

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

MINUTE of MEETING of the POLICE, FIRE &
RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held
in the Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on
Friday, 17 May 2013 at 9.30 a.m.

Present:- Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), G Logan, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull, S Aitchison (from paragraph 7). Mrs. J. Mulloy - Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr. G. Higgs - Voluntary Sector; Mr J. Raine - NHS Borders, , Mr. R. Strachan - Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority.

Apologies:- Councillors B Herd, A Nicol; Mr. G. Bell, Business Sector. LSO P.Heath

In Attendance:- Inspector A. McGregor – British Transport Police, Chief Superintendent J. McDiarmid - Police Scotland, Chief Inspector A. Clark - Police Scotland GC J. Mallin – LBF&R, Chief Inspector K Simpson – Safer Communities Team, D. Scott, Senior Consultant - SBC, Mr N Latimer, Business Sector, L. McGeoch, Democratic Services Team Leader – SBC, P. Bolson, Democratic Services Officer – SBC.

WELCOME

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Mr Norman Latimer who was representing the Business Sector at this meeting in the absence of Mr Bell and Inspector Angela McGregor of the British Transport Police. The Chairman also noted that “Pathfinder” had been dropped from the title of the Board and that it would now be known as the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board.

MINUTE

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 8 February 2012. With reference to paragraph 12, it was noted that in the first sentence, “Criminal” should read “Community” and that the second sentence should read “reduce” rather than “prevent”.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute subject to the above amendments.

3. With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute of 8 February 2013, the Chairman reported that replies had been received from three MSPs, John Lamont, Jim Hume and Paul Wheelhouse in response to the letters about cold calling which had been sent to all 9 MSPs representing the Scottish Borders. It was noted that this issue had been before the Scottish Parliament on two previous occasions. The Board discussed the matter in some detail and it was highlighted that although signage could be used to discourage cold calling, it was not legally enforceable. Mr Latimer confirmed that the Federation of Small Businesses supported control measures in respect of cold calling. Further discussion took place around the possible harm and damage cold calling could cause within communities and it was noted that some research had been carried out by Trading Standards in this respect. Mr Wheelhouse had stated in his letter that he would continue to update the Board as appropriate.

DECISION

NOTED the responses.

4. With reference to paragraph 10 of the Minute of 8 February 2013, a letter had been received from Scottish Minister Mr K Brown regarding minor speeding offences. It was noted that a scheme was in place and that this was to be extended in the future. Discussion took place in respect of exactly what "minor" meant in relation to speeding offences and it was clarified that this referred to a percentage rather than an actual number of miles over the given limit.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. With reference to paragraph 11 of the Minute of 8 February 2013, Group Commander Mallin informed members that the Stair Aware project would be re-launched once updated literature was available which reflected the new names for the Police and Fire Services.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

6. With reference to paragraph 16 of the Minute of 8 February 2013, Mr Scott advised that the Scottish Police Authority Strategic Plan had been approved by the Scottish Parliament at the end of March 2013.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

MEMBER

Councillor Aitchison joined the meeting during consideration of the following item.

Police

7. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April 2012 to March 2013. The report detailed the figures to date and performance against target in respect of a number of areas including antisocial behaviour, theft and dishonesty, road casualties, improving public protection in the Borders and drugs and alcohol. Chief Inspector Clark commented on the various crime groups and advised that 55 less homes had been the victims of theft than in the previous reported year. There had been an increase in the number of road casualties in March 2013 with the year end total being five above the target figure. This was attributed, in part, to March being one of the coldest months on record and the resultant impact of snow and ice on road conditions. It was also reported that there had been a fall in the number of sexual and violent crimes against children, with an increase in the detection of the former and a slight decrease in the detection rate of the latter. Discussion followed and officers present answered Members questions on hate crime, test purchasing, domestic violence and anti-social behaviour. Members were informed that, in terms of overall statistics, the Scottish Borders was the safest place on mainland Scotland. It was noted that statistics relating to Complaints would be included in the report which would be brought to the next meeting of the Board and agreed that the Scottish Borders Council Road Safety Working Group also be invited to make a presentation at the next meeting of the Board scheduled for 2 August 2013.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

- (b) **AGREED to invite Scottish Borders Council Road Safety Working Group to make a presentation at the meeting of the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board on 2 August 2013.**

Fire and Rescue

8. There had been circulated copies of the Fire and Rescue Progress report covering the period January to March 2013. Group Commander Mallin highlighted the main points of the report and went on to detail some of the statistics relating to each of the five main objectives within the Local Fire and Rescue Plan for 2012. It was noted that there had been an increase of eight in the number of road traffic incidents attended from nineteen to twenty-seven during the same period in 2012, and an increase of two in the number of Special Service incidents attended. Accidental fires in the home resulting in death and injury also rose by one to twenty-two, with one death being directly related to the injuries sustained during the fire. It was also reported that there had been a reduction in the number of other primary fires from twenty-three to fifteen. The annual trend of unwanted fire signals had risen by forty and this was attributed, in part, to an increase in the number of single point domestic smoke alarms. There was some concern regarding the number of businesses with inappropriate alarm systems and it was hoped that continued publicity at events such as the Border Union Show would increase awareness of the importance of having the correct systems in place. Discussion followed and officers answered Members' questions.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Safer Communities

9. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Progress report covering the period April 2012 to March 2013. The report noted that there had been an increase in the number of reported incidents of domestic abuse. Chief Inspector Simpson explained that this was partly due to victims being more confident in the service and therefore being more willing to report incidents. The number of Homeless Assessment Presentations had increased by fifty-six and the report explained that the introduction of new prevention activities, along with service redesign, had been the main reason for this. The number of youth-related antisocial behaviour incidents continued to show an overall decrease over the last 3 years and this was partly attributed to severe weather conditions over the winter months. Chief Inspector Simpson acknowledged that it would be extremely challenging to maintain these numbers given normal reporting conditions. The report noted that there had been an increase of 194 early interventions by Anti-Social Behaviour partners and that a training programme had commenced in May 2013 which would enable staff working within partnership agencies to develop an excellent knowledge base of anti-social legislation and local policies and procedures. Future reports would reflect this knowledge and awareness. Further discussion took place in relation to the alcohol and drugs statistics. It was noted that currently, Scottish Borders Council was the only local authority in Scotland without Bylaws relating to drinking in public places, however, Members were informed that a report was being presented at the Council meeting on 30 May 2013 which would look to consult locally on the introduction of Bylaws Prohibiting the Consumption of Alcohol in Designated Public Places.
10. The Chairman thanked the Police for their assistance in dealing with a recent incident in Gordon.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

MEMBER

Mrs Mulloy left the meeting.

PRESENTATIONS

New Borders Rail Joint Community Safety Group

11. The Chairman welcomed Inspector Angela McGregor of the British Transport Police to the meeting to give a presentation on the new Borders Rail Joint Community Safety Group. Inspector McGregor explained that the Borders Railway came under the jurisdiction of the British Transport Police and that this single force for railways worked within a specific set of Bylaws, operational plans and community engagement plans, had a separate patrol strategy and medical team management. Inspector McGregor explained that partnership working was well established and that the Group had been working with Network Rail and BAM Nutall during the railway project development, with a Police Officer based within the Network Rail offices at Newtongrange. The Borders Joint Community Group was as a cross-agency body operating to engage with local communities and included representation from Scottish Borders, East Lothian and Midlothian Councils, as well as all the member agencies of this Board. The Group maintained a high public profile and attended community events to raise awareness of the law as it related to local communities and to publicise how incidents on the railway sites should be reported. Inspector McGregor answered Members questions, and the Chairman thanked her for a comprehensive presentation.

DECISION

NOTED.

Community Justice Authority Update

12. Mr Strachan gave an update on the work of the Community Justice Authority (CJA). He explained that offending and reoffending were key issues currently being addressed by the CJA and that work was being progressed to ensure that young people leaving Polmont would be fully re-integrated into their local communities. Further work was also being undertaken to develop and Edinburgh-based Community Justice Centre for women leaving prison. Mr Strachan informed Members that further reform of the Community Justice System was scheduled to take place in April 2016 and that there would be challenges to be met. Future updates would be presented to the Board as additional information became available.

DECISION

NOTED.

POLICE AND FIRE AND RESCUE REFORM

13. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid provided an update on how the Police Reform had progressed and reported that the transfer to Police Scotland had gone according to plan. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid explained that police officers would be brought into the Scottish Borders from other areas as and when required and noted the Jim Clark Rally as an example of this. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid also noted that within six weeks of the establishment of Police Scotland, additional officers had been drafted into the Borders to assist with critical incidents. Members were informed that a three day motorcyclist campaign had taken place and that further campaigns to address issues of alcohol, drugs and violence were in development. Members were informed that roads

policing was a priority, including issues relating to the use of mobile 'phones while driving and appropriate use of seat belts and that work was ongoing to ensure that resources within J Division were in the right place at the right time. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid answered Members' questions.

14. Group Commander Mallin provided an update on the progress of Fire and Rescue Reform and confirmed that LSO Peter Heath had taken up his new post on 1 April 2013, with further post-matching now in progress. GC Mallin confirmed that LSO Heath's new role included the development of the Fire and Rescue Plan for 2014-17 and that a Local Plan would also be developed in conjunction with this. All operating processes had been consolidated and that it had been business as usual for the Scottish Borders. GC Mallin answered questions from Members.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

URGENT BUSINESS

15. Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the item dealt with in the following paragraph should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed and make an early decision.
16. There was tabled at the meeting a note from Mr Higgs MBE highlighting a number of issues which were causing concern in local communities. These issues included the removal of age as a criterion for hate crime, remote reporting, the role of Equalities and Diversity officers and a change of role for Locality Officers. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid responded to these concerns and would address Mr Higgs' comments to appropriate officers.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

17. It was noted that the next meeting of the Board was due to be held on Friday, 2 August 2013.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

PRIVATE BUSINESS

18. **DECISION**
AGREED under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of the business detailed in the Appendix to this Minute on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 14 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act.

SUMMARY OF PRIVATE BUSINESS

Minute

1. The Board noted the Private section of the Minute of the meeting of 8 February 2013.

The meeting concluded at 12.40 p.m.