

Notes of JCC & Police Meeting held on Thursday 13th October 2016

Council Chambers, High Street, Elgin

In attendance:

Twenty-four Community Councillors and Area Forums members attended, plus two Moray Councillors, the Community Council Liaison Officer and Chief Inspector Stewart Mackie, Police Scotland North-East Division.

Welcome:

The Chair welcomed everyone and introduced Chief Inspector Mackie.

Police Scotland and Community Councils:

Some Community Councillors reported being told they would not receive a report at all any more, one community council was told Police would not disseminate information at meetings, only receive it. Chief Inspector Mackie advised this was not the case and was a miscommunication.

He said the Police value contact with Community Councils, including face-to-face contact at meetings. He mentioned the withdrawal of formal written reports to some Community Councils and would like to discuss how to best to continue meaningful contact with input from Community Councils on developing this.

Written reports:

The withdrawal of reports in some areas in no way reflects a wish to withdraw contact with Community Councils. Police appreciate being taken early in the agenda and that Community Councils understand that there can be pressure on an officer's time meaning they cannot attend as planned.

Travelling to and from and attending meetings can take an hour of an officer's time and there are 17 Community Councils in Moray. It typically takes an officer a further hour to compile the monthly report, searching different systems for statistics, collating them and adding some context. This cannot be done by a civilian. Compiling reports, preparing for and attending meetings takes up to 40 hours of Police time a month in Moray which is then unavailable for detection of crimes etc.

Chief Inspector Mackie asked how useful the detailed statistics were. He said that although reports are tailored to each area, different types of reports go to different Community Councils and there may be benefits in using a more standard format.

He put forward a proposed format of a monthly report with a section on Moray-wide information, such as bogus workmen, scams and Police campaigns. The report could potentially include information from other members of the Community Safety Partnership e.g. Fire service, Community Wardens and Police work carried out in partnership with other agencies. There would also be a section of area specific reports outlining trends in crimes in each Community Police team area e.g. increased break-ins, antisocial behaviour at particular locations, traffic issues. Officers attending meetings could then update reports verbally regarding local issues.

Discussion:

Discussion was held. There were varied opinions on what format the report should take, how useful statistics are, how the Police report is disseminated in each areas (in minutes, to the media, to local halls etc.). There was discussion on whether a Moray-wide report would be of use in an area with a diversity of rural and urban community councils.

It was suggested that quarterly statistical reports could be issued, in addition to the monthly reports. Statistics are also made available to the press and reporting statistics are published quarterly on the Police Scotland website.

There was discussion on how to ensure information was current given the different timings of Community Council meetings. Jane Martin, CCLO offered to update and circulate the monthly reports to each Community Council shortly before their monthly meeting. She will meet with Chief Inspector Mackie to discuss.

There was discussion on the frequency and availability of officers attending meetings, the levels of policing in Moray, which have not changed significantly since the formation of Police Scotland, the preferred frequency of attending, whether the area Sergeant or Inspector attending when on shift (and therefore not at every meeting) would be preferable. There was discussion on the changes, including benefits, that centralisation of the Police service has brought. Moray has a particularly high number of probationers and a 'young' force at present, which inevitably creates some extra demands on time.

There was a mix of views on whether the report or the officer attending the meeting was of greatest value. Some commented that it was the exchange of information that was of most value, regardless of means or to which particular officer.

Further to the report, the Police are happy to receive contact outwith meetings e.g. by emailing the local community police team or local Inspector and reporting incidents as they arise. Anyone who does not have the contact details for their local Inspector and Community Police team can request them from Chief Inspector Mackie.

Vote:

A show of hands was taken on piloting the style of report described by Chief Inspector Mackie, and using feedback from Community Councils to refine the format. The report would cover Moray generally, followed by specifics based on Police community team areas. The report format could be refined from feedback received.

Seventeen were in favour. There were no objections.

The draft report will be sent to Jane for circulation and she will collate feedback.

At the close of the meeting it was agreed the Police report could also be circulated to area forums.