

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

MINUTE of MEETING of the POLICE, FIRE &
RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES
PATHFINDER BOARD held in the Council
Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on
Friday, 28 September 2012 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), B. Herd, G. Logan, A. Nicol, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull.
Mr. J. Raine, NHS Borders, Mrs. J. Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr. G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector, Mr. G. Bell, Business Sector

Apologies:- Councillor S. Aitchison, Mr. R. Strachan, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority.

In Attendance:- LPC Superintendent A. Allan - LBP, LSO W. Allison – LBF&R, Chief Inspector K Simpson – Safer Communities Team, D. Scott, Senior Consultant - SBC, L. McGeoch, Committee & Elections Team Leader – SBC, Inspector B. Jones – LBP, Sgt J. McGuigan – LBP, Director of Service Delivery D. Mallin – LBF&R.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Police

1. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to August 2012. LPC Superintendent Allan advised that he hoped the reporting framework within the new police force would be broadly similar to that currently in operation and he highlighted the main points in the report. Theft and Dishonesty was an area which was being targeted with additional resources being moved to this area to improve some of the challenging figures shown in the report. Inspector Jones reported on road policing. The main aim was to reduce the number of road casualties. Accident hot spots were being targeted and there was close working with neighbouring authorities. With regard to improving public protection LPC Superintendent Allan advised that alternative ways of reporting on the number of Child and Adult Concern Forms were being investigated. New ways of working with sexual offenders were being used in identifying and dealing with low level offences before they led to something more serious. With regard to drugs and alcohol there was a new initiative with partner agencies for those in custody receiving an Alcohol Brief Intervention. New youngsters were currently being recruited to carry out test purchasing as this was a good preventative measure with increased awareness resulting in no failures so far in the current year. LPC Superintendent Allan and Inspector Jones answered Members questions and further information was sought in respect of a breakdown of the hate crimes.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Fire and Rescue

2. There had been circulated copies of the Fire and Rescue Progress report covering the period April to June 2012. The report outlined the main aims of the Fire and Rescue Service and LSO Allison highlighted the main points. The figures for road accidents were different from those provided by the police as the Fire and Rescue Service were only usually called to attend if people were trapped in a vehicle. The number of special service incidents had increased due to the severe weather with a higher demand for 'pumping out' services and assistance with flooding. There had also been 2 fatalities on the River Tweed. Accidental dwelling fires had increased but there had been no fatalities and a drop in the number of casualties. Fire prevention was an important area with home visits to give advice being

carried out. Systems to help vulnerable adults were currently being investigated. Other primary fires and unwanted fire signals had also decreased during the period and there had been no incidents of violence against crews. With regard to unwanted fire signals Members were advised that there were few malicious calls in the Borders and most were as a result of system failures. The Chairman highlighted the good work being carried out with primary school children as part of the 'Crucial Crew' events. LSO Allison answered Members questions.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Safer Communities

3. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Progress report covering the period April to September 2012. Chief Inspector Simpson advised that the work of his unit was closely tied to both the Police and Fire and Rescue and covered the areas of gender based violence, antisocial behaviour, alcohol and drugs and injury prevention in the home and on the road. With regard to gender based violence staff from the new initiative would report on their work at the next meeting. He advised that there was now no longer a national requirement to record children on the Child Protection Register where domestic abuse was a factor but suggested that this still be recorded locally and this was supported by the Board. With regard to antisocial behaviour there had been a continual reduction over the last 5 years. Early intervention was the key and more work was being carried out with RSLs to identify problems earlier. The drop in the number of incidents in licensed premises was due to work with licence holders and a drop in the numbers attending. With regard to injury prevention further data was being sought in respect of the high numbers of falls by people in the 75+ age group to see if prevention could be improved. Accidents in the under 5 age group also needed to be reduced. With regard to the Household Survey it was agreed that the Board would be consulted as part of the review of the questions asked. Chief Inspector Simpson answered Members questions and in particular the problems caused by alcohol.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

MEMBER

Councillor Logan left the meeting during the following item.

OPERATION GOAL

4. LPC Superintendent Allan gave Members a presentation on the recent Operation Goal. Operation Goal had been a partnership operation targeting drug dealers. The main aspects had been intelligence gathering, evidence gathering, high profile enforcement followed by a 'mop-up' phase. In addition to the police, the parties involved had included the Council's Social Work Department, the Safer Communities Team, the RSLs, NHS Borders Drug and Alcohol Partnership and the media. The operation had resulted in 54 dealer arrests, with most dealing to fund their own habits, and 8 guilty pleas so far. The operation had delivered a positive message about the problems caused by dealing in the community and had already resulted in more members of the public getting in touch and better information sharing between the partner organisations. Members commended the success of the operation but noted that by its nature it could not be carried out on a regular basis. The Chairman asked that copies of the slides be circulated to Members.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

MEMBERS

Councillors Turnbull and Herd left the meeting during the following item.

NATIONAL REFORM/POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE BOARDS

5. LPC Superintendent Allan reported on the progress with the National Reform. The Scottish Government Programme was on track with senior Scottish appointments now being made as follows:-
- Head of Fire & Rescue – A Hay
 - Head of Police – S House
 - Chairman of Police Board – V Emery
 - Chairman of Fire & Rescue Board – P Waters
 - Head of Complaints (Police) – J. McNeil

The first phase of implementation for the Single Police Force would be complete by March 2013 with full implementation expected to take 4-5 years. Work was needed to build links between the Board and the national groups. LSO Allison advised that with regard to Fire and Rescue the appointment of the Senior Management Team was the next task with the first Strategic Plan to be presented to the National Board by April 2013. He emphasised the importance of communicating with staff during this transition.

6. The Chairman reported that at the meeting of the Lothian and Borders Police Board the previous day it had been agreed that there needed to be meaningful dialogue between the National Board and the local Pathfinders. There was no legislation covering how this should work and it was essential that there was accountability and good reporting back to the local areas. Members were advised of a collaboration between police and fire and rescue in the Newcastleton Area. Following the closure of the police station the possibility of a police communication unit being located at the fire and rescue premises was under discussion and a report on the outcome would be made at the next meeting of the Board.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

FUTURE MEETINGS

7. It was noted that the meeting in January would need to be changed as it clashed with a meeting of the Fire Board. Members discussed what they wanted from future meetings and it was hoped that National Board representatives would be invited to attend. It was also agreed that future meetings commence at 9.30 a.m. and that lunch be provided.

DECISION

AGREED the proposals for future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.