

LOCAL POLICE & FIRE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 APRIL 2019

Local Police & Fire Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 18 April 2019 at 2pm

Present: Councillors Clocherty, Crowther, Curley, Jackson, MacLeod, J McEleny, McVey, Murphy, Quinn and Wilson.

Chair: Councillor McVey presided.

In attendance: Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources, Head of Inclusive Education, Culture & Communities, Service Manager, Community Learning & Development, Community Safety & Resilience and Sport, Mr J Douglas (for Head of Legal & Property Services), Ms S Lang (Legal & Property Services), Head of Environmental & Public Protection, Service Manager, Public Protection and Mr I Hanley (Community Safety & Resilience).

In attendance also: Chief Superintendent G Crossan, Chief Inspector S Wright and Inspector J MacDonald, Police Scotland and Group Manager D McCarrey, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service.

The following paragraphs are submitted for information only, having been dealt with under the powers delegated to the Committee.

| | | |
|------------|--|------------|
| 257 | Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest | 257 |
|------------|--|------------|

No apologies for absence or declarations of interest were intimated.

| | | |
|------------|---|------------|
| 258 | Presentation – Scottish Police Authority (SPA) | 258 |
|------------|---|------------|

The Convener welcomed to the meeting, Professor Susan Deacon CBE, Chair of the Scottish Police Authority.

Professor Deacon began her presentation by explaining that while the SPA had interface with local government colleagues through CoSLA and the Scrutiny Conveners' Forum, she was taking an opportunity to meet directly with local authorities and other service providers to ensure public services were working together to make the best use of available resources.

By way of background, she explained that a single police force for Scotland had come about for three stated reasons: (1) finance and sustainability reasons, (2) sharing specialist capabilities and (3) providing more involvement of local Councillors in policing. At the same time, the SPA had been established (1) to maintain and improve policing and hold the Chief Constable accountable for the delivery of operational policy, (2) to provide a clearer separation between policy and ministers, ensuring no undue political influence and (3) to address shortcomings in governance accountability which existed under the old arrangements.

In this respect, Professor Deacon advised the Committee that she believed significant improvements had been and were continuing to be made, with stability being provided last year with the new leadership of Police Scotland. In her view, Police Scotland was now one of the best police forces in the world.

The Committee was advised that the SPA had revised the governance structures and decision-making processes to make these more open and transparent and to focus on public interest issues.

LOCAL POLICE & FIRE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 APRIL 2019

One of the main areas requiring further work was around communications and the Police had now embarked on an ambitious programme of transformation and change internally, including improvements in technology, review of the police estate and the shape and balance of the workforce.

Following the presentation, Professor Deacon answered a number of questions from Members including questions relating to cyber crime and technology but focusing particularly on:

Community Policing

Community Policing within Inverclyde was recognised as being extremely effective and Professor Deacon emphasised the impact of leadership in achieving these high standards. She stated that it was vital to ensure that the right balance was achieved between national specialisation and adherence to national frameworks, and exercising discretion and working in a flexible way at a local level.

Police Numbers

Concerns were expressed by Members regarding the effect of the national reduction in police numbers particularly within the context of the serious drugs problems within Inverclyde, the Community Justice funding reduction and reduction in Community Warden numbers.

Professor Deacon indicated that while police officer numbers in Scotland had been sustained in a way which had not been achieved elsewhere in the UK, the emphasis should be on deploying resources more effectively and efficiently. One significant trend was for police officers to become involved in less crime-related activity and this was something which had to be looked at to ensure that gaps in provision within the community were met appropriately across all public sector organisations.

In relation to the drugs problem both locally and nationally, she stated that this was a complex issue with many contributing factors and one that required multi-agency input.

Brexit Implications

It was recognised that the Brexit implications for the Police would be both significant and costly. Chief Superintendent Crossan advised the Committee, that while access to the Shengen Information System may not be available on withdrawal from the European Union, information sharing arrangements would continue as these were mutually beneficial, particularly given the enormous threat of online crime.

Following the presentation and questions, the Convener expressed his thanks on behalf of the Committee to Professor Deacon for her attendance at the meeting.

- | | | |
|------------|--|------------|
| 259 | Police Scotland – Spotlight on Violence in Inverclyde 2018/19 | 259 |
| | <p>There was submitted a briefing paper by Police Scotland on violent crime in the Inverclyde Division in the period April 2018 to February 2019.</p> <p>Decided: that the information contained in the report be noted.</p> | |
| 260 | Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Performance Report | 260 |
| | <p>There was submitted a report on the performance and activities of the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service during the reporting period 1 January to 31 March 2019.</p> <p>(Councillor Wilson left the meeting during consideration of this item of business).</p> <p>Decided: that the information contained in the report be noted.</p> | |

LOCAL POLICE & FIRE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 18 APRIL 2019

- | | | |
|------------|---|------------|
| 261 | <p>Public Space CCTV Provision</p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Environment, Regeneration & Resources providing an update on progress on the replacement of the public space CCTV system.</p> <p>Decided: that the information contained in the report be noted.</p> | 261 |
| 262 | <p>Local Police & Fire Scrutiny Committee Update Report (April 2019)</p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on current and emerging national issues relating to both Police and Fire & Rescue Services.</p> <p>Decided: that the information contained in the report be noted.</p> | 262 |
| 263 | <p>Scottish Police Authority Visit to Inverclyde</p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development and the Divisional Commander, K Division providing an update on the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) visit to Inverclyde on 27 and 28 February 2019.</p> <p>Decided: that the information contained in the report be noted.</p> | 263 |
| 264 | <p>Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018</p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development providing an update on the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 and resulting changes to criminal law for perpetrators of domestic abuse in Scotland from 1 April 2019.</p> <p>Decided: that consideration of this item be continued to the next meeting of the Committee.</p> | 264 |
| 265 | <p>Police Scotland – Shaping our Direction and Delivery 2019 - 2022</p> <p>There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development seeking approval of a response to the Police Scotland consultation ‘Shaping our Direction and Delivery 2019 – 2022’.</p> <p>Mr Hanley advised the Committee that comments in relation to the consultation response could be submitted for up to one week from the date of the meeting.</p> <p>Decided: that approval be given to the consultation response attached at Appendix 1, subject to the inclusion of any further comments submitted by Members.</p> | 265 |