establish reasons for the poor connection experienced by the Scottish Fire and Rescue and Police Scotland attendees, who had to join the Panel by telephone; Michael Reid, ICT confirmed this will be raised with his Line Manager and reported back.

The meeting concluded at 11h48