Colinton/Fairmilehead by-election — Independent candidate calls for action on law enforcement

Mev Brown, an independent candidate in the Colinton/Fairmilehead by-election, has accused The Scottish Government of creating a crisis in Scottish policing while the opposition parties look on.

He claims that damning official figures shows that the average Scottish police officer puts just one individual behind bars every 8 months.

Mr Brown said: "When I talk to serving and retired police officers off the record, they describe themselves as uniformed "tax collectors", "out of hours social workers", "taxi drivers", uniformed "baby sitters", "ambulance drivers" and uniformed "paper pushers".

"What I'm told is often hard to believe. On one occasion, an exasperated police officer said they had spent the whole of their last shift looking for minors who were not where they were meant to be.

"On another, an officer told me he issued an on the spot fine to one member of the public who dismissed it as: "an expensive night out".

"Earlier this year, Jo Farrell, Police Scotland's chief constable, went on the record about how her force is "overwhelmed" by the "appalling" demands placed on it by other agencies. She has called on other agencies to "step up" and allow the officers to focus on core policing.

"Police officers often tell me: "I joined to put bad people behind bars" but, from what I'm hearing, is law enforcement even a top 5 priority?

"When I tell residents this, there is a range of reactions, anger, apathy, exasperation. But not shock. Most people know public services in Scotland are in crisis, schools, getting a GP appointment, NHS waiting lists, the list goes on.

"My concern is, what is Edinburgh's social work department doing to ease the strain, if anything? And what of Edinburgh council's police/community committee?

"Of course, the same question could be asked of the other 31 council committees around Scotland."

Mr Brown is one of twelve candidates in the by-election being held in the ward on 14 November.