

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, 29 August
2014 at 9.30am.

Present:- Councillors D Moffat (Chairman), S Aitchison, B Herd, A Nicol, G Turnbull.
Mrs J Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network, Mr G Higgs, Voluntary Sector.

Apologies: Councillor R Stewart. GC J Mallin, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mr J Raine,
NHS Borders, Mr R Strachan, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority,
Mr G Bell, Business Sector.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent G Imery, Police Scotland, LSO J Dickie, Scottish Fire &
Rescue Service, Chief Inspector K Simpson, Safer Communities Team, P
Murray, Director of Service Delivery East - Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, A
Girrity, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Mr P Rooney, Scottish Police Authority,
D Scott, Senior Policy Officer SBC, P Bolson, Democratic Services Officer.

WELCOME

1. The Chairman thanked Cllr Nicol for chairing the meeting on 9 May 2014. He went on to extend a welcome to those present and introduced Maria Burnett, East of Scotland Regional Co-ordinator with The Brain Injury Association to the meeting.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

2. The Chairman varied the order of business as shown on the agenda and the Minute reflects the order in which the items were considered at the meeting.

MINUTE

3. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 9 May 2014.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

MATTERS ARISING

4. (a) With reference to the decision at paragraph 3 (b)(i) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, it was noted that Community Councils had now received information on the opening hours for Police Counters.
- (b) With reference to the decisions at paragraphs 3 (b)(ii) and 5(b) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, it was noted that the information relating to hate crime had been circulated to the Board by email and Chief Inspector Simpson gave a verbal update on the position on hate crime issues.
- (c) With reference to the decision at paragraph 3 (b)(iii) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, Members were advised that a feasibility study in relation to the hosting of Police Counters within local Fire Stations was not necessary at the present time on the basis that Police Counters continued to function within existing locations.
- (d) With reference to the decision at paragraph 7 (b) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, Mr Higgs reported that he understood that the distribution of around 400 leaflets on fire safety for caravans was now complete.

- (e) With reference to the decision at paragraph 9 (b)(i) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, Members were advised that the Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) provided training for drivers of all ages but did not deliver training specific to older drivers.
- (f) With reference to the decision at paragraph 9 (b)(ii) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, it was noted that the introduction of surgeries by Housing Associations to allow tenants to report anti-social behaviour in a safe environment was already underway.
- (g) With reference to the decision at paragraph 9 (b)(iii) of the Minute of the meeting of 9 May 2014, Chief Inspector Simpson reported that there had been twenty five formal fly-tipping complaints received within the Scottish Borders.

UPDATE ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

5. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the Resource Based Crewing Arrangements within the Scottish Borders. LSO Dickie explained the background to this paper, advising of an impending change to the way in which the SFRS deployed its resources through a Resource Based Crewing (RBC) model and the potential impact that this would have in the Scottish Borders. The report advised that the legacy from Lothian and Borders Fire and Rescue Service was that the system utilised dedicated whole-time fire-fighters to crew all specialist appliances but that RBC was a different approach that used whole-time fire-fighters to combine crews to maintain fire appliance availability. LSO Dickie explained that a similar model had been used successfully elsewhere in Scotland for many years and this would be the standardised model used by SFRS to employ a consistent approach whilst achieving the principles of Fire Reform. The report detailed these principles as SFRS commitments to: achieving best value in service delivery; maintaining and improving community safety through prevention and intervention activities; maintaining and improving fire-fighter safety; achieving a consistent approach to improving levels of service delivery through standardising crewing arrangements across the country; and achieving a consistent approach to accessibility of specialist appliances and resources across the country. Members were informed that Galashiels Fire Station would continue to be staffed full time but that the whole-time duty system fire-fighter establishment would be reduced from 44 to 28. LSO Dickie went on to explain that although this was a reduction of 16 staff, the actual reduction over on a 24 hour basis over 365 days was equivalent to two less whole-time firefighters on duty at any given time. Members were informed that there would be five personnel to man appliances on a full time basis and that the Incident Response Unit (IRU) would only be used when needed at an incident and not routinely deployed and there would also be a Swift Water Rescue Unit (SWRU) for which 4 Swift Water Technicians would be retained. The Chairman advised Members that following receipt of the report, he had written to Pat Watters, Chair of the SFRS to voice serious concerns about the proposals and the lack of consultation in the matter. The response from Mr Watters detailed the reasoning behind the changes and advised that this would assist in one of the key objectives of the SFRS, namely to address the issue of ensuring that resources were placed in the communities and places most at risk across Scotland and therefore create a more equitable access to specialist support services and national capacity where and when needed. The letter also gave strong reassurance that the Scottish Borders would continue to receive an effective emergency response and that there would be no reduction in frontline emergency service delivery. This letter was tabled at the meeting.
6. Discussion followed and Members voiced serious concern at the lack of consultation relating to these proposals, noting that the report indicated these changes being implemented on 1 September 2014 in the Galashiels Fire Station. A number of questions were raised and were answered by officers from the SFRS. In response to questions regarding staffing levels, LSO Dickie detailed how these changes would impact in the Scottish Borders and

this led onto further questions about the lack of consultation on this issue. It was noted that the timing of the SFRS report allowed a very short timescale for the response of the Board. The implementation date for the changes was only three days after this meeting. Mr Murray apologised for the short timescale and explained that these operational arrangements were not experimental and had worked across other areas in Scotland for some time. The short timescale had been necessary in order to meet deadlines for reducing overtime budgets. In response to a question on redeployment of officers from the Borders, Mr Murray went on to explain that this would be offered in the West and North and also in Fife, as all these areas had been identified as requiring more personnel and that relocation would be based on a voluntary basis in the first instance. Members were informed that 5 officers had already indicated an interest in relocation and that additional, required moves would take place although not necessarily on 1 September 2014. Discussion on the public perception of the report was raised and the perceived risks within local communities of redeploying resources to the West and the perceived resultant reduction in service within the Scottish Borders. In response to a question, Mr Murray advised that the SFRS overtime budget was in excess of the available funding and noted that there would be a further review of this in due course. He went on to explain that personnel numbers had increased in other parts of the service from those in place during LBFRS, noting that there were now 16 officers to undertake preventative work as opposed to 9 previously, including a Local Liaison Officer and Training Officers. Mr Dickie advised Members that an increase in short term sickness and the application of family policies across the Scottish Borders required that any gaps in the service were covered by personnel from other areas and on request by Members, LSO Dickie agreed to provide statistics relating to this.

7. Mr Dickie informed Members that RBC arrangements had already been implemented in Hawick and in response to questions, indicated that in relation to flooding incidents, 4 Technicians were available for instant deployment. Following further discussion, it was agreed that a presentation to allow the Board to see first-hand how emergency call incidents were dealt with would be useful and perhaps alleviate some of the concerns raised. LSO Dickie invited the Board to visit Galashiels Fire Station to view a water incident exercise and that arrangements would be made for this. The Chairman thanked LSO Dickie and Mr Murray and it was agreed to include a recommendation that the SFRS would be asked to carry out future consultations which would be more open and accountable.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED:-

- (i) that LSO Dickie would provide statistics relating to short term sickness and the application of family policies across the Scottish Borders and the resultant cover by personnel from other areas;**
- (ii) that Board Members would visit Galashiels Fire Station to view an emergency water incident exercise; and**
- (iii) that the SFRS would be asked to carry out future consultations in a manner which would be more open and accountable.**

PROGRESS REPORTS

8. Police

There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to June 2014. The report detailed the figures for the six Priority areas to date and compared them to the figures for the same period in 2013/14. Chief Supt Imery highlighted key areas of the report and noted that there had been a slight reduction in the detection rate for Groups 1 – 5 crimes by -3.3% over the period but was confident that this would improve throughout the year. She went on to detail the figures in the context of the report and noted that the number of Adults at Risk referrals made to partner agencies had increased by

49.1% from 352 to 525 over the quarter and that 100% of Domestic Abuse initial checks had been conducted within 24 hours. Chief Supt Imery also advised Members that there had been 10 serious assaults in the year resulting in 100% conviction rate. The report noted that there had been an increase of 9.7% in the number of Antisocial Behaviour incidents and Chief Supt Imery indicated that this might have been due, in part, to the use of social media and also that school holidays were completely within the reporting period and therefore reflected a seasonal increase. In relation to Stop and Searches for drugs, the report noted a reduction in the proportion of positive incidents and Chief Supt Imery advised that there had been 612 stop and searches, almost half of the previous year, indicating that targeting was correctly focussed. It was disappointing that there had been 3 people killed in road traffic incidents, one of whom was a motorcyclist and a further 5 motorcyclists seriously injured and the Chief Supt advised that preventative and enforcement measures were in place at the main areas of incidents. Members also noted that there had been a reduction in the number of people detected for drug supply from 17 to 11 however the Chief Supt advised there had been a couple of very good cannabis cultivation detections within these figures and was confident these figures would rise over the remainder of the year through planned activity. Although there had been a decrease in the number of licenced premises visits, the procedures now in place ensure that problems are rare in these facilities. Chief Supt Imery responded to questions from Members in relation to the report and it was noted that figures relating to the breakdown of hate crime would continue to be provided. Discussion took place regarding rural crime in relation to the theft of vehicles. It was noted that the Police were working with the National Farmers' Union to tackle this problem. With regard to Domestic Abuse referrals, Chief Inspector Simpson indicated that he considered the processes in place for early intervention to be effective and appropriate. Relaxation of parking in Galashiels had resulted in parking at school zigzag areas, on pavements and double parking. It was also noted that there was concern in relation to increased driving at speed in the vicinity of schools and Chief Inspector Simpson advised that work was in progress both within the Council's Education Department and the Police, involving community beat officers, to resolve these issues. Following further discussion, Members requested that an update on Wildlife Crime be brought to the next meeting of the Board for consideration.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that an update report of Wildlife Crime be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11.25am for coffee and reconvened at 11.35am.

Fire and Rescue Service

9. There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report covering the period April to June 2014. In summarising the report, LSO Dickie advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 24 accidental dwelling fires during this reporting period, an increase of one from the previous year. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been no fatalities during the quarter however there had been five reported casualties, all suffering from slight smoke inhalation during the same period. This demonstrated an increase of four from the previous year. Priority 3: Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting indicated a disappointing increase of eight from the previous year and was the main reason that this was included as one of the main priorities to be addressed by the SFRS. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions indicated that the SFRS attended 24 incidents during the quarter with only three requiring intervention to release casualties. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 209 Unwanted Fire Signals during this quarter and noted that the SFRS continued to work with the Federation of Small Businesses and individual occupiers in an effort to

reduce these incidents. It was explained that this figure included hoax calls and that a new policy was being developed for tackling unwanted fire signals. With reference to Prevention and Protection, LSO Dickie explained the processes for Pre-Programmed and Non-Programmed Audits and advised that Home Fire Safety Visits continued to be a priority and would be encouraged within communities. With regard to road traffic deaths, Chief Inspector Simpson advised that each incident was fully analysed and if a pattern emerged, then action would be taken to address the trend. Concern was raised regarding the setting on fire of speed cameras and Chief Inspector Simpson advised that an investigation was ongoing in relation to this issue.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Safer Communities

10. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period April to June 2014. Chief Inspector Simpson highlighted the key points in the report and it was noted that, in respect of domestic abuse, there had been a reduction in the number of referrals to specialist support services which was due, in part, to the historic under-reporting of incidents, but these figures also reflected the reduced capacity to market and advertise the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support (DAAS) service. Further explanation was detailed in the report. The report noted that the number of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents had increased by 12% but still remained well below the 3 year and 5 year averages, and Chief Inspector Simpson indicated that the situation would continue to be monitored. With regard to Home Injuries, Chief Inspector Simpson indicated that work was ongoing with the Council's Education Service to address concerns raised in a report by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA) relating to early years groups. Work was also being undertaken with the Falls Unit in the NHS to improve the figures relating to over 75 year olds. The figures for Road Injuries showed a very disappointing increase of 200% in the number of deaths and of 47% for seriously injured road users. The figures were partly attributed to the prolonged summer and the attractiveness of Borders roads encouraging motorbike and pedal cyclists. It was noted that the high number of motorcyclists (14) involved in these incidents was the only identifiable trend. The report noted that there had been an increase of 50% in the number of young drivers between 17 and 25 years of age killed or seriously injured in road accidents. Discussion following in relation to the Skills for Life Young Drivers course and the disappointment that young drivers were not signing up for this free opportunity. Members noted that of the 29 young drivers who had already completed the course, 27 had passed. Discussion followed regarding ways in which young drivers might be encouraged to participate including a wide circulation of the course information via Elected Members, Community Councils and Voluntary Organisations and Chief Inspector Simpson listed the methods which had already been tried to increase the uptake for the course. Members were advised that the Council had offered young people within its employment the opportunity to attend the course during working hours in an effort to improve driving skills and reduce accidents. Members raised a number of questions and it was noted that, in terms of Anti-Social Behaviour, environmental issues such as dog messing were under-reported. Chief Inspector Simpson responded to a question relating to the availability of statistics on the profiles of domestic abuse cases and agreed to provide further information for Members.
11. Grave concern was raised regarding the possibility of Police Officers carrying firearms whilst on duty in the Scottish Borders. It was highlighted that this subject could not be discussed in detail because of the period of purdah prior to the Referendum. Members went on to consider the option of raising the issue of armed Police in the Scottish Borders as a motion to Council. Chief Supt Imery advised that all firearms were locked away securely and were only used during special incidents. Mr Rooney explained the view of the Scottish Police Authority, advising that a review was currently in progress, and that he would circulate information to the Board to allow a response to be submitted. At the Board's request, further advice was sought in relation to the discussion, and Mrs McGeoch outlined the position

relating to the discussion whilst in a period of purdah prior to the Referendum. Further discussion took place in relation to local police staffing levels during the Commonwealth Games and the issues relating to the cancellation of leave for officers. Chief Supt Imery stated that cancellation of leave was an expectation of the Service and was accepted by officers as part of their employment.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the report.**

(b) **AGREED:-**

(i) **to consider ways in which the Skills for Life for Young Drivers course could be promoted;**

(ii) **to participate in the Scottish Police Authority Armed Policing Scrutiny Inquiry.**

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE RETAINED DUTY SYSTEM RECRUITMENT

12. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the recruitment of retained duty firefighters. Mr Girrity and LSO Dickie provided background to this report and noted that there were eleven stations across the Scottish Borders that were manned totally by retained firefighters and appliances. Members were further advised that remuneration and rewards were agreed at a national level. In terms of recruitment, it was acknowledged that officers did not necessarily work in the area in which they lived, as was the case in past years and this could lead to difficulties in recruiting retained firefighters in those areas. Members were informed of a recent initiative which included local businesses being contacted to request the release of individuals between 9am and 5pm for a two week training period, this being the only available training delivery method at the present time. Further discussion took place and clarification provided as to the way in which retained firefighters were deployed and how this was managed by Edinburgh Operations Control.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Police Scotland

13. Chief Supt Imery reported to Members that there had been some recent changes to officers within the Division. Members noted that there were now three Uniformed Superintendents and one Detective Superintendent in the Management Team and four Chief Inspectors, namely Andy Clark covering East Lothian, Paula Clark covering the Scottish Borders, Paul Cameron covering West Lothian, Kenny Simpson moving to Midlothian and Andy Maclean replacing Kenny Simpson in Safer Communities in the Scottish Borders.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

HM INSPECTORATE OF CONSTABULARY IN SCOTLAND REPORT

14. There had been circulated copies of a report by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland on the Review of Legacy Inspection Recommendations.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

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

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.

ST BOSWELLS GYPSY FAIR

17. Mr Higgs thanked the Police for their input throughout the event and reported that over 600 people had attended the Fair.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

FAMILY CULTURE DAY

18. It was noted that an International Family Culture Day was scheduled to take place on 12 November 2014 and that this might be an opportunity to market the Skills for Life Course for Young Drivers in addition to the Police and Fire and Rescue Services.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

THANKS

19. The Chairman of the Board and Members both thanked Chief Inspector Simpson for his valued input and support over the years and wished him well in his new post.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 13.00pm