

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 14
February 2014 at 9.30am

Present:- Councillors D Moffat (Chairman), S Aitchison, A Nicol, R Stewart, G Turnbull.
Mrs J Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr R Strachan, Lothian & Borders
Community Justice Authority, Mr G Higgs, Voluntary Sector.
Apologies: Councillor G Logan. Mr J Raine, NHS Borders, Mr G Bell, Business Sector.
In Attendance: Dr. D Steele, NHS Borders, Superintendent G Jones, Police Scotland, Chief Inspector A
Clark, Police Scotland, Chief Inspector K Simpson, Safer Communities Team, GC J
Mallin, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, LSO P Heath, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mr
P Rooney, Scottish Police Authority, Ms E Gaw, Scottish Police Authority, D Scott, Senior
Consultant SBC, S Smith, Partnership Manager SBC, P Bolson, Democratic Services
Officer.

WELCOME

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

MINUTE

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 15 November 2013. In respect of paragraph 11 of the Minute, it was noted that fires in Scotland had reduced by 18% and not 80% as had been recorded.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute, subject to the above amendment.

3. **MATTERS ARISING**

- (a) Members were informed that the following senior posts within Police Scotland had now been filled:
Chief Superintendent Gill Imery, Divisional Commander;
Superintendent Angus MacInnes;
Detective Superintendent Pat Campbell.
- (b) Cllr Nicol – Sought clarity on members within the minute. It was agreed that advice on this matter would be obtained via Members Services.
- (c) With reference to the Waverley Railway works, it was reported that Transport Police was not experiencing any real problems and that initial complaints regarding the impact on the A7 and other roads were successfully dealt with by Scottish Borders Council and BAM directly. The local Member acknowledged that there had been a reduction in the number of complaints related to these works.
- (d) With reference to recommendation (b) of item 7 of the Minute of the meeting of 15 November 2013, it was agreed that the item on the Community Safety Engagement Toolkit be included on

the Agenda for the meeting scheduled for 9 May 2014. This decision had been taken due to the number of items on today's Agenda.

DECISION

AGREED that an item on the Community Safety Engagement Toolkit be included on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Board.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Police

4. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to December 2013. CI Clark noted that there had been 55 complaints against the police in the Scottish Borders year to date. The report detailed the figures for the six Priority areas to date and compared them to the figures for the same period in 2012/13. Chief Inspector Clark highlighted key areas of the report and stated that it was pleasing to report the detection rate for Groups 1 – 5 crimes had increased by 2.9 percentage points over the last quarter. He went on to detail the figures in the context of the report and noted that the detection rate for crimes relating to domestic abuse had increased by 4.6% and by 17.3% for sexual offences, the latter being particularly significant, given the difficulties often associated with detection of this type of crime. The report noted that the number of anti-social behaviour incidents had also reduced by a further 3% over the last quarter, reflecting the continued good partnership working within Scottish Borders and the tangible benefits of early intervention processes. It was reported that there had been an increase in the number of hate crimes during the current year to date, from 43 to 56. This might, in part, be attributed to an increased confidence by the public in reporting such crimes. It was noted that race related crime continued to be the most prevalent, currently accounting for two thirds of all hate crime. It was further noted that the detection rate for all hate crime was currently 80%. Chief Inspector Clark reported that the reduction in the level of violent crime was extremely pleasing, as was the increase in the number of positive stop and searches for offensive weapons and for drugs and highlighted the intelligence-led approach in these areas. There had also been an increase in the number of licensed premises visits, particularly during Operation Tinsel (from 2 December 2013 to 5 January 2014) and as a result, the number of such visits during the year to date had increased by 12%. A decrease in the number of incidents within licensed premises of 17% had subsequently been recorded. The report noted that the number of adults killed on our roads had decreased by 50% from 8 to 4 while adults seriously injured had increased from 58 to 59. The report further noted that children aged 16 years or under who were killed or seriously injured had reduced by 40% from 5 to 3 and not as per the document which depicted a drop of 72% (18 to 5), however Chief Inspector Clark stated that overall, this demonstrated very positive comparative figures to 2012/13. Further road safety figures showed a decrease in the number of detections for drink/drug driving offences from 92 to 89, while detections for seat belt offences and mobile phone offences increased by almost 130% from 194 to 446 and 59.2% from 184 to 293 respectively. Further figures relating to serious organised crime showed that just over £310.1k had been recorded in cash seizures and restraints under the Proceeds of Crime Act, this figure being double that in the previous three months. The number of people detected for supplying drugs had dropped by 63.4% from 112 to 41. Chief Inspector Clark explained that although this figure initially appeared disappointing, this was partly because the comparable figures for the previous year included the Operation Goal results. In effect, Operation Goal accounted for 63% of the total number of detections during 2012/13 and that without these, the current year figures would be more equitable. The report also noted that there had been an improvement of 5% in the previous quarter routine stop and searches and there had been two significant seizures in East Berwickshire as a result of routine stop and searches.
5. Discussion followed and Members asked a number of questions. Concern was raised regarding the way in which social media was being used by individuals to publicise "legal highs". Chief Inspector Clark referred to the work of the Safer Communities Team (SCT) in relation to "legal highs" and also noted that there was a Drugs Death Review Group set up in the Scottish Borders. Chief Inspector Simpson noted that the SCT had won a national award related to its work around "legal highs", and

explained that educational packages had been developed as part of the programme to explain the dangers of "legal highs" to young people. He went on to explain that using social media to publicise "legal highs" was not illegal although it was regarded as reckless and confirmed that work was in progress with the Borders Alcohol and Drugs Partnership to address this. A further question relating to any proposed Governmental/legislative changes was raised and Chief Inspector Simpson confirmed that he was aware of some work that had been undertaken in respect of drug categorisation from legal to illegal and vice versa. Members were informed that there were statistics available relating to conviction rates of older people taking drugs and Chief Inspector Clark would look at providing these figures for a future meeting. It was noted that the way in which some figures were reported, eg hate crime and age, was slightly confusing and Chief Inspector Clark agreed to consider the way in which this information was presented for future reports. Also, in relation to hate crime, questions were raised regarding repeat offending and the type of intervention and support that was required. It was acknowledged that the figures were small in the Scottish Borders at the present time and also that this was an area in which the Inequalities theme of the Community Planning Partnership would have a role. Further questions were raised by Members. In response, Chief Inspector Clark explained that the increase in the number of visits to licensed premises related in part to the way in which inspections were now carried out, including the informal visits which now took place. With regard to safety on our roads, Chief Inspector Clark went on to explain that, in respect of the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads, there was activity around contributory factors such as using mobile phones, lack of using seatbelts etc and in an effort to reduce the overall number of accidents, "hotspots" were being targeted. It was also noted that there had been 5 accidents on a particular road since October 2013 and Chief Inspector Clark explained that in situations such as this the police initiated a high visibility presence at these locations. There was already joint working with the Fire and Rescue Service and further work would be taken forward in the future with the Community Planning Partnership. Chief Inspector Clark confirmed that inappropriate use of fog lights was an offence and in respect of road safety following the removal of the Traffic Warden Service, he re-assured Members that areas such as zigzags at schools and other dangerous parking would continue to be targeted by the police. Discussion took place regarding anti-social behaviour and concerns regarding the under-reporting of incidents. It was acknowledged that fear could prevent people from reporting and it was therefore essential for people to feel supported when reporting anti-social behaviour. Chief Inspector Simpson noted that a national campaign would be launched on 24 February 2014 which would encourage and promote the reporting of hate crime. Chief Inspector Clark responded to a question relating to the closure of Police Counters, explaining that the decision to close some counters followed significant analysis relating to the use of the service. He would also provide information on the new opening hours in due course. LSO Heath explained that consideration could be given to hosting Police Counters in local Fire Stations, should this be identified following the outcome of a feasibility study.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED:

- (i) that Chief Inspector Clark would provide Members with the statistics relating to conviction rates of older people taking drugs;**
- (ii) that Chief Inspector Clark would review the way in which the figures relating to hate crime and age were presented for future reports; and**
- (iii) that Chief Inspector Clark would provide information on the new opening hours for Police Counters in the Scottish Borders.**

Fire and Rescue Service

6. There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Progress Report covering the period October to December 2013. LSO Heath and GC Mallin noted that this report for the third quarter of the year had been very positive and went on to highlight the main points contained within

it. With regard to Objective 1: To reduce the occurrence of road traffic collisions resulting in death and injury, it was noted that the Fire and Rescue Service (FRS) had attended twenty-one road traffic collisions, a decrease of eight compared to the same period the previous year. Objective 2 related to the occurrence of special service incidents resulting in death and injury and it was noted that forty-one attendances were required, and increase of eleven compared to the same period in 2012/13. It was noted that this included nine flooding incidents, sixteen incidents where a person had fallen, was trapped or to enable access to property so that the Scottish Ambulance Service could tend to a casualty. Objective 3 also showed a reduction in the occurrence of accidental dwelling fires in the home resulting in deaths and injury from thirty to twenty-three. Objective 4 related to other primary fires resulting in death and injury and figures showed a decrease of eight for the current reporting period. It was noted that chimney fires accounted for 30% of dwelling fires in the Scottish Borders and GC Mallin highlighted that a campaign using local media had been utilised to raise awareness of the dangers and prevention of fires involving traditional fires and wood burning stoves. Objective 5 related to the occurrence of unwanted fire signals and it was noted that there had been a reduction of twenty, from 246 to 226. It was further noted that work continued with the Federation of Small Businesses and with individual occupiers of premises in the Scottish Borders to reduce the number of persistent unwanted fire signals. Members were informed that there had been no reported complaints against the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service within the Scottish Borders during quarter three reporting period.

7. Discussion took place and a number of questions were raised by Members. In response, GC Mallin confirmed that work was in progress to collate statistics which would show the number of fires for which drugs and alcohol were contributory factors and LSO Heath explained that statistics were driven by the way in which a person reported an incident and highlighted that medical assessments were not always made. Engagement with young people was promoted through programmes such as Phoenix and it was confirmed that young people from the Scottish Borders could participate in such programmes being delivered in the Lothians. GC Mallin informed Members that initial work was currently being undertaken to look at the feasibility of delivering a course in the Scottish Borders and to identifying associated costs and budget requirements. With regard to Cooldown and whether this initiative could be developed for use within secondary schools, it was noted that a presentation would be made to Members at a future date to be agreed. Members discussed the figures relating to the number of unwanted fire signals received and it was noted that only a small proportion of call outs were actual fires. Throughout Scotland during 2013, there were 47,000 call outs and 74% of these were due to failure of apparatus. GC Mallin explained that risk assessments could go some way to reducing the number of call outs and confirmed that only one fire pump currently attended each call out with owners of premises having the option to call 999 for full attendance when required. In respect of chimney fires and the need for regular cleaning, it was noted that a public campaign would be launched in August 2014. It was also acknowledged that there could be a link between fuel poverty and the use of cheap fuel with an increased risk of chimney fires. LSO Heath and GC Mallin updated Members on the current recruitment of retained fire fighters and confirmed that all vacancies could be viewed via My Job Scotland. A report on recruitment within the Fire and Rescue Service in the Scottish Borders would be presented to the next meeting of the Board

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED:

- (i) that a presentation be made to Members on the feasibility of developing the Cooldown Crew initiative for use within secondary schools in the Scottish Borders;**
- (ii) that an item on recruitment within the Fire and Rescue Service in the Scottish Borders be included on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Board.**

Safer Communities

8. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period from April to December 2013. Chief Inspector Simpson highlighted the key points in the report and it was noted that there had been a reduction in the number of reported incidents of domestic abuse involving adults to 680 from 693 in the same period last year. Further positive results were recorded under Strategic Objective 1, including repeat victim incidents where a reduction of 9% had been recorded; the number of children on the Child Protection Register where domestic abuse had been identified as a risk factor had reduced by twelve; and the number of homeless presentations due to violent or abusive disputes within the household had reduced by fifteen. In relation to anti-social behaviour, it was reported that the number of youth-related incidents was down by 443 to 1,422. The figures under the heading of alcohol and drugs also showed very positive results, with a reduction of 110 in the number of reported incidents of vandalism; 107 less incidents relating to licensed premises; and a reduction from 34 to 18 incidents involving needles/drugs. It was also reported that the projected end of year figures in relation to falls for people aged 75+ was likely to be higher than the baseline and this had been highlighted to the multi-agency Falls Prevention Group. Chief Inspector Simpson noted that the number of road users killed during the current reporting period had reduced by 50% from eight to four and that the number of children killed or seriously injured had also decreased from five to three. He also informed Members that the Skill for Life Training Programme for young drivers aged between 17 and 26 was due to commence in April 2014. A question was asked in terms of how the figures were collected for emergency hospital admissions for people aged 75+. Members were informed that NHS Borders provided the data and that it was compiled from two different sets of figures based on how patients were transported to hospital. Mr Strachan congratulated the Community Safety Team in relation to developing Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

DECISION

NOTED the report.

PRESENTATION

9. The Chairman welcomed PC Hannah Medley, Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer (WCLO) to the meeting. PC Medley explained that she was one of six Wildlife Crime Liaison Officers across Scotland whose role included offering support and guidance to operational officers, undertaking investigations and reporting of wildlife crime, gathering local intelligence for use in the development of investigative and preventative strategies, meeting and liaising with other officers and partner agencies and speaking and engaging with public groups. PC Medley informed Members that there were a number of different types of wildlife crime. She identified deer poaching as a major issue in rural areas and explained that Operation Moon was in response to the problem. This was a nationally-led operation and included intelligence-led identification of hot spot areas which were then patrolled of officers. Operation Moon also included liaison with local landowners to raise awareness and to disrupt offenders so they were unable to continue poaching. PC Medley also reported that venison dealers across Scotland would be visited and their books and records would be inspected to ensure that any trading had been legally undertaken. PC Medley went on to note that deer poaching was sometimes carried out by rogue gun owners shooting on other landowners' property, often by individuals with fast-running dogs and often by organised criminals using illegal firearms. PC Medley described hare coursing, explaining that this crime often only lasted about 40 seconds and noted that Operation Lapus was the national operation associated with this crime. Badger baiting currently received publicity because dead animals were often seen at the roadside although PC Medley explained that it was very difficult to establish whether these badgers had been killed by baiting or were road kill. Other types of wildlife crime included bird of prey persecution, where criminals were guilty of shooting the birds illegally, trapping them illegally or poisoning them, often using poisons which were lethal to humans as well as birds. Multi cage traps/Larsen traps were also used to catch birds of prey and it was within the remit of WCLOs to identify when the strict licensing regulations associated

with these traps were breached. PC Medley reported that new legislation was being introduced in April 2014 in an effort to reduce crime associated with snaring, and went on to list other forms of wildlife crime such as bat roosting disturbance, illegal egg collection, nest destruction, illegal trade in endangered species and releasing non-native species into the wild. PC Medley acknowledged that events such as hare coursing were embedded in some cultures within society and that this was often very difficult to target. She went on to note that the training courses for gamekeepers could now be taken up at the Borders Agricultural College and that these would hopefully go some way to developing their skills for working in the field. PC Medley emphasised the importance of collecting forensic/DNA evidence from all crime sites as this was usually essential before a charge could be made. The Chairman thanked PC Medley for her presentation and emphasised the importance of reporting suspected wildlife crime immediately.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

POLICE SCOTLAND DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

10. There had been circulated a report by Police Scotland on the Draft Local Policing Plan for the Scottish Borders 2014-17. Chief Inspector Clark explained that the previous Plan was for one year only and had been supported by the Board and Elected Members. The new Plan set out the local policing priorities and objectives for the Scottish Borders for three years and was a statutory requirement of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. He further explained that this Plan was produced as part of a planning process which took account of the Scottish Government's vision for public services, the Strategic Police Priorities set by Scottish Ministers, the Scottish Police Authority's Strategic Police Plan and the Chief Constable of Scotland's Annual Police Plan. CI Clark noted that the new Local Plan was to be built from the bottom up and was to apply specifically to the Scottish Borders, with national priorities being taken into account. Multi-Member Ward Plans were developed from the same process. CI Clark acknowledged that the Local Plan was ambitious and although it might not be possible to achieve all the objectives immediately, it was the Plan for the future. In terms of the priorities within the Plan, CI Clark confirmed that Protecting People (Priority 1), Tackling Substance Abuse (Priority 3) and Tackling Serious Organised Crime (Priority 5) remained. Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour (Priority 2) now included reducing the level of common assaults and under Making our Roads Safer (Priority 4) reference to mobile phones and the use of seatbelts had been removed. A new Priority 6 Tackling Acquisitive Crime had been added to the Plan. CI Clark went on to explain how the Priorities and Objectives within the Plan had been identified and how the consultation process and engagement with local communities had been key to the development of the Plan before the Board. He explained how the local policing arrangements would be achieved, including in this the Ward specific Plans and the locally based community police teams. CI Clark also noted that a national performance framework would be developed to measure performance and accountability and that local scrutiny and engagement arrangements between local authorities and the police service would also be required, noting that locally, this would be the remit of the Scottish Borders Police, Fire and Safer Communities Board. The Plan also now included a section relating to Equality and Diversity. Discussion followed and it was acknowledged that close working with community planning partners would be required to take forward these priorities. The link between acquisitive crime and drugs and alcohol was discussed and it was noted that strategies should be developed using an integrated data set. Further discussion took place relating to the success of early intervention in education and the improved communication based on school-based youth worker. A discussion was also had regarding any groups that may have been omitted in the consultation period and it was acknowledged that if any were identified then all future consultations would include these.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

- * **(b) AGREED TO RECOMMEND to Council that the draft Local Police Plan be approved.**

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

11. There had been circulated copies of a briefing paper providing Members with an update to work in progressing the 2014-17 Local Fire & Rescue Service Plan for the Scottish Borders. LSO Heath explained that the current Strategic Plan would run out in 2016 and that the new Local Plan would take effect in 2017, thus allowing the Strategic Plan to be refreshed before the Local Plan was due. LSO Heath further explained that the Strategic Assessment contained within the Plan enabled key local priorities to be identified and went on to note that the Scottish Borders was a very safe place to live. He went on to summarise some of the main performance indicators for the Scottish Borders, noting that driving down risk and focusing on the areas where the level of incidents was not reducing was a key aspect of the decision in selection of priorities. The report listed the priorities of the Plan, namely reduction in the areas of dwelling fires, fire casualties and fatalities, deliberate fire setting (other than dwellings), road traffic collisions and unwanted fire signals and the actions and outcomes associated with them. In terms of scrutiny arrangements, it was noted that this would be the remit of the Scottish Borders Police, Fire and Safer Communities Board. LSO Health explained that the next steps were to present the Draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan to Scottish Borders Council and to commence multi-ward planning work to take forward development of the Locality Plans. A request was made by Mr Higgs for the contact details for the various stations etc contained within the draft to be circulated to all third sector organisations.

DECISION

(a) **AGREED** that information requested by Mr Higgs would be circulated to all third sector organisations.

- * (b) **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to Council that the draft Local Fire and Rescue Plan be approved.

UPDATE ON POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE REFORM

12. Superintendent Jones gave an update on progress to date. With regard to contact systems, some were nationally linked but some applications were locally based. There were operational issues relating to the compatibility of Police and Fire and Rescue systems and although some applications would be compatible, it was acknowledged that others would not. Discussion took place regarding the removal of the Traffic Warden service and Superintendent Jones explained that redundancy, early retirement and redeployment were all options that had been considered. In response to a question about Diversity Advisers for the Borders, Superintendent Jones confirmed that Diversity Advisers were allocated nationally.
13. LSO Heath reported that the current eight Control Centres in Scotland would be reduced to three, and that Edinburgh would remain as one of the three. He also confirmed that there would be no redundancies at the present time.

DECISION

NOTED the current position.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

14. The next meeting of the Board would be Friday 9 May 2014. It was recommended that the first meeting following the summer recess be changed to Friday 29 August 2014.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 1.15pm