

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, 30 November 2012 at 9.30 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), S. Aitchison, B. Herd, A. Nicol, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull (from para 8).
Apologies:- Mrs. J. Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr. G. Bell, Business Sector
Councillor G. Logan, Mr. J. Raine, NHS Borders, Mr. R. Strachan, Lothian &
Borders Community Justice Authority, Mr. G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector.
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, Sgt J. McGuigan – LBP

MINUTE

1. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 28 September 2012.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute subject to paragraph 2 below.

2. It was noted that reference to the discussion on the future of the Earlston Police Post had not been included in the Minute. The Police Post was well used by the community and benefits currently outweighed cost of retention. Concern was expressed that this local issue might be decided at a national level in future.
3. With reference to the request for information on benchmarking, LPC Superintendent Allan tabled a paper which provided a comparative analysis of crimes and offences currently reported across all eight police force areas in Scotland. It was noted that benching marking with other similar rural areas would be helpful.

DECISION

NOTED.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Fire and Rescue

4. There had been circulated copies of the Fire and Rescue Progress report covering the period July-September 2012 and LSO Allison highlighted the main points. In response to concerns regarding the increase in unwanted fire signals LSO Allison advised that the majority of these continued to be apparatus failures and the service was working with businesses to try and reduce these. If there were a number of calls from the same premises then officers would visit to inspect the system and give advice on how it could be improved. With regard to all figures provided it was noted that these were just for the first 6 months so it was too early to comment on trends for the year.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Safer Communities

5. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Progress report covering the period April to October 2012. Chief Inspector Simpson provided clarification regarding some of the figures in the report and answered Members questions. With regard to antisocial behaviour the importance of early intervention was highlighted. Work with partner agencies was helpful and housing officers were being encouraged to deal more robustly with incidents. Details of the number of people breaking their ASBO's were requested. The increase in the number of accidents involving children under 5 was highlighted and Chief Inspector Simpson advised that the NHS had been asked for a breakdown of these figures to ascertain if there was a particular problem area. Work on home safety was being carried out in association with the Childcare Partnership,

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Police

6. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to October 2012. LPC Superintendent Allan advised that targeting of resources had resulted in the reduction in the figures for housebreaking. In response to a question on metal theft and the implications for the building of the new railway, LPC Superintendent Allan advised that he was working with the British Transport Police regarding the whole railway corridor. Members discussed the problems caused by cold calling, particularly for the elderly. The use of "No cold caller" signs currently had no legal status but it was noted that legislation might be introduced in England and Wales. It was agreed that further information on proposals for England and Wales be sought and that a letter be sent on behalf of the Board to the Scottish Government to ascertain what their approach was to this problem. With regard to complaints, LPC Superintendent Allan advised that a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED with regard to cold calling that further information on proposed legislation for England and Wales be sought and that a letter be sent on behalf of the Board to the Scottish Government to ascertain what their approach was to this problem.

LAY DIVERSITY ADVISER SERVICE

7. The Chairman welcomed Mr Alun Evans to the meeting. He reported that the Lay Diversity Adviser Service had been established in 2002 and was unique in Scotland. The service had been set up to monitor hate crime across the force area and volunteers with an interest in diversity had been appointed. The service provided a scrutiny role and provided advice on critical incidents, public protection and event planning. Two of the Lay Advisers were aligned with the Borders Area and reported annually to the Police Board. He advised that it was unclear if the service would continue under the new single police force and hoped that the Pathfinder Board would retain the service for the Borders. The City of Edinburgh Council had already agreed to continue the service in their area. LPC Superintendent Allan advised that he found the service to be very useful and he valued the opinions of the Advisers and the oversight they provided. They could provide specialist information, assisted with public transparency and provided a vetting service. Members agreed that a report on the possible continuation of the service in the Borders be provided at their next meeting

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that a further report be provided at the next meeting on the possible continuation of the service in the Borders.

MEMBERS

Mr. Bell left the meeting during consideration of the following item and Councillor Turnbull joined the meeting.

PATHWAY PROJECT

8. The Chairman welcomed Andrea Beavon and Sandra Paton to the meeting. Ms Beavon advised Members that there had been an independent review of how violence against women was dealt with in the Borders and this had found that the few available services were not linked and were only reaching about 10% of victims. The Pathway Project had secured funding of £1.22m to provide co-ordinated services to address domestic violence in the Scottish Borders. The Project delivered three key services namely the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support (DAAS), the Children 1st Domestic Abuse Service and the Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) Groupwork programme. The three new services would work alongside existing provision to achieve project and programme outcomes for victims of domestic abuse and their children. Ms Paton, who managed the DAAS service, reported on the figures for the first 8 weeks of the project. Positive feedback had been received to date and the numbers were expected to increase once knowledge of the service grew. Members commended the excellent work of the project. Chief Inspector Simpson also commented on the good work of the service. The project had high targets to achieve but he had every confidence that these would be met. It was noted that there would be a formal launch for the project the following week at which Rosanna Cunningham, the Minister for Community Safety and Legal Affairs, would be speaking. There was an appeal for an elected Member to join the Board for the project and the Chairman advised that he would be happy to be involved.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

UPDATE ON NATIONAL REFORM

9. LPC Superintendent Allan advised that the Scottish Police Authority had now been appointed. Four Depute Chief Constables had now been appointed and they were Neil Richardson, Steve Allen, Rose Fitzpatrick and Ian Livingstone. The next tier would be appointed before the end of the year. The number of Chief Officers in Scotland was reducing from 40 to 11 and there was still no clarity regarding support staff and this was causing concern for those staff. The new single force was to be divided into 14 territorial divisions with the Borders being in division 7 together with East, Mid and West Lothian Council areas.
10. LSO Allison advised that the National Board had been appointed and would hold their first meeting in early December. Mr Alec Clark had been appointed as the Depute Chief Officer. The service would be divided into three hubs with the Borders being in the eastern hub with the Lothian's and Fife. This section would be headed up by Peter Murray from Grampian. Lewis Ramsay would be heading up Prevention and Protection and there was one further appointment to be made at that level. Two non-uniformed posts were currently being advertised and the management structure of the eastern hub still had to be finalised. It was hoped that Pat Watters, National Board Chairman would be able to attend the Boards next meeting.

DECISION

NOTED the reports.

POLICE FIRE AND RESCUE BOARDS

11. The Chairman reported that discussions were ongoing regarding the display of Fire and Rescue Memorabilia and it was hoped that Edinburgh City Council would be able to offer a permanent home. Councillor Herd paid tribute to the work of both services during the recent flooding incident in Galashiels.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

CONSULTATION ON THE STRATEGIC POLICE PRIORITIES

12. There had been circulated copies of a letter received from the Scottish Government seeking comments on the Strategic Police Priorities. Mr. Scott advised that there would be a similar letter received in respect of Fire and Rescue and it was important that the Board submitted a response. It was suggested that more focussed outcomes regarding Antisocial Behaviour, alcohol and road accidents. Given the short timescale it was proposed that powers be delegated to Mr. Scott in consultation with the Chairman to submit a response.

DECISION

AGREED that powers be delegated to Mr. Scott in consultation with the Chairman to submit a response to the Scottish Government on the Strategic Police Priorities.

BEST VALUE IN POLICE SERVICES IN SCOTLAND: OVERVIEW REPORT

13. There had been circulated copies of the Audit Scotland Report on Best Value in police authorities and police forces in Scotland. Chief Inspector Simpson was keen to receive the views of the Board on the report and what needed to be taken forward. The Chairman proposed that Members contact Chief Inspector Simpson if they had strong views on any particular matter. Chief Inspector Simpson answered Members questions and it was noted that links between this Board, the Community Planning Strategic Board and Area Forums was important.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that Members contact Chief Inspector Simpson if they had strong views on any particular matter.

FUTURE MEETINGS

14. It was noted that the next meeting would be held on 8 February 2013 and thereafter quarterly in May, August and November.

DECISION

NOTED that the next meeting would be held on 8 February 2013.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 p.m.