

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD

MINUTES of Meeting of the POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held in Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Friday, 10th November, 2017 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillors W. McAteer (Chairman), D Moffat, E Robson, H Scott, E Small, G Turnbull, Mr D Davidson - NHS Borders, Ms M Lyall – SBHA, Mrs M Simpson - Voluntary Sector.

Apologies: Mr B Halley, Ms J Mulloy – SBHA, Mr H Walzl.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent L Clark, Chief Inspector A McLean, Police Scotland; Dr K Darwent, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Board; Ms J Keddy, Scottish Ambulance Service; Group Manager A Girrity Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, LSO S Gourlay, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Ms A Beavon – Violence Against Women Coordinator, SBC, Ms W Marsden, Partnership Analyst, SBC, Mr D Scott, Senior Policy Advisor SBC, J Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer, SBC

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round on introductions. In particular, he welcomed Dr Kirsty Darwent, the current Vice Chair of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Board, who takes up the post of chair next month.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 25 August 2017.

**DECISION
APPROVED the Minute.**

3. MATTERS ARISING

With reference to paragraph 5.11 of the Minute, the Senior Policy Adviser explained that the local conference on Antisocial Behaviour was being organised. He also confirmed that the draft Local Police Plan had been approved by Scottish Borders Council. With reference to paragraph 6.7 of the Minute, he advised that the Scottish Ambulance Service had nominated Mr Bill Halley as their representative on the Board. Mr Halley had sent his apologies for the meeting and the Board welcomed Ms Jill Keddy, who was attending on his behalf

**DECISION
NOTED that Mr Bill Halley was the Board's representative from the Scottish Ambulance Service.**

4. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE SCOTLAND

- 4.1 The Chairman welcomed the new Police Divisional Commander Chief Superintendent Lesley Clark to the Board. The Chief Superintendent advised that she had recently taken up the post and would be responsible for four diverse local authority divisions. Chief

Superintendent Clark was currently engaging with front line staff to consider improvements going forward to ensure the service was the best it could be to meet future demands.

- 4.2 Chief Inspector McLean presented the Police Scrutiny report for November 2017, which had been circulated. The report detailed the figures for the six Priority areas to date and compared them to the figures for the same period in 2016/17. Chief Inspector McLean advised that this would be the last report presented in this format; a new format would be presented before April in accordance with implementation of the new Local Police Plan.
- 4.3 Priority 1 – Protecting People. Adult at Risk Referrals made to partner agencies were showing a 16.3% decrease on 2016/17 figures, 91 fewer referrals. All officers were fully conversant with the IVPD system. However, the criteria for submitting referrals had been re-assessed and this was the reason for the decline. With regard to Domestic Abuse Initial Checks, 95% of checks were carried out within 24 hours, this was above target and an improvement on last year's figure.
- 4.4 Priority 2 – Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour. There had been a 6% decrease in Common Assaults reported in the year to date when compared with 2016/17, 24 fewer victims. There was a robust process in place every weekend with specific patrols detailed at key locations. This visible deterrent was reflected in the decline in incidences of assault. With regard to antisocial behaviour incidents, there had been a 16.7% increase (441 more incidents). Many of the calls were of a low level nuisance type, particularly where youths were involved. However, some were of more significance including setting fire to a wreath at a war memorial. Work was ongoing with partner agencies to ensure appropriate early and effective interventions. Chief Inspector McLean then discussed the decrease in the number of recorded victims of hate crime. He explained that this could be because hate crime was underreported, or that Police Scotland's robust response to hate crime had contributed to the decline.
- 4.5 Priority 3 – Tackling Substance Misuse. During the period there had been 161 stop and searches of which 77 proved positive. Chief Inspector McLean explained that current reporting methods meant that a further breakdown of search activity to individual categories was not possible. There had been a 22.4% increase in the number of licensed premises visited during the period which equated to 60 more visits. The Best Bar none scheme which awarded good practice was highlighted, and the Board were asked to encourage licensees to participate in the scheme.
- 4.6 Priority 4 – Making our Roads Safer. There was a 42.6% decrease (23 fewer casualties) in the year to date. There were four people killed, which was five fewer than last year. Accidents involving motorcyclists made up a significant proportion of the casualties. There were a number of initiatives underway focusing on younger and older drivers including "Drive Wise" which provided enhanced training to 17-25 year old and the over 65s.
- 4.7 Priority 5 – Tackling Serious and Organised Crime. Cash seizures were higher than the value in the same time period last year. However, opportunities for cash seizures under POCA legislation were limited, as there were strict criteria to follow. During the period £3,050 had been seized. There had also been £11,876 of assets referred for restraint through POAC. Detections for drug supply remained the same compared to the same time period in 2016/17. Ongoing proactive tactics continued to be implemented to deter, disrupt and detect activity.
- 4.8 Priority 6 – Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There was a 47.2% increase in the number of housebreaking to dwellings in the year to date, with 17 more victims reported. The Scottish Borders has seen an increase in travelling criminals committing both business and domestic housebreakings. Joint working with neighbouring divisions had resulted in notable detections and disruption of criminal activity. During the time period there had

also been a 16.7% increase in thefts of motor vehicles which equated to five more victims of this type of crime. This increase in part related to the same travelling criminal issues as identified in relation to housebreaking.

- 4.9 To conclude, Chief Inspector McLean advised that in relation to Overall Crime there had been a 3.5% decrease in detection rates compared to the same period last year. However, the detection rate for the Scottish Borders was higher than the divisional detection rate. There was a continued drive and focus on priorities and all crime reports were scrutinised by supervisors to ensure that nothing was missed from an enquiry perspective.
- 4.10 During discussions regarding the statistics provided, Chief Inspector McLean provided clarity on a number of issues. With regard to the reduction in road accident rates potentially being as a result of the young drivers' scheme, he advised that this was difficult to evidence although the accident rate had plummeted. The increase in litter was referred to and Chief Inspector McLean explained that if officers did not witness the incident it was difficult to pursue. Reference was made to ongoing Bilston Glen complaints, the Board were informed that further investment had been made to the Control Room, the staff dealt with thousands of often complex calls on a daily basis and unfortunately mistakes did happen occasionally. With regard to the proposed merger with British Transport Police, Chief Superintendent Clark advised that no dedicated timeline had been set for the merger. However, a dedicated officer was in place to progress the project and HR were on board to ensure the smoothest transition possible. The Board discussed that it would be useful to compare local figures with national outcomes and this was noted. The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent Clark and Chief Inspector McLean for the informative report.

DECISION NOTED:

- (a) the report; and**
- (b) that consideration be given to including national outcomes in the Progress Report for comparison with local figures.**

5. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS – SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

- 5.1 The Chair congratulated Stephen Gourlay on his new LSO role for the Scottish Borders, Mid and East Lothian. He also wished David Farries, the former LSO, all the best with his promotion to Deputy Assistant Chief Officer for the North of Scotland.
- 5.2 Group Manager Girrity presented the SFRS Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2017, copies of which had been circulated with the Agenda. In summary the report, detailed that during the period the SFRS had responded to 817 incidents, 34 more than the same reporting period last year. False alarms accounted for 58% of these emergency calls.
- 5.3 Priority 1 - Reduction of Dwelling Fires. There had been 42 dwelling fires recorded compared to 46 for the same period last year, this represented a slight, but positive decrease. Six of these fires were started deliberately and 22 had originated in the kitchen and involved adults 18-64 years old.
- 5.4 Priority 2 - Reduction of All Fire Casualties (Fatal and Non-Fatal). There had been eight fire related casualties during the reporting period, five less than the same period last year. There were no Fire Fatalities during the reporting period.
- 5.5 Priority 3 – Deliberate Fire Setting. There were 110 incidents in the period; this represented a significant increase in the previous year. 37% of these incidents occurred

in the Galashiels and District Ward. The incident at Balmoral Primary School was discussed, this situation could have been much worse if the Fire and Rescue Service had not intervened as quickly as they had. A 14 year old male had since been identified and subsequently charged. Initiatives with Safer Communities partners were ongoing to mitigate the risk of reoccurrence; the SFRS were also utilising social media to highlight the dangers of antisocial behaviour.

- 5.6 Priority 4 – Road Traffic Collisions. During the reporting period the SFRS attended 37 Road Traffic Collision, 13 less than the same reporting period last year. There had been 242 related casualties and three fatalities.
- 5.7 Priority 5 – Special Service Casualties. There had been 45 Special Service casualties this was a 46% decrease in the same period last year.
- 5.8 Priority 6 – Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals. There had been 478 false alarm incidents during the reporting period. Equipment failure accounted for 321 of these incidents with 141 and 16 the figures for good intent and maliciousness respectively. Fire Safety Enforcement Officers were working with premises to reduce further incidents. In response to a question, the Board were informed that it was predominantly equipment failure within educational establishments which caused false alarm incidents. More resources were being allocated towards reducing such incidents and an audit of all high risk premises was being undertaken. There had also been a pilot initiative in Jedburgh Primary School which it was hoped would be taken forward to each school. The Board discussed the issue and asked for further clarity to be presented at the next meeting in order that concerns could be raised with the Council's Education Department.
- 5.9 Group Manager Girrity concluded his report by highlighting the SFRS's performance on fire safety audits, home safety visits and spoke about the range of partnership working including youth engagement fire skills programmes and attending the monthly Multi Agency Risk Conference (MARAC). In addition to MARAC outcomes it was noted that the Community Action Team had facilitated a further 10 referrals from the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service in partnership with the Safer Housing options worker for the Scottish Borders.
- 5.10 In discussion, the Board were advised that with regard to fires in derelict buildings, legally, the SFRS covered risk in occupied premises. However, they continued to engage with the Safer Communities team regarding unoccupied premises. Regarding the sale of fireworks, the SFRS considered that they should not be sold through retail outlets. With regard to difficulty in the recruitment of retained firefighters, the new national recruitment system had made a difference, promoting within communities was suggested and that SBC's Connect publication might be appropriate for a recruitment advertisement.

DECISION:-

- (a) **AGREED to request further information on the causes of unwanted fire alarm signals in educational establishments.**
- (b) **NOTED that Scottish Borders Connect publication be considered for recruitment of retained firefighters.**

DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor Robson declared an interest in the above item of business in terms of Section 5 of the Councillors Code of Conduct but did not leave the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned from 11.10 am to 11.20 am

6. SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE TRANSFORMATION

- 6.1 LSO Gourlay gave a presentation to the Board on the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service transformation program. He began by explaining that the SFRS would continue in their existing role, but also had to adapt to meet new risks. He clarified that there had been a continuing reduction in fires but an increase in terrorism, flooding and risks associated with an ageing population. The present delivery model had been designed 70 years ago and resources no longer aligned with the existing fire incident profile. There were also limitations on moving resources to where need was greatest, crews were unavailable to conduct vital preventative work and there was limited use of technologies. Increasing fiscal challenges and no guarantee of extra funding meant the current model was unsustainable beyond 2017/18.
- 6.2 LSO Gourlay explained that the transformation strategy would deliver a modern, flexible and efficient fire and rescue service which would meet the changing risks in communities. This would be achieved by expanding the firefighter role, strengthening the retained service, refining the station footprint, improving workforce flexibility, introducing new emergency vehicles and technology. The role of the firefighter would include responding to acts of terrorism, road traffic collisions, water rescue, safety in the home and humanitarian rescue. However, he highlighted that the Out of Hours Cardiac arrest scheme, part of the transformation programme, had been suspended because of union negotiations. LSO Gourlay concluded his presentation by advising that along with community planning partners the SFRS's priorities were to continue to make people safer in their homes, make roads safer, challenge antisocial behaviour and reduce the impact of unwanted fire alarm signals. The consultation on the transformation was ongoing until 18 December and feedback was welcomed. The Chairman thanked LSO Gourlay for the presentation.
- 6.3 In response to questions, Dr Darwent advised that the SFRS Board had lobbied Scottish Government regarding VAT charging and would continue to do so. Regarding the risk of closure to fire stations, there were no plans to change any stations in the Scottish Borders. With respect to NHS partnership working, the SFRS Chair was meeting with the Chairs of NHS Boards to look at how they could work more effectively together.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

7. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2017 to 30 September 2017. Ms Andrea Beavon, Violence Against Women Coordinator, highlighted the key points in the report.
- 7.2 Priority 1 – Reduce the Level and Impact of Gender Based Violence through Effective Partnership Working - Referrals to the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support (DAAS) Service had increased to 45% compared to the same period last year. The number of cases referred to MARAC was also increasing. The Safe Housing Options continued to receive referrals from a range of partner agencies. The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police had increased by 20.1%. The Court Advocacy Service was now established and within 10 days had received 26 referrals. The Inside Outside Exhibition, which showed the reality of working within the sex industry, was attended by over 100 people. Representatives from the SFRS and Police had attended and feedback had been positive.
- 7.3 Priority 2 – Reduce the Level and Impact of Substance Misuse through Effective Partnership Working - The Safer Communities Team had been consulted regarding development of the Licensing Board policy document. The team were also coordinating the underage drinking campaign which would be launched in December with targeted periods around the festive period and local festivals. 2018 would be the Year of Young People and health and wellbeing was one of the themes the campaign would support.

- 7.4 Priority 3 – Reduce the Level and Impact of Crime and Antisocial Behaviour through Effective Partnership Working. There was a reduction of 12.1% in people being monitored for antisocial behaviour which correlated to the 13.1% increase in early interventions undertaken by ASB partners. Community Safety partners were commencing a programme for young farmers in relation to rural fire safety and crime prevention. They had also met to coordinate activity for the festive period, four themes had emerged: Drive Safe, Property Safe, Party Safe and Fire Safe,
- 7.5 Priority 4 –Reduce the Level and Impact of Poor Driver Behaviour through Effective Partnership Working. A rolling programme of advanced driver training continued to be offered. Accidents involving motorcyclists continued to be a concern and had increased when compared to the same period last year.
- 7.6 Priority 5 – Reduce the Level and Impact of Accidents in the Home through Effective Partnership Working. The SFRS had run skills programmes through the TD1 programme. The programme involved working with young people in developing fire and community safety knowledge and skill. The seasonal focus on chimney fire awareness, the risks of carbon monoxide poisoning and use of stoves and heaters was also being promoted.
- 7.7 In response to questions, Chief Inspector McLean advised that with regard to farm safety, Police Scotland offered specialised advice. With regard to the dangers posed by grain dryers, LSO Gourlay advised that employer's had a duty of care to their employees under the Health and Safety Act. The Chairman thanked Ms Beavon for the report and highlighted the significance of the new Licensing Board Policy.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

During discussion, it was noted that the NHS were unique in having a joint Director of Public Health and Social Work and the NHS board were keen to assist the Board in further partnership working. The Chairman advised that as well as the Board's scrutiny function, it would be useful to have more appropriately themed based discussions, for example, the Board could consider how to deal collectively with a specific issue e.g. driving.

DECISION

NOTED that in conjunction with the Board's scrutiny function, consideration by given to themed based discussion.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Future meetings of the Board were scheduled to take place at 9.30am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on:-

Friday, 9 February 2018

Friday, 18 May 2018

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 11.45 am