

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, 9 May 2014 at 9.30am.

Present:- Councillors A Nicol (Chairman), S Aitchison, B Herd, G Logan, R Stewart, G Turnbull.
 Mr J Raine, NHS Borders, Mr G Higgs, Voluntary Sector.

Apologies: Councillor D Moffat. GC J Mallin, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mrs J Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr R Strachan, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority, Mr G Bell, Business Sector.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent G Imery, Police Scotland, Chief Inspector A Clark, Police Scotland, Chief Inspector K Simpson, Safer Communities Team, LSO P Heath, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mr S Patten, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service Board, Mr P Rooney, Scottish Police Authority, D Scott, Senior Consultant SBC, S Smith, Partnership Manager SBC, P Bolson, Democratic Services Officer.

WELCOME

1. In Councillor Moffat's absence, Councillor Nicol chaired the meeting. He extended a welcome to those present and introduced Mr Sid Patten, Board Member, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service to the meeting.

MINUTE

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 14 February 2014. With reference to the sederunt, it was noted that Mr P Rooney and Ms E Gaw represented the Scottish Police Authority and in respect of paragraphs 7 and 7(b)(i) of the Minute, it was noted that Crucial Crew should have read Cooldown Crew as had been recorded.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute, subject to the above amendments.

MATTERS ARISING

3. (a) With reference to paragraph 5 of the Minute of the meeting of 14 February 2014, Members were informed that of the 350 offences involving people taking drugs, 39 (11%) were committed by people over 45 years of age and these were mainly related to the supply of drugs. It was also noted that figures relating to the age category in hate crime had now been removed from the table of reporting. In relation to the new opening hours for Police Counters in the Scottish Borders, Members were informed that Chief Inspector Clark would notify Community Councils of the new opening hours, as follows:-

Hawick	-	07:00 until 00:00	7 days per week;
Galashiels	-	08:00 until 18:00	7 days per week;
Duns	-	09:00 until 17:00	Mon – Fri;
Kelso	-	09:00 until 17:00	Mon – Fri;
Peebles	-	09:00 until 17:00	Mon – Fri;
Jedburgh	-	08:00 until 16:00	Mon – Fri (variance due to court access);
Eymouth	-	08:30 until 16:30	Mon – Wed; and
		08:30 until 16:00	Thurs.

In respect of hate related crime, Chief Inspector Simpson would provide further information to the next meeting on the national campaign to encourage the reporting of hate crime launched in February 2014.

- (b) LSO Heath informed Members that the some preliminary exploratory work in respect of hosting Police Counters within local Fire Stations was underway and that further updates would be presented to the Board in due course.
- (c) With reference to paragraph 7 of the meeting of 14 February 2014, LSO Heath confirmed that further work was progressing in relation to the development of the Cooldown Crew in the Scottish Borders.
- (d) With reference to items 10 and 11 of the meeting of 14 February 2014, the Police Scotland Local Plan and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Local Plan were adopted by Council on 27 March 2014.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the updates.**

(b) **AGREED:-**

- (i) **that Chief Inspector Clark would notify Community Councils of the new opening hours for Police Counters;**
- (ii) **that Chief Inspector Simpson would provide an update at the next meeting on the national campaign to encourage the reporting of hate crime; and**
- (iii) **that future updates on the feasibility study relating to the hosting of Police Counters within local Fire Stations would be presented to the Board.**

PROGRESS REPORTS

Police

- 4. There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April 2013 to March 2014. 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. CI Clark highlighted key areas of the report and stated that it was pleasing to report that the detection rate for Groups 1 – 5 crimes had increased by 1.2 percentage points over the last year. 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 7.1%, in part to increased public confidence in reporting this type of crime to the police, and by 12% for sexual offences. The report noted that the number of anti-social behaviour incidents had also reduced by a further 11.7% over the last year, reflecting the continued success of the Safer Communities Team and its close work with partners, particularly those in the Borders Housing Network . It was reported that the detection rate of hate crime during the current year to date had increased by 12% and currently stood at 83.1%. It was noted that there had been 351 stops in relation to stop and searches for offensive weapons and of these, 7.7% had proved positive. Stop and searches for drugs had also increased from 10.8% to 17%. Chief Inspector Clark highlighted that the number of people killed on our roads had decreased by 50% and by 13.2% for serious injuries and that the number of children under the age of 16 who had been killed or seriously injured had also decreased from 6 to five in the current reporting period. He went on to explain that the number of people detected for seat belt offences had risen from 236 to 464, an increase of almost 97%, and for Mobile Phone offences by 49.5% and that the drivers involved in these crimes would also have been routinely breath tested. There had been a 65.5% reduction in the number of people detected for supplying drugs and it was noted that this could be linked, in part, to the impact of Operation Goal in the figures. Members also

noted that over £350,000 had been seized from Serious and Organised Crime Groups in the year to date.

5. Discussion took place and Members raised a number of questions. In relation to hate crime, CI Simpson agreed to provide a supplementary report between meetings of the Board which would include a more detailed breakdown of the figures. In terms of a launch of Clare's Law in the Scottish Borders, CI Simpson was unable to confirm the current position in Scotland as to where pilot areas were to be. Chief Superintendent Imery advised Members that all cash seizures were added to a national "pot" and subsequently redistributed to assist community projects. Mr Rooney added that it could take in the region of eighteen months from seizure to redistribution and that community projects involving policing, eg CCTV might benefit. CI Clark confirmed that Transport Police figures in respect of railway-related crime were not included in this report and added that there had not been an increase in other crimes associated with the railway at this time.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that Chief Inspector Clark would provide Members with a supplementary report to provide a detailed breakdown of figures relating to hate crime.

Fire and Rescue Service

6. There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report covering the period January to March 2014. LSO Heath noted that this report for the fourth quarter of the year had shown mixed results, acknowledging that although figures were low in the Scottish Borders, each incident was a personal tragedy for the victims. In summarising the report, LSO Heath advised that 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 sixteen road traffic collisions, a decrease of eleven 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 twenty-seven attendances were required, an increase of five compared to the same period in 2012/13. Objective 3 showed a disappointing increase in the occurrence of accidental dwelling fires in the home resulting in deaths and injury from twenty-two to thirty and the report further detailed that within this category, non-fatal casualties had increased from one to eleven, compared to the same quarter of 2012/13. Objective 4 related to other primary fires resulting in death and injury and figures showed an increase of seven for the current reporting period although the figures for the fourth quarter continued to show a downward trend, with a decrease of 35% over the previous two years. Objective 5 related to the occurrence of unwanted fire signals and it was noted that there had been a reduction of thirty, from 213 to 183. LSO Heath confirmed that unwanted fire signals were mainly attributable to equipment failure or lack of management intervention. Only a small number of calls were of a malicious nature and Members noted that there had been one domestic fire which had caused serious and extensive damage and was subject to further investigation. Members were informed that there had been no reported complaints against the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service within the Scottish Borders during quarter four reporting period.
7. Discussion took place and Members raised a number of questions. In response, LSO Heath advised that the leaflet for caravan fire safety had not yet been produced. Following discussion, it was agreed that this leaflet should be produced as soon as possible. LSO Heath also explained that partnership working between the Fire and Rescue Service and the Federation of Small Businesses continued to have a positive impact of the figures relating to unwanted fire signals and Mr Patten advised that the positive statistics in the Scottish Borders were not reflected in some other areas. In response to a question relating to joint Police/Fire and Rescue/Scottish Borders Council visits to licensed premises, LSO Heath

explained that this was not routine at the moment although there was scope for this to happen. He went on to advise that there were very few incidents relating to anti-social behaviour against the Fire and Rescue Service and explained the process followed by the Fire and Rescue Service should an incident occur. In response to a question on general access for wheelchairs, LSO Heath advised that powers were available for reporting incidents to community partner organisations. Alternative options could be suggested with a follow-up visit carried out and finally, if the issue was serious, then a solution could be enforceable by law. LSO Heath confirmed that access for fire appliances to remote areas of the Scottish Borders was identified and addressed via day to day intelligence.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that a fire safety leaflet for caravans would be produced by the Fire and Rescue Service as soon as possible.

Safer Communities

8. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period from April 2013 to March 2014. Chief Inspector Simpson highlighted the key points in the report and it was noted that, under Gender Violence Strategic Objective 1, there had been a reduction from thirty-nine to sixteen in the number of children on the Child Protection Register where domestic abuse had been identified as a risk factor. Further positive results were recorded under Strategic Objective 2, with the number of calls by females to the national domestic abuse helpline increasing by fourteen to 205 and by males from zero to five. In relation to anti-social behaviour, it was reported that the number of youth-related incidents was down by 752 to 1,767 (a reduction of almost 30%). The figures under the heading of alcohol and drugs, in the main, showed positive results, with a reduction of 152 in the number of reported incidents of vandalism; 105 less incidents relating to licensed premises; and a reduction from 34 to 29 incidents involving needles/drugs. A slight increase of 1.6% was recorded in relation to anti-social behaviour incidents which were alcohol related. In terms of Injury Prevention, there had been a reduction of 73 in the number of emergency hospital admissions for 75+ where a fall was the main reason and there had been one less emergency hospital admission of a child under five due to a home accident. 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 road users seriously injured was ten less than the same period in 2012/13. There had also been one less child killed or seriously injured in the current year to date. The number of young drivers aged 17 to 25 killed or seriously injured had reduced by two with further reductions in the number of passengers killed or seriously injured in cars driven by 17 to 25 year old drivers being recorded. There had also been a 30% reduction in the number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured and Chief Inspector Simpson advised that these related mainly to incidents involving individual motorcyclists. General discussion followed and a number of questions were raised. In terms of training for older drivers, no further information was currently available but Chief Superintendent Imery would follow this up and report back to the Board at a future date and it was noted that the Institute of Advanced Motorists offered training for all ages. With reference to anti-social behaviour reporting by older people, there was discussion around the benefits of Housing Associations holding regular surgeries and it was agreed that Chief Inspector Simpson would take this forward and report to a future meeting of the Board.
9. Concern was raised regarding a specific situation relating to the cost of managing some aspects of a local Common Riding and in particular, the notice given to the Common Riding Management Committee of these costs when the festivities had already begun. Chief Superintendent Imery and Chief Inspector Clark advised that discussions had taken place about 18 months previously when information was given as to the principle of cost recovery for community events however it was acknowledged that the timing of the notification of costs could have been better managed. Chief Inspector Simpson clarified that cost recovery

applied only to “paying/income generating” events and as St Boswells Fair was non-paying, cost recovery would not be relevant. In response to a query regarding littering and fly-tipping, Chief Inspector Simpson confirmed that this would be regarded as anti-social behaviour and that he would provide figures to the next meeting of the Board. Further discussion took place regarding the linking of Ward Policing Plans to the formal reports presented to the Board. Members were informed that Ward statistics and detail were not currently included in the reports they received for the Board but that Community Councils did receive more detailed reports which related to the individual Wards. It was suggested that local trend developments could be included in future reports.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED:

- (i) that further information would be presented to the Board on the provision of specific training for older drivers;**
- (ii) that Chief Inspector Simpson would investigate the introduction of surgeries by Housing Associations to allow tenants to report anti-social behaviour in a safe environment;**
- (iii) that Chief Inspector Simpson would provide further information on the number of littering and fly-tipping incidents in the Scottish Borders; and**
- (iv) future reports would include information on trends which had developed for each Ward whenever relevant.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11.30am for coffee and reconvened at 11.40am.

PRESENTATION

10. The Chairman welcomed Community Firefighter (CFF) David Wilson who was in attendance to make a presentation on the Community Safety Engagement Toolkit (CSET). LSO Heath introduced the presentation and explained that home fire safety was a major priority for the Safer Communities Team and that the Toolkit formed a valuable part of that process. CFF Wilson demonstrated the Toolkit, giving an overview of the way in which it was applied in the field. Members were informed that CSET consisted of four modules, namely Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) comprising all completed or declined visits, whilst at the same time, building a history of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service engagement with domestic addresses across the country; Partnerships which included details of all Community Planning and Community Safety partners for each Local Authority; Activities which recorded all Community Safety engagement activity; and Initiatives for supporting Community Planning Partnership objectives including LSO Local Plans. A Case Study Portal provided a database for storing information on fire casualties and other fire safety issues highlighted within domestic premises and assisted in the identification of trends and in taking action with partners as appropriate. CFF Wilson went on to explain each of the different computer screens and their application in terms of referral, auditing performance, generating statistics and providing input to the Community Planning Process. Members were also informed that there was a free phone number available through a contracted call centre and how this operated, emphasising that the centre did not give advice but merely passed the information on to SFRS to be dealt with. Discussion took place regarding the Risk Rating Form used when a home visit was requested. CFF Wilson explained that the questions were designed to enable prioritisation of requests, adding that high risk referrals were contacted within 24 hours with medium and low risk responded to within five days. It was noted that an empty form received into the system would default to high risk and dealt with appropriately. A further risk rating was then carried out once the visit had been made and action taken with

the system also recorded the timescales for contacting the householder for repeat risk rating in the future.

11. Members raised questions relating to the use of CSET and the methods used for the public and community groups to be made aware of its existence. Statistics relating to the percentage of the population using CSET was not available but LSO Heath would look to providing this information to the Board at a future meeting. It was agreed that publications such as SBConnect and Elder Voice should be used to make the information on accessing CSET available to the public and in terms of home safety for garages, this was an area discussed with residents at the time of a visit rather than making the form too onerous to complete. In terms of security of data and email, Mr Patten confirmed that SFRS were currently reviewing their overall ICT strategy. Ms Smith added that there was a requirement to have a secure GSX connection in order that data could be shared. Mr Patten agreed to ensure that Members' comments were fed into the process and report back when the outcome of the review was known. Members raised the question of recruitment within SFRS and were informed that a report would be presented to a future meeting of the Board. The Chairman thanked CFF Wilson for his presentation.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the presentation.

(b) AGREED:

- (i) that LSO Heath would provide statistics relating to the percentage use of CSET to a future meeting of the Board;**
- (ii) that publications such as SBConnect and Elder Voice be used to make available to the public information on how to access CSET;**
- (iii) to receive a report by SFRS on the outcome of its review into ICT within the context of sharing data within CSET; and**
- (iv) to receive a report by SFRS on its current recruitment plans.**

UPDATE ON POLICE AND FIRE & RESCUE REFORM

12. Chief Superintendent Gill Imery took up post on 12 February 2014 and was attending her first meeting of the Board. She gave a summary of her previous roles, explaining that she had had 20 years experience within Lothian and Borders Police with two and a half years as Commander in Edinburgh City and further time spend as Head of CID. She noted that this was now the second year of Police Scotland and gave an update on progress to date. She noted that there had been challenges in developing one Force for the whole country with equity of provision across all services. Chief Superintendent Imery went on to highlight that a number of local priorities had been implemented alongside national priorities during year one and it was hoped that Police Scotland would continue to improve on its strong performance already in place. She explained that local priorities within the Scottish Borders had determined whether changes implemented in other areas were taken forward locally and advised Members that performance in the Scottish Borders was better than in some other areas whilst also noting that improvements could still be made in relation to offences such as break-ins and sexual crime. In her verbal report, Chief Superintendent Imery asked Members to consider that as Police Scotland had now been in existence for some time, the title of this item should be changed from "Update on National Reform" to "Update on Consolidation and Sustainability".
13. Discussion took place relating to national lay advisers and third party training for remote reporting sites. Members were informed that a scheme for national lay advisers led by Safer Communities was now up and running. In response to a query relating to gypsy sites, Chief Inspector Simpson confirmed that there was one site in the Scottish Borders. He was

unable to provide any information relating to the provision of facilities for remote reporting at this site but would take this forward and report to a future meeting of the Board.

14. LSO Heath reported that in year 2 of the establishment of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, "reform" had become business as usual. He reflected on some key highlights of the past year, including the commitment to ensure that local communities would not be detrimentally affected by the transfer to one organisation, the increase of fire safety visits and audits, the maximisation of available skills within the Service, development of Local Plans and the internal and external recruitment campaigns. Looking forward, LSO Heath advised that it was the SFRS's goal to continue to operate efficiently without loss of effectiveness and Mr Patten confirmed the importance of stakeholder engagement along with a continued understanding of local issues. He went on to advise that a joint meeting with CoSLA and Police Scotland had enabled Members to meet with other Conveners and Councillors and that such events might become part of the regular cycle of meetings. LSO Heath responded to a query regarding the provision of fire safety leaflets for an event taking place in July at St Boswells and agreed to take this forward.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the reports.**

(b) **AGREED:**

- (i) **that the verbal reports from Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service be renamed Updates on Consolidation and Sustainability;**
- (ii) **to receive a report from Safer Communities on remote reporting relative to the one gypsy site in the Scottish Borders; and**
- (iii) **that LSO Heath would investigate the current position in relation to the provision of fire safety leaflets for caravan users in advance of a event scheduled to take place in July.**

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

15. Future meetings of the Board were scheduled to take place on:

Friday 29 August 2014;
Friday 14 November 2014;
Friday 13 February 2015; and
Friday 15 May 2015.

DECISION

NOTED.

URGENT BUSINESS

16. 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.

MEETING OF THE SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY

17. Mr Rooney advised members that the next meeting of the Scottish Police Authority was scheduled to take place at the Victoria Hall, Selkirk on Wednesday 25 June 2014.

The meeting concluded at 12.40pm