

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 14 November
2014 at 9.30am.

Present:- Councillors D Moffat (Chairman), S Aitchison, B Herd, G Turnbull.
Ms M Lyle, Scottish Borders Housing Network.

Apologies: Councillors A Nicol, R Stewart.
Mrs J Mulloy, Scottish Borders Housing Network; Mr J Raine, NHS Borders; Mr R
Strachan, Lothian & Borders Community Justice Authority; Mr G Higgs, Voluntary
Sector.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent G Imery, Police Scotland; LSO J Dickie, Scottish Fire &
Rescue Service; Group Manager A Girrity, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service;
Superintendent A MacInnes, Police Scotland; Chief Inspector A McLean, Police
Scotland; Inspector J Scott, Safer Communities Team; Ms S Smith, Communities &
Partnership Manager; P Bolson, Democratic Services Officer.

WELCOME

1. The Chairman welcomed those present and introduced PC J Hood, Wildlife Crime Officer, Police Scotland and Mr R Whetton and Mr G Paterson from the Improvement Service to the meeting.

MINUTE

2. There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 29 August 2014. With reference to the attendance record, it was noted that A Girrity should have read D Girrity; with reference to paragraph 5, line 23 Incident Response Unit (IRU) should have read Incident Support Unit (ISU); and with reference to paragraph 7 (b) (i) the recommendation should have stated "that LSO Dickie would provide a report on staffing levels before 1 April and after the start of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service."

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute subject to the amendments as noted above.

MATTERS ARISING

3. (a) Members were informed about the arrangements for the Board to visit Galashiels Fire Station on Friday 21 November 2014, meeting there at 10.30am.
- (b) With reference to the decision at paragraph 8 (b) the Minute of the meeting of 29 August 2014, it was noted that PC Jamie Hood was present to update Members on wildlife crime in the Scottish Borders.
- (c) With reference to the decision at paragraph 11 (b)(i) of the Minute of the meeting of 29 August 2014, Members were advised that Inspector Scott from the Safer Communities Team would provide an update to the Board in relation to the Skills for Life for Young Drivers course.

- (d) With reference to the decision at paragraph 11 (b)(ii) of the Minute of the meeting of 29 August 2014, the Chairman advised the Board that he, along with Councillor Turnbull and Mr Scott had given evidence at the Scottish Police Authority Armed Policing Scrutiny Inquiry on 3 November 2014. The Chairman reported that the session had gone extremely well and encouraged the Board to view proceedings via the internet by searching for Scottish Police Authority Armed Policy Evidence Sessions.

PROGRESS REPORTS

4. Police

There had been circulated copies of the Police Progress report covering the period April to September 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 reduction of 3.2% in the detection rate for Groups 1 – 5 crimes although the reduction was 0.1% compared to the previous quarter. She went on to detail the figures in the context of the report and noted that Adults at Risk referrals made to partner agencies had increased by 23.2%, from 654 to 806 compared to the same period in 2013/14. Members were advised that a new Vulnerable Persons' Database had been introduced in March 2014 to ensure that all vulnerabilities were identified and addressed at the earliest opportunity and that this had increased the number of referrals over the period. The number of Domestic Abuse initial checks that had been conducted within 24 hours had decreased and this was due to the Police being unable to contact victims within the 24 hour timeframe. Chief Supt Imery also advised Members that the number of common assaults compared to the previous year had decreased by 23.4% and that this trend was mirrored across crimes of violence as a whole in the Scottish Borders, equating to 117 fewer victims in the area compared to the previous year. The report noted that there had been an increase of 1.2% in the number of Antisocial Behaviour incidents but this was in comparison to an increase of 9.7% over the previous quarter. Work would continue in a bid to return to the previous downward trend. Chief Supt Imery reported that there had been a very welcome decrease of 21.4% in the reporting of hate crime compared to the same period in 2013/14. The report detailed the trends in relation to the type of prejudice and noted that incidents for Race crime had reduced from 30 to 22, Homophobic had decreased from 9 to 7, there had been no reports of Transgender crime and a reduction of 1 in respect of Disability. There had been an increase of 2 incidents of Religious Hatred compared to the same reporting period last year. In relation to Stop and Searches for drugs, the report noted an increase of 2% in the proportion of positive searches. It was noted that visits to Licensed Premises had reduced by 9.4% this year to date and this was mainly attributed to the focus of activity in this area in the previous year. It was encouraging that the figures in relation to making our roads safer had decreased. There had been a reduction in the number of people seriously injured from 46 to 41 and the number of people killed in road traffic incidents had remained the same as in the previous year. The report noted that no children had been killed or seriously injured and this was extremely encouraging. Members noted that there had been no change in the number of people detected for drug supply over the same period in 2014/15 and were advised that this work continued to be intelligence-led. The report identified an increase of £1,210,354 in the amount of Assets referred for Restraint and Chief Supt Imery advised Members that the process was a very complex and time-consuming one. Both housebreakings to dwelling houses and thefts of motor vehicles had decreased by 15.1% (19 fewer victims) and 9.1% (14 fewer victims) respectively. Discussion took place regarding problems that members of the public had reported in relation to using "101" to contact Police Scotland. The Board was informed that Police Scotland had been made aware of these problems. Chief Supt Imery advised that the introduction of new software had improved the situation for users and invited future feedback from Members on the results.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Fire and Rescue Service

5. There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Performance Report covering the period June to September 2014. In summarising the report, LSO Dickie advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 17 accidental dwelling fires during this reporting period, an increase of five from the previous year and there were no deliberate dwelling fires during in Quarter 2. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been no fatalities during the quarter however there had been four reported casualties, all as a result of small cooking related fires. This was an increase of four from the previous year. Priority 3: Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting indicated a decrease of five from the previous year and it was noted that this included all deliberate secondary fires. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions indicated that the SFRS attended 21 incidents during the quarter, a reduction of four from the same period in the previous year with five requiring intervention to release casualties. No deaths had occurred as a result of these road traffic collisions with two casualties being of a serious nature. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 227 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals (UFAS) during this quarter, representing a decrease of 27 incidents compared to Quarter 2 in 2014. Members noted that where an increase was shown, this related to actuation of automatic fire alarms in residential properties. It was further noted that the SFRS's new UFAS policy was due to go live in December 2014 and would be applied and enforced by Fire Safety Enforcement Teams as required. LSO Dickie noted that there had been no reported incidents of violence to staff/crews. The report detailed performance in relation to Fire Safety Enforcement Audits, noting that delivery was slightly below target for Quarter 2 but was expected to achieve the final annual target for 2015/16. Delivery of Home Fire Safety visits was allocated on a points basis to target the highest risk households in order to make best use of the resources available and SFRS had achieved their target ahead of schedule for Quarter 2. Details of community safety engagement activities were now contained in the report and this was welcomed by the Board.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Safer Communities

6. There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period April to September 2014. Inspector Scott highlighted the key points in the report and it was noted that, in respect of domestic abuse, there had been an increase in the number of reported incidents, including those to the dedicated Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (DAAS). The report explained that there had been increased focus and change in protocol response from Police Scotland and risk assessments were now undertaken at point of incident with the likelihood that more cases were now being correctly identified. This new procedure was the reason for the increase of recorded incidents. The report also explained that the percentage of self-referrals to specialist support services had decreased compared to the same period the previous year. DAAS now provided support throughout the whole court process, with the result that clients were more likely to self-refer and remain with the service than re-refer after repeat incidents and this, in turn, was a possible cause of this decrease. The report also identified a reduction of 4.2% in the number of children on the Child Protection Register where domestic abuse had been identified as a risk factor. Inspector Scott advised that, following the implementation of a homeless prevention service, there had been a considerable drop in the number of homeless assessment presentations which were due to violent or abusive dispute within the household and that the excellent partnership working with Housing Associations and the Anti-social Behaviour Unit had been a key contributory factor in the success of the new service. Other domestic abuse indicators also demonstrated encouraging results with further details included in the report. The report noted that there had been a very slight increase in the number of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) incidents but continued to remain well below the 2 year average. Inspector Scott indicated that incidents were identified and targeted very quickly and

the situation would continue to be monitored. Members were advised that youth-related incidents had decreased by 117 (12.9%) and this was due, in part, to the high level of partnership working with Social Work, Health and Education. Early interventions made by Anti-Social Behaviour partners resulted in an increase of 23% (115 cases) which demonstrated a very positive and proactive approach. In terms of alcohol and drugs, there had been 78 less incidents of reported vandalism compared to the same period last year. There was an increase of 16.1% in the number of alcohol-related ASB incidents and these figures were also reflected in the joint Alcohol Data Project. The increased rigidity and recording mechanisms contributed to the increase in the number of incidents relating to licensed premises. A rise of 38.5% in incidents involving needles/drugs paraphernalia was reported and Members noted that work was ongoing to improve reporting and identify locations for preventative activity. In terms of Home Injury Prevention, the report recorded the number of hospital admissions for people aged 75+ caused by falls had decreased by 113 (47.3%) and there were 10 less emergency hospital admissions due to a home accident of children under 5 years. The figures for Road Injuries indicated that 5 fewer road users had sustained serious injuries compared to the same period in the previous year and that no children had been killed or seriously injured in a road crash. There had also been a reduction both in the number of young drivers killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions and of passengers killed or seriously injured in cars driven by young drivers. Due to a prolonged period of good weather and the attraction of Borders routes, there had been an increase in both motor and pedal cyclists using the roads during the year and that this was seen as a major factor in the increased number of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured.

7. Discussion followed in relation to the Skills for Life Young Drivers course and the continued disappointment that young drivers were not signing up for this free opportunity. A number of suggestions were made regarding ways in which this course could be re-marketed and kept in full view of the target audience. It was agreed that re-publicising the course via Elected Members, the Community Council Network and other Community Partners on a regular basis could go some way to ensure that potential participants are targeted. Discussion followed. Officers clarified a number of points raised by Members and answered a range of questions. With regard to the deployment of Police officers, CI McLean advised that the call management system used at Bilston Glen allocated officers as required on a geographical basis. Inspector Scott confirmed that the Institute for Advanced Motorists had advocated that funding be released to enable motorcyclists to be included in the Skills for Life for Young Drivers programme. Alcohol-related incidents within private residencies were not covered by the same regulations as licensed premises and Chief Supt Imery advised the Board that for the first time nationally, a higher level of problems had been experienced within private spaces. It was noted that increasing staffing skills and understanding the roles of colleagues within partnership organisations could have a positive impact on reducing alcohol-related incidents. Members were advised that a conference on Domestic Abuse was scheduled for 4 December 2014 at Tweed Horizons, commencing at 3.00pm.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that information about the Skills for Life for Young Drivers course be promoted via Elected Members, the Community Council Network and Community partners on a regular basis.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10.50am for coffee and reconvened at 11.05am.

UPDATE ON WILDLIFE CRIME

8. PC Jamie Hood, Wildlife Crime Officer was present to update Members on the current status of wildlife crime within the Scottish Borders. Members were advised that nationally, there were six priorities addressed by the Wildlife Crime Unit and that locally, the main issues were those of badger persecution, bat persecution, deer and hare coursing, poaching and raptor persecution. PC Hood advised that 50% of the offences which took place in the Borders related to deer and hare coursing but there had been no prosecutions in the past six months. With regard to salmon poaching, the majority of incidents were dealt with by the Tweed Commissioners, with only one case resulting in prosecution by Police. Recent changes in wildlife legislation and increased partnership working with the Tweed Commissioners and Borders College where a range of courses in game keeping and wildlife management were available would hopefully lead to a better understanding of the issues affecting the Borders. PC Hood went on to explain that in respect of raptors, the general licenses granted were for the control of vermin and carrion and should any licence holder have that licence revoked, it would result in a three year ban across the whole estate. Members discussed the possibility that raptors were responsible for the deaths of young lambs and requested that further information was provided regarding the current situation. Discussion took place regarding whether badger carcasses found on the roadside were all road kill and the incidence of hare coursing in some areas of Berwickshire. Inspector Scott reiterated the importance of reporting any suspicions to Police Scotland to allow proper investigations to be undertaken and PC Hood outlined the process for such investigations and prosecutions. In response to a question on whether raptors were responsible for killing young lambs, PC Hood would provide further information to the Board in due course. Chief Supt Imery added that there was evidence to link wildlife crime to organised crime on a national level. Members acknowledged the potential impact of wildlife crime on tourism and the local economy. The Chairman thanked PC Hood for his presentation.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the report.**
- (b) **AGREED to receive further information on raptor activity in relation to the killing of young lambs.**

UPDATE ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Police Scotland

9. Chief Supt Imery provided a verbal update to the Board, noting that Police Scotland was moving into its third year of operation and in terms of local delivery, all areas across Scotland should receive a similar level of service from Police Scotland. Members noted that counter terrorism activities impacted both nationally and locally in respect of deployment of resources; and that cyber-crime included economic, fraud and sexual crimes. Chief Supt Imery highlighted areas where crimes were of significant importance, including the cannabis cultivation in Selkirk and issues relating to substance misuse in Galashiels and Hawick and advised Members that child sexual exploitation was not an organised activity in the Scottish Borders. Members were further advised of the imminent changes to the drink driving legislation and the potential impact this could have and noted that community policing and response would continue as it was in the Scottish Borders. Following discussion, Chief Supt Imery answered a number of questions. In relation to the cannabis cultivation in Selkirk, the perpetrators had used an energy bypass, obscuring the unusually high consumption and as such, this had not been identified by the power company. Bypassing energy supplies was a dangerous activity with very serious health and safety concerns to be considered. Members requested clarification regarding the new system for licensing a motor vehicle whereby no disc was displayed and were advised that the linking up of speed cameras, registration recognition and the DVLA system would ensure that offenders were identified. This link up provided Police Scotland with a complete database of information. With regard to the use and sharing of buildings, Members were advised that the national exercise to identify assets was still in progress with some way still to go. When this

exercise was complete, consideration of joint use with partner organisations could proceed. Discussion took place regarding the policing of community events and Members were referred to paragraph 9 of the Minute of the meeting of the Board held on 9 May 2014. Members were advised of new management arrangements within J Division, namely Superintendent Angus McInnes and Superintendent Brian Auld were now both in post. Inspector John Scott had now taken up his role as the Safer Communities Team Leader and Chief Inspector Andy McLean was the new Local Area Commander.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

10. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service updating Members on resources based with the Scottish Borders area. The report stated that the whole time establishment at Hawick fire station had remained constant at 28 operational staff throughout the Service reform period and advised that the implementation of Resourced Based Crewing (RBC) at Galashiels in November 2014 meant that operational staff numbers would reduce from 44 to 28. The report further advised that the Retained Duty System (RDS) establishment had remained at 150 across all ranks within 12 stations, noting that this could vary slightly depending on factors such as staff turnover and recruitment difficulties. The report explained that the Day Shift Duty Service had been discontinued at Duns as part of a trial to improve strategic cover across the Scottish Borders and staff from the Duns station were relocated to whole time watches in Galashiels. A flexible resource was available from Galashiels should the need arise in any of the RDS stations in the Scottish Borders. LSO Dickie advised Members that the number of Protection and Prevention staff had increased as a result of National Reform with 10 officers now responsible for fire safety engagement and enforcement. Training and Employee Development staff had also increased to 10 across the area. LSO Dickie confirmed that the Management structure comprised an Area Manager, a Group Manager and 3 officers responsible for station command and one senior officer on call at any time. The provision of fire appliances had not been affected by Service Reform and the report noted that the availability of the Incident Support Unit had been maintained but with an amended procedure for mobilisation. Appendix A to the report gave further detail of staff numbers across stations and functions and it was noted that figures for the Safer Communities Team had been omitted. This would be corrected and reflected in the report presented to the next meeting of the Board. Discussion followed and Members requested clarification on staffing numbers within the Scottish Borders and a full explanation of the situation at Duns. LSO Dickie explained that the Day Shift Duty System (DSDS) had been implemented in the Scottish Borders over four years previously and that the staff based in Duns had been transferred to Galashiels whilst still part of Lothian and Borders Fire Service. LSO Dickie went on to explain that although the Duns station had an establishment of 10 staff, in practice there were never more than 6 officers in post due to previously reported recruitment difficulties. The remaining posts not filled at Duns were moved to Galashiels and were never subsequently used to cover retained fire duties. Members noted the response times for appliances attending incidents. Members were advised as to the procedure for deployment of the Heavy Rescue Vehicle based at Newcraighall and noted that the Incident Support Unit (ISU) currently located in Galashiels would be replaced by a new vehicle that would cover all requirements. In response to concerns that the service provided in the Scottish Borders would not be maintained in the future, Members were informed that when an ISU was required, normally not until later in an incident, this would be sent from either Newcraighall or Dunfermline. Members were advised that a national project relating to retained firefighters was in progress, but the final report would not be available for some time. It was acknowledged that better communication with the public would be beneficial, particularly in times of change.

DECISION

NOTED:-

(a) the report; and

(b) that the report presented to the Board in February 2015 would include staffing numbers within the Safer Communities Team.

SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE SPECIAL APPLIANCE REVIEW

11. There had been circulated copies of a report by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service on the Review of Specialist Equipment being undertaken by SFRS. The report explained the background for and purpose of this national Review and included specific implications for the Scottish Borders when relevant and appropriate. LSO Dickie explained that the service currently provided by SFRS had been developed to meet the changes required by law, regulation and operational guidance and that the range of equipment and skills training had increased accordingly. The report further explained the key principles and objectives of the Review and noted that the final report entitled the "Review of Specialist Equipment Report" was being presented to the SFRS Board for approval in November. A copy of this draft was attached for information. Following approval, a detailed implementation plan would be developed with a possible timescale of up to three years for implementation to be complete. The implications for the Scottish Borders included the High Volume Pump being removed from Hawick to Alloa whilst maintaining capability to respond to flooding incidents within the Borders; the Water Rescue service remaining in Galashiels with a dedicated vehicle able to tow permanently inflated boats ready for immediate deployment, this vehicle replacing the ISU currently based in Galashiels; and a further Water Rescue resource to be located in Hawick. The report gave assurances that these changes would not affect the staffing levels within the Scottish Borders and LSO Dickie advised Members that the service provided would remain the same regardless of the location of Special Appliance Vehicles. It was noted that a new consultation framework had been introduced by the SFRS.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

12. Future meetings of the Board were scheduled to take place at 9.30am in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on:

Friday 13 February 2015;
Friday 15 May 2015;
Friday 28 August 2015;
Friday 13 November 2015;
Friday 12 February 2016; and
Friday 13 May 2016.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 12.45pm

