

**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 CHAMBER,  
COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS, NEWTOWN ST  
BOSWELLS on 2 August 2013 at 09:30 a.m.

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Present: Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), S. Aitchison, A. Nicol, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull.  
Mr. J. Raine, NHS Borders, Mrs. J. Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, , Mr.  
R. Strachan, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority Mr. G. Higgs, Voluntary  
Sector, Mr. G. Bell, Business Sector.

Apologies: Councillors B. Herd, G. Logan, Chief Inspector Andy Clark

In Attendance:- Chief Superintendent J. McDiarmid Police Scotland, LSO P. Heath - Scottish Fire &  
Rescue Service, Chief Inspector K Simpson – Safer Communities Team, GC J.  
Mallin – Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, D. Scott - Senior Consultant SBC, L.  
McGeoch - Democratic Services Team Leader SBC.

**WELCOME**

1. The Chairman welcomed Mr Paul Rooney and Mr Douglas Yates, Members of the Scottish Police Authority, to the meeting.

**MINUTE**

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 17 May 2013.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute.**

**PROGRESS REPORTS**

**Police**

3. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to June 2013. The report detailed the figures to date and comparisons with figures for the same period last year for the 6 priority areas. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid highlighted the main points in the report. There had been an increase in the detection rates for crimes of domestic abuse and it was hoped this would be a continuing trend in light of the increased efforts being made to prosecute suspects. There had been an increase in the level of violent crime. However, 2012/13 had seen the lowest level with the figures still being below the 5 year average of 23.4. She was also pleased to report that there had been no incidents so far this year related to the local festivals. The use of a more intelligence led approach had seen more positive stop and searches for drugs. While there had been a positive reduction in road accidents during the reporting period it was noted that there had been two fatal accidents during July. While there had been a large increase in the number of people detected for seatbelt and mobile phone offences this was an area which had been targeted. There was to be a focus on serious and organised crime over the coming months with additional staff being moved into the area to assist.. It was noted that the numbers of police complaints would be reported at the next meeting of the Board. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid answered Members

questions and agreed to provide numbers of seizures in respect of proceeds from serious and organised crime and details of the crime groups in her next report to the Board.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

### **Fire and Rescue**

4. There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Progress report covering the period April to June 2013. LSO Heath and GC Mallin highlighted the main points in the report. There was an overall downwards trend in all areas with the exception of unwanted fire signals. Faulty apparatus was a major factor in this figure and the Service continued to work with businesses to resolve this issue. During the reporting period there had been a small increase in road traffic accidents attended but no hotspots had been identified. There had been a decrease in special service incidents which had included 3 lift rescues, 5 water rescues, 1 flooding incident and 2 animal rescues. There had been a 25% reduction in accidental dwelling fires and the programme of home safety checks was continuing. The Chairman commented on a successful chemical incident exercise conducted at Ahlstrom in Chirnside by local Fire & Rescue Crews. GC Mallin advised that further exercises were to be organised and Board members were welcome to attend. Further clarification of the information provided with regard to audit activity was provided in terms of the types of premises to be visited and how risk for each type was assessed. LSO Heath and GC Mallin answered Members questions. Mr Strachan commented on research carried out by a PhD student on work with prison visitors and agreed to provide it to LSO Heath who indicated that the service needed more sharing of such information. LSO Heath advised that he was involved in preparations for the new railway. Meetings were being held with the contractor and information on likely risks were regular sent to fire stations. A specialist training package relating to the railway was currently being developed.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

### **Safer Communities**

5. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Progress report covering the period April to June 2013. Chief Inspector Simpson highlighted the main points in the report. With regard to gender based violence there had been an 11% reduction in repeat victims. The first assessment of the Pathway Project had been carried out with service users and there had been a very positive response. Self-referral to the service was to be publicised further. Fewer calls were now being made to the national helpline with more going direct to Pathway. The number of antisocial behaviour incidents continued to decline and it was anticipated that the recent training of partner organisation staff would lead to an increase in the early intervention figures. It was hoped that the results from the recent Scottish Borders Household Survey would reflect an improved public perception in this area. With regard to injury prevention, data was still awaited from the NHS. Chief Inspector Simpson answered Members questions in respect of children involved in domestic abuse cases, use of officers from the national motorcycle unit in the Borders and the need to keep pursuing antisocial behaviour cases.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

### **CONSULTATION ON THE SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

6. There had been circulated copies of the draft Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2013-2016 which had been issued for consultation. Copies of a suggested response had also been circulated. LSO Heath advised that this Strategy would inform the local area plan. Mr. Scott commented on the proposed response and where the Strategy might be strengthened. Members discussed the document and made further suggestions including the need to have data integration

rather than links, reflect the added value to the community such as the use of Fire and Rescue Premises by the community, engagement with youth justice and cross border co-operation.

#### **DECISION**

**AGREED to approve the response to the consultation paper subject to the addition of the points detailed above.**

#### **UPDATE ON THE WORK OF THE POLICE AUTHORITY**

7. Mr Paul Rooney advised that he and Mr Douglas Yates were the Police Authority contact points for the Scottish Borders. Mr Rooney was a Glasgow City Councillor and former Convener of the Police Board in his area. Mr Yates was a former police officer. He advised that they were trying to get an idea of the challenges faced by the new police force. The first focus was to ensure that it was “business as usual” and from local feedback it appeared that the public had noticed little change. Regarding the media attention on the provision of support services he advised that a Governance Working Group had been set up to look at future support needs. The full Police Board met every 6 weeks and 4 committees to deal with Audit/Risk, Complaints, HR and Finance had been set up. The Board would meet at different venues around the country and were open to the public. He commended the Scottish Borders for the composition of their Board which reflected best practice by involving all community partners. The Chairman commented on the importance of two way dialogue.

#### **DECISION NOTED.**

#### **SCOTTISH BORDERS ROAD SAFETY GROUP**

8. The Chairman welcomed Mr Paul Richardson, Community Safety Officer to the meeting. Mr Richardson gave members a presentation on the work of the Road Safety Working Group. The current Group had been set up in May 2006 and included representatives from all groups with an interest in road safety. The aim of the Group was to reduce road casualties in line with government targets. These included:-
- a 40% reduction in the number of people killed by 2020 – this would require there to be 7 or less fatalities per year and the current rate was around 11-12
  - a 55% reduction in those seriously injured – this would require there to be 43 or less and this was a difficult target to meet given the current rate of over 70 per year
  - a 50% reduction in child fatalities – this would require there to be no more than 2 by 2020
  - a 65% reduction in child injury – we were currently on target at 6 per year

The long term trend in road casualties was down but there would always be fluctuations. The aim of the group was to raise the profile of road safety and follow the 3 Es – education, enforcement and engineering. Mr Richardson answered Members questions and commented on the launch of the “Nice Way Code” by Scottish Government which aimed to encourage drivers, cyclists and pedestrians to be more considerate of each other on the roads. The Chairman thanked Mr Richardson for his presentation.

#### **DECISION NOTED the presentation.**

#### **CHAIRMAN**

Councillor Moffat left the meeting during the above item and Councillor Nicol took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

#### **UPDATE ON POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE REFORM**

9. Chief Superintendent McDiarmid advised that the transition had been smooth for local communities. She was rolling out the multi member ward objectives and had written to all councillors for their views

on the review of traffic warden provision and police station counter opening hours. With regard to counter opening hours the current level of usage would be considered. Consideration was being given to the decriminalisation of parking offences which would allow local authorities to deal with this. The trunk road policing division was moving from Fettes in Edinburgh to Dalkeith. She also commented on the use of the operational support division to provide extra support at the local festivals and the Jim Clark Rally, which had resulted in fewer incidents of antisocial behaviour and violence. Mr Scott commented on the council's response to the two reviews and advised that while the financial challenges were recognised both services were important to the public and opportunities for more joint working should be proactively investigated.

10. LSO Heath advised that the focus during the last quarter had been on producing the strategic plan. A meeting had been arranged with the Council's Leader and Chief Executive to discuss this. He and CG Mallin were working on a template for local plans and these would be brought to the Board. HMI was currently reviewing integration in the Eastern Hub and would report back on whether or not targets were being met. The National Board had designated 4 of its Members with responsibility for the eastern area. A full review of the property belonging to the Service was currently being carried out to identify areas for rationalisation. There were no planned reductions in service for the Borders area and there was a project dealing with the identification of specialist resources to ensure that these were in the correct location. He also commented on the threat of possible strike action and that resilience plans were currently being prepared.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the current position.**

**URGENT BUSINESS**

11. Under Section 50B(4)(b) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the Chairman was of the opinion that the items dealt with in the following paragraphs should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency, in view of the need to keep Members informed.

**GYPSY TRAVELLERS SITE MANAGERS ASSOCIATION**

12. Mr Higgs advised that the Gypsy Travellers Site Managers meeting was to be held at the Tweedside Caravan Park in Innerleithen on 25 September 2013 and encouraged Members to come along.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**AWARDS**

13. Chief Inspector Simpson reported that his unit had been shortlisted for an award by Safer Communities Scotland in respect of their work on legal highs.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

14. It was noted that the next meeting of the Board was due to be held in Friday, 8 November 2013, however, the Scottish Fire and Rescue representatives asked if it would be possible to put the date back by one week to allow them to be able to provide their performance report in advance of the meeting.

**DECISION**

**AGREED that the Clerk check on the suitability of moving the meeting date and thereafter advise all Members.**

*The meeting concluded at 1.00 p.m.*