

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**  
**POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD**

MINUTE of MEETING of the POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held in Council Headquarters, Newtown St. Boswells on Friday 11 November 2016 at 9.30am.

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Present: Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), B. Herd, A. Nicol, G. Turnbull.  
Mr G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector, Dr D. Steele, NHS Borders

Apologies: Councillor S. Aitchison, Chief Superintendent I. Marshall, Ms J. Mulloy, SBHA, Ms F. Young, CJA.

Absent: Councillor R. Stewart, Mr H. Waltl, Business Sector.

In Attendance: Superintendent A. Clark, Chief Inspector A. McLean, Police Scotland, David Farries, LSO, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Group Manager A. Girrity, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Group Manager S. Gourlay, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service, Ms F. Miller, Scottish Police Authority, Mr D. Scott, Senior Policy Adviser, SBC, Ms S. Smith, Communities & Partnership Manager, SBC, Mr G. Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, SBC, K. Mason, Democratic Services Officer, SBC.

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**1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS**

The Chairman welcomed Fiona Miller from the Scottish Policy Authority and Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager to their first meeting of the Board.

**2. MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 16 September 2016.

**DECISION**  
**APPROVED the Minute.**

**3. MATTERS ARISING**

(a) With reference to paragraph 3(b) of the Minute, Superintendent Clark advised he was not yet in a position to give accurate figures relating to statistical information on the number of Police complaints which were upheld and partially upheld.

**DECISION**  
**NOTED.**

(b) With reference to paragraph 4(b) of the Minute, Members were advised that the Chairman had accepted an invitation for Board Members to visit the call centre at Bilston Glen. Members would be advised in due course when the visit would take place. Following the visit a representative from Bilston Glen would attend a future meeting to bring Members up to date with the work being carried out in the control room at Bilston Glen.

**DECISION**  
**NOTED.**

(c) With reference to paragraph 5(b) of the Minute, Members were advised that Council had agreed that the current Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan be extended until December 2017 and approved the proposed timeline for the production of the next Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan.

**DECISION  
NOTED.**

**4. PROGRESS REPORTS / UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**4.1 Police Scotland**

Superintendent Clark referred to the Strategic Police Plan; a meeting had taken place yesterday hosted by Police Scotland at which four local authorities had been represented. The purpose of the meeting was to identify priorities and to get the ball rolling about the consultation. A number of similar meetings would take place and a timeline would be issued. The results of the "Your View Counts Survey" had been published and a breakdown of the results for the Scottish Borders would be circulated to Members. He referred to information on the BBC website which had been published as a review of closure and advised this was not the case and the review was in connection with best plans for money with collaborative opportunities to make Police Scotland more operationally viable by providing a better quality of service. Members expressed concern at the adverse publicity relating to the estates review.

**4.2** Chief Inspector A. McLean presented the Police Progress report covering the period April 2016 to September 2016 which had been circulated. The report detailed the figures for the six Priority areas to date and compared them to the figures for the same period in 2015/16.

**4.3** Priority 1 – Protecting People, referrals for the second quarter of 2016/17 were showing a 7.25% decrease on the 2015/16 figures. This equated to 48 fewer referrals.

**4.4** Priority 2 – Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour, showed a 3.9% increase in Common Assaults reported in the year to date when compared to 2015/16. This equated to 15 more victims. There had been a 1.1% increase (28 more incidents) in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. Antisocial behaviour tended to be seasonal with increases seen in the summer months. Therefore the small increase in the number of incidents in quarter 2 was not unexpected. There was a small decrease in the number of recorded victims of Hate Crime in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. In regard to the reporting of hate crime, Mr Higgs asked if the information on prejudice type – disability could be widened to include mental or physical disability and Chief Inspector A. McLean said he would enquire about this but he was sure that the figures were now broken down as far as they could be.

**4.5** Priority 3 - Tackling substance misuse. Officers in the Scottish Borders had conducted a total of 166 stop and searches of which 63 proved positive (38%). Unfortunately owing to current reporting methods, further breakdown of stop and search activity into individual categories was impossible, therefore the number of searches conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act could not be reported. However this was a high success level for positive searches. There was a 67% decrease in the number of visits to licensed premises, which equated to 544 fewer visits, owing to the excellent working relationship between Police, the trade and partner agencies who engaged at an early stage before premises became problematic, thereby reducing the need for visits.

**4.6** Priority 4 - Making our Roads Safer, there had been a 20.5% increase (9 more casualties) in the year to date when compared to 2015/16. The number of people killed this year to date was 9, which equated to 4 more fatalities than at

the same time last year. The number of serious injuries had also increased compared to last year in the same time period

- 4.7 Priority 5 - Tackling serious and organised crime. Cash seizures were lower than the value seized in 2015/16. There had been a 13.5% decrease in the number of detections for drug supply in the year to date compared to the same time period in 2015/16. Members were advised that cannabis plants to the value of £100,000 had been found in a house in the northern part of the Borders
- 4.8 Priority 6 -Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There had been an increase in the number of housebreaking to dwellings in the year to date, with 5 more victims reported. It was noted that the rise was likely to be connected to the increase in thefts of motor vehicles as culprits broke into houses to steal car keys.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the report and that Chief Inspector McLean would ascertain whether information on prejudice type – disability could be widened to include mental and/or physical disability.**

**5. SCOTTISH POLICE AUTHORITY**

Ms Fiona Miller referred to the Annual Review of Policing 2016/17. A letter would soon be issued from the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Policy Authority to the Chairmen of Local Authority Scrutiny Committees for Policing seeking to capture the views and experiences of scrutiny committees on activity between April 2016 and early 2017, to inform the review. To accommodate Local Government Elections in May 2017 views would be sought at an earlier stage than usual.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

**6. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**6.1 Fire and Rescue Service**

LSO David Farries referred to the publication on 3 October 2016 of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019. There was potential to bring a presentation to the next meeting of the Board to give a general overview of the strategic plan which had been pulled together after the consultation period where people thought that changes should be made to the Service. He thanked Members for their support and thanks were also given to full Council for agreeing to the proposal to extend the SFRS local fire plan. A process was in place to review the current plan. He was involved in an off station structure review which related to staff not working on the front line and referred to the potential for other delivery models. SFRS were looking to the position and funding from the Scottish Government. If there was no increase in funding the current method would be difficult to maintain if the current service model was used. There was evidence to support a transformation change of the service. Many changes had taken place since the 1940s/1950s in particular severe weather, terrorism, hazardous materials all of which had resulted in the work of fire officers having changed considerably over the years. In the Scottish Borders fire stations were in prime positions which meant there was the ability to reduce risk in the area which was not necessarily about fire. He referred to the difference the SFRS had made in communities and spoke of the out of hospital cardiac arrest initiative. There was a need to look at duty patterns and to adapt the role of firefighters to give them a broad flexible role within the community taking into account the amount of funding available. LSO Farries needed to ensure that the SFRS role in the Scottish Borders was sustainable and how the importance of the service could be enhanced to society as a whole. He then went on to discuss the bonfire period and advised that the SFRS

had attended 970 incidents of which 326 were bonfire related. He was pleased to report that only one of the incidents was in the Scottish Borders. In referring to reports in the media about acts of violence to firefighters across Scotland at that time, he said this was completely unacceptable and advised there were no reported incidents of such a nature in the Scottish Borders. Members noted that there would be good dialogue with Cosla about the transformation of the SFRS and discussed the budget pressures and funding packages.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 10.50 a.m. and reconvened at 11.10 a.m.

- 6.2 There had been circulated copies of the SFRS Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 30 September 2016. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Gurrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 44 dwelling fires in comparison to 58 for the same Year to Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this represented a 24% decrease. Three of these fires had been started deliberately with one occurring in the last quarter. Cooking continued to be the most common cause accounting for nearly 60% of all accidental dwelling fires. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 11 fire related casualties in this YTD reporting period, this was an increase of two compared to the same period last year. The last quarter accounted for six of these casualties with all suffering smoke inhalation and receiving first aid from the SFRS at the scene. One casualty required rescuing by firefighters in breathing apparatus. One casualty also attended hospital as a precautionary measure. These figures included one fatality in April at Hawick. Priority 3: There had been 60 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, a decrease of 17 in comparison to the same reporting period last year, there was also a slight decrease in comparison to the previous quarter. Galashiels and District suffered the highest incidence of this type of fire (14) with Jedburgh and District next with eight. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) indicated that the SFRS attended 48 RTCs, compared to 45 for the same reporting period last year. It was positive to note that comparison to the previous quarter showed a 45% decrease. There had been 41 RTC related casualties in the YTD period with four of these being fatalities. There were three non-fatal RTC casualties during the last quarter. During the YTD period, the SFRS used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on 15 occasions to extricate casualties. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 430 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing an increase of 23 incidents compared to the same reporting period last year. Members discussed the junction at the Borders General Hospital and Dr Steele advised she would ask Accident and Emergency at the Borders General Hospital for any statistics they might have relating to accidents in that area.
- 6.3 There had been circulated copies of the report on Prevention and Protection Activities. In referring to home fire safety visits Group Manager Gourlay advised that most of the resources were going into higher risk premises. In regard to unwanted fire alarm signals, a champion had been appointed at Galashiels who would visit premises which had had false alarms. 697 home fire safety visits had been delivered during this reporting period. Another pilot being undertaken in the Scottish Borders was to deliver Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) training to households which would be started in Galashiels in February/March 2017. Three fire stations across Scotland were involved in this pilot; the others were Arbroath and Cumbernauld.

#### **DECISION**

**NOTED the report and that Dr. Steele bring back to a future meeting any statistical information on accidents taking place at the junction leading to the Borders General Hospital.**

**7 SAFER COMMUNITIES  
MEMBER**

Councillor Nicol left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

**7.1 Safer Communities**

There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2016 to 30 September 2016. Mr Graham Jones referred to the Community Justice Act which was all about reducing reoffending and preventing people offending in the first place. He had been in post for 2 weeks and was familiarising himself with statistics and reporting methods. He then went on to highlight the key points in the report and it was noted that, in respect of domestic abuse, there had been an increase of 23 reported incidents of domestic abuse for the year to date in 2016/17 when compared to the same time period last year, which equated to a 5.4% increase. There were 3 fewer reported sexual crimes related to domestic abuse in the year to date when compared to the same time period last year, this equated to a 37.5% decrease and it was expected that this figure would fluctuate during the year owing to historical reporting of sexual crimes. In relation to referrals to the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Support Service there were 26 fewer referrals in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16 and it was noted that the Service Manager was looking at trends and would target agencies to find out why referrals had dropped. There had been a decrease in the number of high risk domestic abuse cases discussed at MARAC. There were 28 fewer children present in the home where domestic abuse incidents took place; this was a 15.5% reduction on the year to date when compared to the same period in 2015/16. There was an increase in the number of homeless assessment presentations from 40 in the year to date for 2015/16 to 62 in 2016/17; this was a 4.7% increase against total presentations for the year to date. There had been a small increase in the percentage of Anti-Social Behaviour incidents which were alcohol related in the second quarter of 2016/17 when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. Although the percentage of alcohol related incidents was currently higher than last year it had been decreasing month on month since April. In regard to interventions following antisocial incidents in licensed premises 61 had been undertaken in the second quarter of 2016/17 bringing the total for the year to date to 130. It was noted there were 199 more persons being monitored for anti-social behaviour when compared to the same period in 2015/16. A presentation on driver behaviour would be considered later in the meeting.

- 7.2 On behalf of the Board, the Chairman thanked Inspector A. Hodges for all his work during his time with the Safer Communities Team and wished him all the best for the future. Mr Higgs referred to the recruitment of ex-offenders by Virgin Trains and asked if anything similar was being undertaken in the Scottish Borders. Mr Jones advised there were a number of components of the community justice plan. At the moment the plan was moving forward through the Community Planning Partnership and after the Strategic Board there would be a 3 month period of public consultation. Mr Jones advised the focus of the plan was to break the cycle of offending. The Chairman asked for a presentation on community justice to be heard at a future meeting to allow for a better understanding of the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.

**DECISION**

- (a) **NOTED the report.**  
(b) **AGREED that a presentation on the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 be heard at a future meeting of the Board, to be determined by the Chairman.**

**8. PRESENTATION**

Chief Inspector McLean gave background information in relation to his work with Police Scotland. He then went on to give a presentation on Vulnerable Road Users within the Scottish Borders which covered 1,800 square miles with over 2,000 miles of road. During April 2014 – April 2015 there had been 6 fatal collisions resulting in 7 fatalities and 55 serious injury collisions. From April 2016 until June 2016 there had been 7 fatalities and 13 serious injury collisions. There were 3 main schemes for vulnerable user groups as follows:- (a) Driver Gold for those aged 65 years and over, with free theory lessons and a chance to get assessed during sessions and instruction from the A.D.I. (currently at a cost), (b) Young Drivers – Skill for Life was open to 17 – 25 year olds, it was supported and run by IAM with a cost of £150 which was fully refundable on successful completion, 120 students had undertaken training to date; and (c) The Under 17 Car Club which was founded in 1974 with the ultimate aim to ensure that members were “Safe at 17”. The objectives of the “Safe at 17” initiative were explained and on each day there were over 30 volunteer instructors from Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue and Ambulance Services; there were over 24 cars from various sources, MPs and MSPs had attended the events. IAM Road Smart and the under 17 car club provided administration and ITV Borders covered a 6 minute main story. Following the events there was a 100% positive feedback from parents and students and all objectives were achieved on the day. Looking forward, further events were being planned, sustainability was vital; blue light services and IAM would continue their support and it was hoped that parents would get more involved. A successful funding bid amounting to £73k had been submitted to Transport Scotland to support all 3 programmes. Further work was on-going to explore how to make the under 17 programme self-sustaining in the same manner as in England. Chief Inspector McLean was thanked for his informative presentation.

**DECISION****NOTED.****9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

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

Friday 10 February 2017

Friday 9 June 2017

**DECISION****NOTED.**

*The meeting concluded at 12.45 pm*