

# **Council leader asks Procurator Fiscal to fast- track Bonfire Night disorder cases**

**The leader of Edinburgh Council has asked for court cases involving people who were arrested for causing disorder on Bonfire Night to be fast-tracked.**

Cammy Day condemned “deplorable” attacks on emergency service workers and bus drivers across the city over the last week.

A sharp rise in anti-social behaviour has come to be expected at the start of November, however the Capital’s police chief said this year was the worst disorder they’ve ever seen, according to Cllr Day, who added it “can’t be the new norm”.

Large groups of youths attacked officers with fireworks, bricks and bottles on Bonfire Night and Halloween in Niddrie, Gilmerton, Sighthill, Gracemount and Moredun.

Police were given powers to stop and search people in some areas and also deployed a helicopter to assist with the operation.

Meanwhile Lothian Buses was forced to withdraw or divert services as a result of anti-social behaviour. The company reported that 16 of its buses were left damaged. In addition, an open-top bus carrying young people with disabilities was

targeted outside the Dynamic Earth attraction.

Officers have made 19 arrests linked to incidents over the last week. Six people have been charged under the Fireworks and Pyrotechnic Articles Act and a 26 further charges relate to criminal behaviour.

Cllr Day praised the “exemplary work” of police and “many bus drivers who were out trying to do their job and got attacked with missiles through their windscreens and attacks on buses” as he reflected on the “shocking disorder” during a full council meeting on Thursday, November 7.

“The morning after Bonfire Night and last week after the 31st I coordinated a meeting with the fire service, police service, Procurator Fiscal, Lothian Association of Youth Clubs, the chief executive from the council and a number of our directorate key colleagues who were on gold silver command during the last week.

“A number of the people involved, be that young people or adults, have been arrested and held in prison pending a trial before jury.

“These are people who threw rocks through the front windscreen of a police car and injured a [woman police constable].

“These are people who have smashed up at least 16 buses and terrorised bus drivers.”

He said 10,000 bus journeys “were not able to be made because of removal of bus services across the city,” adding: “It is deplorable.”

Drivers were left scared going to work because of the behaviour of what the council leader called “a small minority – but a growing small minority – of young people in the east and south-west of the city”.

Cllr Day, who wants to see a complete ban on the public safe

of fireworks, added: "It is the worst disorder the police have seen, that came for the commander for Edinburgh.

**"Hence we have asked the Procurator Fiscal service to fast-track these to the justice system, whichever part of the justice system that is, and that people are dealt with appropriately.**

"Whether that's restorative justice or criminal justice or prison for some people, all these options should be looked at.

"We're keen to work with, as we did this year, the Lothian Association of Youth Clubs to provide additional funding to support young people across the city to be involved in other activities."

The council leader said the help of the "wider community" would be essential to reducing levels of anti-social behaviour and violence.

"It can't be the new norm in Edinburgh that come the end of October we accept that public servants are attacked doing their job."

Scottish Secretary Ian Murray, MP for Edinburgh South, described the scenes as "disgraceful and unacceptable"

He said: "We must stop the sale of fireworks to those who wish to use this time of year to cause havoc on our streets."

Police Scotland's assistant chief constable Tim Mairs said: "Now that our Bonfire Night deployments have stood down, our investigation teams will begin reviewing all the evidence we obtained through Body Worn Video, Air Support Unit footage and statements from the public.

"This will help us establish the identities of those who chose to cause harm within our communities and who sought to attack and injure emergency service workers.

“While I am encouraged that we didn’t see the same levels of serious disorder, when compared to last year, I am under no illusion that that actions of a minority of individuals still had a significant and detrimental impact on various communities across Scotland.

“Their actions will not be tolerated, and detectives are working tirelessly to make arrests and ensure all of those involved in the offences we witnessed are brought to account.”

By Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter