Item 7

24th November 2023

Glasgow Community Planning Partnership
Maryhill Area Partnership

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Partnership Approach to Removal of Unauthorised Bonfires

Purpose of Report:

To provide the Area Partnership with an overview of the approach taken by Glasgow City Council, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland in relation to the removal of unauthorised and potentially dangerous bonfires.

Recommendations:

The Area Partnership is asked to note the content of the report.

1 Introduction

1.1 Community safety partners including Glasgow City Council (GCC), Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) and Police Scotland have historically worked together to produce a joint protocol to inform communities and other partner agencies of the dangers, requirements and regulations in relation to fireworks and bonfires.

1.2 A need for a closer partnership approach was identified in 2022, specifically in relation to the removal of unauthorised bonfires and to ensure partners work together to establish an improved efficiency of delivery.

1.3 To respond to this, a Multi-Agency Control Centre (MACC) was established that co-located partners on 4 and 5 November 2022, to respond, in real time, to events within communities.

1.4 This approach enabled an improved collaborative efficiency of service by allowing unauthorised bonfires to be risk assessed remotely; where Public Space CCTV was available or by deploying staff to gather information for a risk assessment to be undertaken. This has now been adopted as a new way of working and this paper provides an overview of how this approach operates.

2 Multi-Agency Control Centre (MACC)

2.1 To strengthen the partnership between agencies and address challenges, a Multi-Agency Control Centre (MACC) will operate within Glasgow City Council's Eastgate Building on the 4 and 5 November. There is representation from Glasgow City Council, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and Police Scotland ensuring a responsive co-ordinated approach.

2.2 To provide local Police Officers and other agencies an improved route to report unauthorised bonfires, dedicated phone lines are set-up within the MACC and calls are taken by GCC staff who record key details of the structures including location, proximity to buildings and power supplies and access to sites. Information from these calls is shared with all partners within the MACC and added to a prioritised list for removal.

2.3 Reported unauthorised bonfires are prioritised based on a risk assessment by SFRS, based on the information received by staff within the MACC or if required a site visit is undertaken to assess the risk.

2.4 After the prioritisation of reported sites, there are regular multi-agency meetings between partners within the MACC to agree how resources should be deployed. This element is key, as these unauthorised bonfires are built and protected by local communities. There have been attacks on GCC operational teams attending these sites for removal and it is therefore crucial that Police Scotland and GCC operational teams attend these sites jointly to protect staff and maintain public order.

2.5 The presence of all agencies in the MACC, ensures attendance at sites is co-ordinated thereby enhancing safety of staff, communities and valuable assets. The pre-assessment of sites also minimises any delay allowing for an increased number of potentially dangerous bonfires to be removed.

3 Public Reporting

3.1 Members of the public are encouraged to report unauthorised and potentially dangerous bonfires to Glasgow City Council by contacting the Council's Cleansing line on 0141 287 9700, where an option to report bonfires is available. Call Centre staff ensure all relevant information including location, type of materials and if the bonfire is near to property, electricity or gas. These details are passed to our operational team for removal.

4 Partner Reporting

4.1 There is a reliance of quality community intelligence to ensure that GCC, SFRS and Police Scotland are aware of all potential risks to communities. To ensure this intelligence is captured, in advance of bonfire night, community partners including housing associations, third sector partners, Police Scotland staff and SFRS staff are provided with contact details of their Neighbourhood Liaison Co-ordinator who ensures this vital information is passed to operations for removal.

5 Community Reassurance

5.1 From a community perspective, although these unauthorised and unsafe structures are built by individuals and groups within local communities, not all citizens are supportive of them. Unauthorised bonfires can cause significant alarm and distress to individuals who fear the wider issues that emanate from these events. These issues include a potential risk of personal injury, damage to property and an increase in antisocial behaviour.

5.2 This approach provides agencies an opportunity to respond collaboratively to unauthorised bonfire events and take the necessary action to ensure our communities are kept safe. By deploying staff to locations, this promotes public reassurance and gives confidence to communities that we take these issues seriously and take appropriate action.

Recommendations

1. The Area Partnership is asked to note the content of the report.