

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD

MINUTE of MEETING of the POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE
AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held in Council
Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Friday 25
August 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

Present: Councillors W. McAteer (Chairman), H. Scott, E. Small, G. Turnbull, Mrs M. Simpson - Voluntary Sector, Ms J. Mulloy - SBHA
Apologies: Councillors D. Moffat, Mr. D. Davidson - NHS Borders, Mr H. Walzl.
Absent: Councillor E. Robson.
In Attendance: Chief Superintendent I. Marshall, Chief Inspector A. McLean, Police Scotland, David Farries, LSO, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Group Manager A. Girrity, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Group Manager S. Gourlay, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mr D. Scott, Senior Policy Adviser, SBC, Mr G. Jones, SBC Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, F. Henderson, Democratic Services Officer, SBC.

1.0 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and expressed his thanks to the previous Chairman, Councillor Moffat and Committee for their initiatives and excellent collaborative working and hoped that the Committee would continue this good work.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

2.0 MINUTE

- 2.1 There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 10 February 2017.

**DECISION
APPROVED the Minute.**

3.0 MATTERS ARISING

- 3.1 Senior Policy Adviser reported that all matters from the previous meeting had been taken forward and were complete.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

4.0 UPDATE ON THE ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Senior Policy Adviser gave an overview of the remit of the committee and he stressed its advisory role for the Council.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5.0 PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS

5.1 Police Scotland

Chief Superintendent Marshall thanked the Chairman for his remarks. He then went on to give an overview of the National and Divisional Police Scotland staff structure and how it linked to the local police structure. He mentioned that the police staff resources available locally could be provided to the Committee on a confidential basis as part of a private briefing. The Chief Superintendent indicated that this would be his last meeting as he was moving to the post of President of the Association of Chief Superintendents. He referred to the ongoing work on the National 2026 policing project – a 10 year strategy to achieve a sustainable operating model within the forecasted budget envelope. This strategy would result in a programme of transformation projects. He indicated that Assistant Chief Constable John Hawkins was leading on a transformation project on a 'local approach to local policing' which would recognise that policing in rural areas such as the Scottish Borders was different from the Central Belt of Scotland and that this project would look at resourcing challenges. Work was also ongoing to develop a new performance framework which would focus on outcomes rather than processes. On current police issues he highlighted the importance of counter-terrorism and the importance of the Prevent initiative; the concerns about the drug 'Fentanyl' and how rapid people can get addicted to it and the resultant impact particularly in premature deaths; the significant increased incidence of local anti-social behaviour incidents particularly by young people and the need for a partnership approach to this issue with a focus on early intervention and prevention; the slight increases in housebreaking and theft of motor vehicles which are crimes the police take very seriously and these are now often linked; the success of local drugs raids linked to serious organised crime with Operation Jigsaw seeing certain individuals targeted on a day of action earlier in the week; and the local initiatives being based to improve driver safety of young and old drivers.

5.2 In discussion the issue of the local distribution of drugs was highlighted and it was indicated that Police Scotland builds up intelligence of this issue linked to organised crime groups and to assist this process it was important that anyone with any information on drugs matters should report this to the police. Also given the geographical location of the Borders a lot of cross border work was carried out by the police. In relation to the local availability of police resources it was indicated a different resourcing model was being applied by Police Scotland than the previous regional structure which meant that specialist resources were now based nationally and could be applied across Scotland as the need arose such as the search helicopter. On local police resources the transformation project on local policing previously mentioned could make a positive difference. It was indicated that there would be merit in raising concerns about local police staffing nationally as this might strengthen the case for the deployment of more staff resources to local policing. Following discussion on the anti-social behaviour Graham Jones agreed to organise a local conference to discuss this issue. It was also agreed that a member of the Scottish Police Authority should be invited to attend meetings of the Committee.

5.3 Chief Inspector A. McLean presented the Police Progress report covering the period January 2017 to July 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.

5.4 Priority 1 – Protecting People, the performance was on target as a result of close scrutiny by supervisors and daily tasking and coordinating process. In terms of the increase of the number of Adult at Risk Referrals made to partner agencies, the first quarter of 2017/18 was showing a 20.6% decrease on 2016/17 figures. All officers were now fully conversant with the iVPD system which had made submission of referrals

much easier. A re-assessment of the criteria for referrals meant that referrals were now only submitted when required, so the number had levelled out and was showing a decline.

- 5.5 Priority 2 – Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour, showed a 3% decrease in Common Assaults reported in the first quarter of 2017/18 when compared to 2016/17. This equated to 6 fewer victims. There was an ongoing focused approach to address violence disorder and antisocial behaviour throughout J Division monitored on a weekly basis through Gold Performance structure and a robust plan for Friday and Saturday evenings. In terms of antisocial behaviour incidents, there had been a 28.1% increase (347 more incidents) in the first quarter of 2017/18 when compared to the same time period in 2016/17. Whilst the percentage increase appeared high a large number of these calls were a very low anti-social behaviour level. Significant improvements to Police call handling and the 101 system had undoubtedly increased public confidence in contacting the Police. There had been a rise in alcohol related youth ASB at larger scale events such as common ridings and rugby 7s. There had been a decrease in the number of recorded victims of Hate Crime in the first quarter of 2017/18 compared to the same time period in 2016/17. Race related hate crime continued to be the most frequent type of hate crime recorded and there had been 4 reported racial crimes and 3 reported racial incidents, however there were no repeat victims.
- 5.6 Priority 3 - Tackling substance misuse. During the period 1 April – 30 June 2017, Officers in the Scottish Borders had conducted a total of 87 stop and searches of which 47 proved positive (54%). There was an increase of 102% in the number of visits to licensed premises, which equated to 99 more visits. Figures were significantly higher than last year; more licensed premises were being visited as a form of early intervention to try to deter patrons from becoming involved in violent crime and ASB.
- 5.7 Priority 4 - Making our Roads Safer, there had been a 46.4% decrease (13 fewer casualties) in the first quarter of 2017/18 when compared to 2016/17. The number of people killed was 2, which was 5 fewer fatalities than for the first quarter last year. The number of serious injuries had also decreased compared to last year in the same period; however accidents involving motorcyclists make up a significant proportion of the casualties (11).
- 5.8 Priority 5 - Tackling serious and organised crime. Cash seizures were slightly higher than the value seized in the first quarter of 2016/17. There had been a small decrease in the number of detections for drug supply in the first quarter of 2017/18 when compared to the same time period in 2016/17.
- 5.9 Priority 6 -Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There had been an increase of 36.7% in the number of housebreaking to dwellings in the first quarter of 2017/18, with 18 more victims reported. This tied into the 78.6% increase in theft of motor vehicles which equated to 11 more victims of this type of crime. A high volume of housebreaking involved the theft of keys to steal high performance cars. In terms of overall crime i.e., Crime Groups 1-5 there had been a 5.6% decrease in detection rates in 2016/17 compared to the same period last year and it was indicated that this detection rate for the Scottish Borders was still higher than the divisional detection rate. In relation to the number of complaints made against the police in the Scottish Borders for the year to date 2017/18 were much lower than Division as a whole and amounted to 23 in total.
- 5.10 During discussions regarding the statistics provided, Chief Superintendent Marshall reassured Members that Police Scotland in the Scottish Borders were highly performing compared with the rest of Scotland. In regard to the behaviour of drivers, Chief Superintendent Marshall advised that the analysis of data indicated that most of the time accidents could be attributed to driver inattention and/or not driving according to

conditions; accidents were very seldom due to mechanical errors. Therefore it was important to educate and encourage people to drive better and the drivewise initiative for 17-25 yrs and over 65yrs had proved beneficial with 150 -160 participants signing up for the course. The free advanced driver test reduced the cost of insurance and helped make participants more careful drivers.

- 5.11 In referring to the refreshment of the Local Police plan, Chief Superintendent Marshall indicated that the draft local Police plan had been circulated to members of the Committee and he would be grateful for any comments by the consultation closing date which was on Friday 15 September 2017. The final draft Plan would be considered by full Scottish Borders Council for approval. In terms of the draft Local Police Plan for the Scottish Borders, there appeared to be a lack of analysis of crime and anti-social behaviour trends etc. and there was a need for a follow through of this analysis into the justification of the police priorities. There was also a need for information that clearly sets out the links between national and local police priorities. He indicated that he himself wanted to see changes in the Plan and that the written comments made by Douglas Scott would be given due consideration. In relation to linkages between the local Police Plan and Fire and Rescue Plans he advised that discussions would take place with the SFRS.

DECISION:-

NOTED:-

- (a) the report;
- (b) that Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager organise a local conference on Anti-Social Behaviour matters;
- (c) that a member of the Scottish Police Authority be invited to attend meetings of the Committee; and
- (d) The final draft local Police Plan to be submitted to a meeting of the Council following consideration by Police Scotland of the comments made in the consultation process.

6.0 PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS

6.1 Fire and Rescue Service

LSO David Farries referred to the strength of local partnership working between the SFRS, Police Scotland and the Council which had resulted in a lot good preventative and early intervention work with local communities. He referred to the success of the local work of the SFRS in non-traditional areas such as the call outs for cardiac arrests and the use of home visits to help identify the need for wider help for vulnerable people. He commented on challenges within the SFRS budget and the resulting structural changes being made to the service. He referred to the single common duty system which came into force in April 2017 for the whole of Scotland. He indicated that communities in the Scottish Borders would see no change, and the new duty system would allow staff to work closely together on a more regular basis. Members noted the importance of accepting invitations to attend events organised by the SFRS and Police Scotland

- 6.2 There had been circulated copies of the SFRS Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2017. The main issue in the report was about deliberate fires and the problems appeared to be particularly focused on Galashiels and District. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Girrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 18 dwelling fires in comparison to 22 for the same Year to

Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this represented a 22% decrease. Two of these fires had been started deliberately.

- 6.3 Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 6 fire related casualties in this YTD reporting period; this was an identical figure for the same period last year. Further analysis showed that two casualties went to hospital for precautionary checks suffering from slight smoke inhalation or burns. Four casualties received first aid at the scene and did not require any further treatment. There were no Fire fatalities during the reporting period.
- 6.4 Priority 3: There had been 67 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, an increase of 35 in comparison to the same reporting period last year. A breakdown of these figures showed that 91% of deliberate fires during the YTD period involved grass, woodland or refuse. Half of these incidents occurred within the Galashiels & District Ward. Previous experience indicated that there was a direct correlation between the increase of deliberate fire setting, drier weather and longer daylight hours.
- 6.5 Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) indicated that the SFRS attended 20 RTCs, 11 less than the same reporting period last year; a slight decrease in the previous quarter comparison. There had been 13 RTC related casualties in this YTD period including one fatality. During the YTD period, the SFRS used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on 8 occasions to extricate casualties. Information was also presented relating to special service casualties.
- 6.6 Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 213 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing an increase of 21 incidents compared to the same reporting period last year.
- 6.7 Group Manager S Gourlay highlighted the SFRS's performance on fire safety audits, and home safety visits and spoke about the range of partnership working. In discussion the issue of deliberate fires were raised and it considered that this might be discussed at the proposed conference on Anti-Social Behaviour detailed above. It was agreed to see whether a member of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Board could be invited to attend the Committee as well as a representative of the local Scottish Ambulance Service.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the report .**
- (b) **AGREED to invite a member of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Board, and a representative of the local Scottish Ambulance Service to attend future meetings of the Committee.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.40 a.m. and reconvened at 11.50 a.m.

7.0 SAFER COMMUNITIES AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2017 to 30 June 2017. There had been a major effort in the Scottish Borders over the last 5 years to tackle domestic abuse. The reported incidents of domestic abuse to the Police were still increasing which was to be expected because of the Council project and it was heartening that the number of repeat referrals to the Domestic Abuse Advisory Service was decreasing. Funding for the domestic abuse service had been secured until 2020 and it would be crucial for the future of the service to secure funding in

order for it to survive past 2020. Mr Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, highlighted the key points in the report.

- 7.2 Strategic Policy 1 – While the number of domestic abuse incidents reported to the Police had increased the number of repeat referrals to the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support (DAAS) Service had been on the downward trend suggesting that clients were receiving the support they required on the first occasion they accessed the service. While the overall referral number to DAAS had fallen the number of first time users of the service had been fairly consistent over its lifetime. There had been an increase in referrals to DAAS in part due to the introduction of a direct referral mechanism from the Vulnerable Persons Database (VPD). Existing clients who are subject to a further domestic abuse incident reported to the Police were referred to the service again so that contact can be made immediately with the client and additional support and advice provided. DAAS had maintained their target of responding to referrals by the police within 24 hours on 90% of occasions and within 48 hours 100% of the time for referrals from other agencies. The reason for police referrals being at 90% was a consequence of referrals being received over the weekend. The number of police referrals was twice that of other agencies or individuals referring into the service. Over 50% of those people referred to the service complete a risk assessment and safety plan. The aim was to increase referrals but the trend for the last 3 years had been downward.
- 7.3 Strategic Policy 2: The demand for the Best Bar None scheme by licensees had been high with applications up on last year to a total of 33. Applications closed in September 2017. Licensed premises apply and are assessed against set criteria and if the required standard was achieved an award was made, bronze, silver or gold and premises can re-apply to be assessed again to receive a higher award. Safety Advice in relation to finding a used needle and/or syringe had been re-issued through the media.
- 7.4 Strategic Policy 3: There had been a 24.9% increase in the number of group 1 – 5 victims recorded in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2016/17, this equated to 186 additional victims. There had been an increase of 730 reported Anti-Social Behaviour incidents compared to the same time period in 2016/17. There had been an increase in the number of youth related Anti-Social Behaviour incidents in the year 2017/18 when compared to the same time period in 2016/17; 441 persons were being monitored for anti-social behaviour in the year to date which was 28 less when compared to the same time period in 2016/17.
- 7.5 Strategic Policy 4: In relation to reducing the level and impact of poor driver behaviour through effective working, it was noted that there had been a decrease of 5 road users killed on our roads in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2016/17; and a decrease of 8 road user seriously injured in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2016/17. There had been no children seriously injured or killed. One young driver had been killed in the year to date, which was a decrease compared with the same time period in 2016/17. Two older drivers had been killed or seriously injured in the year to date; this was a decrease on the same time period in 2016/17. Finally 11 motorcyclists had been killed or seriously injured in the year to date; this was an increase on the same time period in 2016/17.
- 7.6 Strategic Policy 5: In relation to reducing the level and impact of accidents in the home through effective partnership working, for the time period 1 April 2017 only there had been an increase of 4 accidents in the under 5's recorded, when compared to the same time period in 2016. For the time period to 1 April 2017 there had been fewer recorded falls in the over 75s compared to the same time period in 2016. There had been a significant increase in the number of actioned Fire Service adult and child protection referrals received from Safer Communities.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

8.0 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

Friday, 10 November 2017

Friday, 9 February 2018

Friday, 18 May 2018

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.