

THE MORAY COUNCIL

**MINUTE OF MEETING OF THE POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICES
COMMITTEE**

6 AUGUST 2015

COUNCIL OFFICE, ELGIN

PRESENT

Councillors R Shepherd (Chair), G Alexander, J Divers, G Leadbitter, M McConachie, G McDonald, D Ross and C Tuke.

APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

IN ATTENDANCE

Divisional Commander, Chief Superintendent Campbell Thomson and Chief Inspector Willie Findlay both Police Scotland, Aberdeenshire and Moray Division, Chief Inspector Kevin Elder, Police Scotland, Contact, Command and Control Division, Mr David Rout, Local Senior Officer, Mr David Meldrum, Group Manager, Ms Anna Rodgers, Station Manager, Mr Bruce Milne, Station Manager all of Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (Aberdeenshire and Moray Division), the Head of Development Services, the Community Safety Officer, Sergeant Kevin McPherson, Police Scotland, Partnership Development Officer and Mrs Lissa Rowan, Committee Services Officer as Clerk to the meeting.

1. DECLARATION OF GROUP DECISIONS AND MEMBER'S INTERESTS

In terms of Standing Order 20 and the Councillors' Code of Conduct, there were no declarations from group leaders or spokespersons in regard to any prior decisions taken on how Members will vote on any item on the agenda or any declarations of Members' interests in respect of any item on the agenda.

2. EXEMPT INFORMATION

The meeting resolved that in terms of Section 50A (4) and (5) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, as amended, the public and media representatives be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items of business appearing at the relevant paragraphs of this minute as specified below, so as to avoid disclosure of exempt information of the class described in the appropriate paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

<u>Paragraph No. of Minute</u>	<u>Paragraph No. of Schedule 7A</u>
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3. MINUTE OF THE POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES COMMITTEE DATED 7 MAY 2015

The Minute of the Meeting of the Police and Fire & Rescue Services Committee dated 7 May 2015 was submitted and approved.

4. WRITTEN QUESTIONS

The Committee noted the following question submitted by Councillor Ross and response thereto:

To ask how elected members of The Moray Council were consulted under section 44(2) of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 prior to the appointment of the new Local Commander?

RESPONSE

On 3 June 2015, the Chief Constable of Police Scotland wrote to Mr Roddy Burns, Chief Executive of The Moray Council regarding his nomination for the Local Police Commander role following an internal application process.

The Chief Executive later wrote back confirming his support for the nomination.

On 2 July 2015, the Chief Constable confirmed the appointment of Chief Superintendent Thomson to Mr Roddy Burns, Chief Executive of The Moray Council and this was circulated to the Convener, Group Leaders and all members of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Ross asked that the Committee give consideration to a letter being written to the Chief Constable of Police Scotland indicating the Committee's disappointment in the process of appointing the Divisional Commander and the tone inferred in the correspondence between the Chief Constable and the Chief Executive in relation to the appointment and further asked that a report be submitted to the next meeting of The Moray Council reviewing the delegation of the Chief Executive in relation to his authority to approve such appointments on behalf of the Council.

In response, the Head of Development Services advised that in terms of process he was of the opinion that the Chief Executive would have written back in the belief that this was the correct process, and in respect of referring to the matter in question to the Full Council, he was of the view that perhaps the matter should be dealt with by means of a briefing note to members of the Committee including the views of the Monitoring Officer in relation to the delegated authority to the Chief Executive for consideration of such matters and if that did not suffice it could perhaps be something that could be raised at a later date.

5. OPERATIONAL UPDATE (VERBAL) - FIRE

Prior to the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) operational update, Mr David Rout, Local Senior Officer, SFRS thanked elected members and colleagues in Police Scotland for their attendance and participation at the recent Elected Member Engagement Event at the Elgin Fire Station and expressed his hope that members had found it of interest.

Following this, the Committee was provided with an informative oral update on SFRS operational matters from Mr David Meldrum, Group Manager, where he advised the Committee that the SFRS had dealt with a wide variety of incidents in the last quarter including fire, road traffic collisions, rescues of persons from water, special services and false alarms.

He further advised that, in relation to prevention and protection, a high profile pan Scotland week of action had been undertaken where community safety engagement activities had taken place with an aim to target the most vulnerable within communities with particular attention being given to ways in which to reduce accidental fire by promoting safer smoking and cooking.

In relation to road safety, Mr Meldrum further advised that SFRS had undertaken 2 initiatives along with partners highlighting the consequences of road traffic collisions.

Mr Meldrum also advised of 2 large scale training exercises that had taken place. The first exercise was undertaken in conjunction with fire services within the Royal Air Force (RAF) and Ministry of Defence (MOD) whereby a major accident controlled regulations exercise had taken place which had focussed on an air craft crash with fuel spillage and road traffic accident. The second exercise was an entrapment and extraction educational event for all co-responders for pre-hospital care.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed to note the informative oral update on operational matters from Mr David Meldrum, Group Manager, Scottish Fire and Rescue Services and the responses to the relevant questions thereafter.

6. SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE PERFORMANCE

There was submitted and noted a report by Mr David Rout, Local Senior Officer, Aberdeenshire and Moray, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service informing the Committee of the local performance for 1st April 2015 to 30th June 2015 in respect of the Moray Local Fire and Rescue Plan 2014-17 as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report.

7. POLICE PERFORMANCE

There was submitted a report by Chief Superintendent Thomson, Divisional Commander, Aberdeenshire and Moray Division, Police Scotland informing the Committee of the performance of Police in respect of the Local Policing Plan 2014-2017, and other key indicators.

During discussion surrounding the indicator that measures police complaints, clarification was sought in relation to the nature of complaints received against the Police.

In response, the Divisional Commander suggested that the Committee may benefit from a presentation in relation to the Police Complaints Process and that this could be given at a future meeting of this Committee. This was agreed.

During further discussion, concern was raised in relation to the increase in the indicator that measures vandalism and it was queried whether targeting vandalism was still a national priority with Police Scotland and whether Aberdeenshire and Moray Division could provide evidence that, within the Moray area, they were targeting vandalism as a priority.

In response, Chief Superintendent Thomson advised that vandalism was still very much a priority for the Force included in the national priority of Violence, Disorder and Antisocial behaviour and confirmed it was indeed a local priority that required attention given its perceived links to fear of crime. He further advised that this was a Community Planning partnership issue and that as a partnership they required to be more proactive in their approach.

Chief Inspector Findlay advised that targeting Antisocial Behaviour, which includes vandalism, is still a local priority which features in every multi member ward plan in Moray. He further advised that, whilst vandalism incidents had decreased in the past, they had risen in the last quarter and, if the Committee were so minded, he would keep them informed of progress over the coming weeks in relation to ongoing work intended to reverse the recent increase in vandalism. This was agreed.

In response to a query in relation to the breakdown of speeding offences to reflect the number of warnings given and tickets issued, the Divisional Commander agreed that future reports would distinguish between warnings given and tickets issued.

Thereafter, the Committee agreed:-

- (i) to note the performance outlined in the report;
- (ii) to note that the Local Commander will continue to report to the Committee quarterly on performance measures against service objectives as articulated in the 2014-17 Local Policing Plan;
- (iii) that a presentation would be given at a future meeting of this Committee in relation to the Police Complaints Process;
- (iv) that, over the next few weeks, the Committee be kept informed of progress in relation to ongoing work Police are undertaking to address the cause of the recent increase in vandalism; and
- (v) that, in relation to speeding offences, future reports distinguish between warnings given and tickets issued.

8. CONTACT, COMMAND AND CONTROL DIVISION – PERFORMANCE

Under reference to paragraph 9 of the Minute of this Committee dated 7 May 2015, a report was submitted by the Divisional Police Commander, Aberdeenshire and Moray Division Police Scotland providing the Committee with background information on the increase in response times over the year April 2014 - March 2015 when compared to the previous year.

Chief Superintendent Thomson advised the Committee that, when preparing the report for Committee, two pieces of work had been undertaken, one by the Contact, Command and Control Division and the other by Chief Inspector Findlay, and it was decided that the information gathered by Chief Inspector Findlay should not be included in the open session as it detailed the length of time it could take to travel to various places in Moray and Police Scotland did not want to publish this information as it could potentially be used for purposes to the detriment of communities and sought the Committee's agreement to provide this further information in the closed session.

Councillor Ross raised concern that Elected Members had not received the further information that Chief Superintendent Thomson had referred to in relation to response times and queried why the Committee had not been made aware of this additional information.

In response, the Head of Development Services advised that the Police had consulted with the Chair earlier in the week and advised that additional information was available but would require to be dealt with in the closed session, and that the Chair had agreed to this request.

Councillor Ross queried why the report could not have stated that the additional information was going to be referred to in the closed session and raised concern that only the Chair of the Committee had been consulted in regard to how the additional information would be made available when the entire Committee was supposed to be scrutinising Police Scotland and expressed his disappointment that the process had not been adhered to.

In response, Chief Superintendent Thomson apologised if any deviation from the process had taken place and assured Councillor Ross that this would not happen again.

Following this, Chief Inspector Elder introduced the report and summarised its content for the Committee.

During discussion, Councillor Ross raised concern in relation to the lack of information within the report that would support the explanations given by Chief Inspector Elder in relation to the increase in response times such as:

- a) the number of grade 1/emergency calls that came through the 101 telephone number and what action has been taken to discourage members of the public from using the 101 telephone number in an emergency;
- b) how response times varied during the significant events in Moray in 2014;
- c) the number of times, and reasons why, calls have not been updated on time by the Control Room which may have had an impact on response time statistics;

- d) the number of times an emergency has been down graded which may have had an impact on response time statistics; and
- e) any correlation between staffing levels and increased response times.

and moved an additional recommendation to the report that the Committee express their disappointment in relation to the report from Police Scotland and request a further report regarding the resource deployment issue, looking at the availability of front line officers to attend in comparison to the complete number of officers employed by Police Scotland and that The Moray Council supports calls for no further rationalisation of the Contact, Command and Control Centres that affect Moray.

Councillor Divers agreed to second the motion subject to Councillor Ross amending the motion to omit the Committee's disappointment in relation to the report from Police Scotland. Councillor Ross agreed to this request.

Councillor McDonald stated that he could not support Councillor Ross' motion and moved as an amendment that a further report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee detailing:

- a) the number of grade 1/emergency calls that came through the 101 telephone number and what action has been taken to discourage members of the public from using the 101 telephone number in an emergency;
- b) how response times varied during the significant events in Moray in 2014;
- c) the number of times, and reasons why, calls have not been updated on time by the Control Room which may have had an impact on response time statistics;
- d) the number of times an emergency has been down graded which may have had an impact on response time statistics; and
- e) any correlation between staffing levels and increased response times.

This was seconded by Councillor Shepherd (Chair).

Councillor Ross, in noting that both motions were similar in nature, with the only significant difference being his request for The Moray Council to support calls for no further rationalisation of the Contact and Control Centres that affect Moray asked, if by adding "at this time" to the end of his motion, if this would prevent a split in the decision of the Committee.

In response, Councillor McDonald stated that he was still in disagreement with the terms of Councillor Ross' motion and stood by his original amendment.

On a division there voted:

For the motion (2):	Councillors Ross and Divers
For the amendment (5):	Councillors McDonald, Shepherd, Leadbitter, McConachie, and McDonald
Abstention (1):	Councillor Alexander

Thereafter the amendment became the finding of the Committee and it was agreed:

- (i) to note the information provided within the report in relation to the increase in response times over the year April 2014 – March 2015; and
- (ii) that a further report would be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee detailing:
 - a) the number of grade 1/emergency calls that came through the 101 telephone number and what action has been taken to discourage members of the public from using the 101 telephone number in an emergency;
 - b) how response times varied during the significant events in Moray in 2014;
 - c) the number of times, and reasons why, calls have not been updated on time by the Control Room which may have had an impact on response time statistics;
 - d) the number of times an emergency has been down graded which may have had an impact on response time statistics; and
 - e) any correlation between staffing levels and increased response times.

9. QUESTION TIME

Councillor Leadbitter asked if a briefing note on the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) process could be provided to the Committee as it had been running for some time and further asked if the briefing could include an assessment of the process, any challenges identified and improvements being worked on.

In response, the Divisional Commander agreed to this request.

Councillor Ross stated that in the past members of the Police Scotland Board and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) Board had attended the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Committee regularly however he had noted that no Board representation had been made recently and sought clarification as to whether Board Members still held an interest in the work of the Scrutiny Committee and whether they would be attending future meetings.

In response, Chief Superintendent Thomson advised that the Board Members from Police Scotland were still very interested in the work of the Scrutiny Committee and that he would raise Councillor Ross' point with them.

David Rout, Local Senior Officer (LSO), SFRS further advised that the SFRS Board Members were still very much interested in the work of the Police and Fire and Rescue Services Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Divers stated that he had received information from a contact within the Trade Union advising of potential industrial action from the Fire Brigade Union and asked David Rout, LSO if he was aware of any potential industrial action.

In response, David Rout, LSO advised that he was not aware of any potential industrial action either locally or nationally.

10. OPERATIONAL UPDATE (VERBAL) - POLICE [PARA 14]

The Committee agreed to note an informative oral update on operational matters and the further information in relation to response times from the Divisional Police Commander, Aberdeenshire and Moray Division and the responses to the relevant questions thereafter.