

Public Protection Committee

ABERDEEN, 9 March 2021. Minute of Meeting of the PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE. Present:- Councillor Stewart, the Depute Provost, Convener; Councillor Lesley Dunbar, Vice-Convener; and Councillors Allard, Duncan, Greig, Houghton, MacGregor, Mason MSP (as substitute for Councillor Wheeler) and Townson.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

1

The Convener invited Members to declare any interests in the business before the Committee.

There were no declarations.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 2 DECEMBER 2020

2

The Committee had before it the draft minute of its previous meeting.

Members heard a question regarding Article 11 – Resilience Annual Report – COM/20/226 specifically with regard to EU Exit arrangements and its current position.

The Chief Officer – Governance reminded Members of the previous communication circulated just before New Year and updated the Committee that none of the risks had become issues and that the Council remained active in participation at a national level to monitor all developments.

The Chief Officer – Governance agreed that a report would follow to a future meeting and feature in the Committee Planner.

The Committee resolved :-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

COMMITTEE PLANNER

3

The Committee had before it the Committee Planner.

Members heard that the planner represented current and future business and were reminded that there had been a circulation on behalf of the Convener seeking themes for future reporting by Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service to maintain an assurance overview.

Members suggested themes and heard that these would be discussed with the respective organisations and be planned for future reporting.

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The Committee resolved :-

- (i) to note the planner; and
- (ii) to programme the suggested themes for thematic reporting by Police Scotland and SFRS into future planning.

POLICE SCOTLAND - VERBAL UPDATE : CURRENT LOCKDOWN**4**

The Convener advanced this item from its agenda position to facilitate Police Scotland to provide a 'here and now' position of policing in the City before continuing to the reports presented.

Members heard from the Local Police Commander who presented a verbal overview of the operations, challenges and observations being experienced during the current lockdown.

Members were advised of positive partner working with ACC Services and acknowledgement of frustrations experienced by citizens. Responding to a question on staff morale, the Local Police Commander advised that Police Scotland remained observant and mindful on staff welfare and that absenteeism levels, whilst lower than normal, were monitored and that there was an introduction of fatigue within policing which was being addressed with adaptive welfare consideration.

The Local Police Commander confirmed that a lessons learned exercise was live and captured benefits and efficiencies that had developed during changes to policing throughout Scotland whether by legislation, guidance or public behaviours and expectations, to ensure a 'new normal' would evolve within policing.

The Committee resolved :-

to acknowledge the verbal update provided.

POLICE SCOTLAND PERFORMANCE REPORT : APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2020 - POL/21/058**5**

The Committee had before it the report from the Local Police Commander, Police Scotland.

The report presented the Police Scotland Performance Report for the period April to September 2020 for Committee scrutiny.

Members heard from the local Police Commander who provided a summary of the report and responded to Members' questions.

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The report recommended : -

that the Committee discuss, comment on and endorse the report.

The Committee resolved :-

to approve the recommendation.

**POLICE SCOTLAND THEMATIC REPORT - VIOLENCE TOWARDS POLICE STAFF
- POL/21/059**

6

The Committee had before it the report from the Local Police Commander, Police Scotland.

The report provided information to the Committee on the rise in Police Assaults and abusive behaviour towards Police Officers and Police Staff and the associated approach of Police Scotland and North East Division to protecting our people.

Members heard from the local Police Commander who provided a summary of the report and addressed Members' questions.

The report recommended : -

that the Committee discuss, comment on and endorse the report.

The Committee resolved :-

- (i) to approve the recommendation; and
- (ii) to note the increased instances of violence towards Police Officers and Staff and to record their abhorrence at such activity.

**POLICE SCOTLAND - LETTER REGARDING NORTH EAST DIVISION SENIOR
MANAGEMENT CHANGES**

7

The Committee had before it the letter from the Local Police Commander which had been previously circulated to all Elected Members.

The letter provided information on North East Division - Senior Management Team Changes.

Members heard that the Local Police Commander wished to continue community focused Policing and provide Elected Members with contact points within their communities and the wider management team.

The Committee resolved :-

to note the updated information.

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SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE - VERBAL UPDATE : CURRENT LOCKDOWN**8**

The Convener introduced the Local Area Commander (LAC), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS), acknowledged awareness of the increased challenges upon SFRS and sought assurance that there had been no impact on service delivery.

The LAC provided a verbal update on the activities undertaken by SFRS during the pandemic lockdown to address the required adaptations to maintain an effective and safe service delivery.

Members heard that staff and public safety requirements were foremost, and several reviews had amended all functions beginning from the initial request for an SFRS service whether by answering of a call or receipt of correspondence through to completion; whether that be non-emergency or emergency situations.

The LAC advised Members that safe working practices within stations had been adapted and that legislative requirements around fire safety and inspection had been maintained through innovative use of technology.

Members heard that SFRS intended to capture learning and best practice from adaptations implemented during the pandemic period to inform enhanced SFRS service delivery.

The LAC concluded with examples of where Firefighters had responded to community needs. Responding to a question on staff morale, the LAC provided examples of positive welfare and activity by staff to overcome the difficult situation and indicated that combined with low levels of absenteeism, high levels of staff morale were evident.

The Committee resolved :-

to acknowledge the verbal update provided.

PROTECTIVE SERVICES - VERBAL UPDATE : CURRENT LOCKDOWN**9**

The Convener introduced the Protective Services Manager (PSM), Operations and Protective Services, and acknowledged the additional demands that had been placed upon this service area and approved deviation from presentation of a report to provision of a verbal update to provide assurance Members on continued public protection.

The PSM advised members that officers from both Environmental Health and Trading Standards continued to operate as a unified, integrated team to deliver the business

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restrictions and investigation of clusters of cases associated with business premises and the pandemic.

Members heard that Protective Services continued to operate at both local and national levels and had strong partner working with Police Scotland.

The PSM advised Members that much of the proactive activity of his teams had been reduced however much of this reduction was linked with the high volume of closed or restricted businesses together with pandemic guidance or restriction which precluded close proximity working.

Members enquired of the levels of staff morale and heard that whilst early signs of fatigue were now being seen, staff were performing well which was acknowledged by a Member evidencing positive constituent feedback.

The PSM concluded by seeking to assure Members that Protective Services service delivery was being properly delivered to the priority areas particularly pandemic related.

The Committee resolved :-

to acknowledge the verbal update provided.

- **Councillor Jennifer Stewart, Convener**