

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTES of Meeting of the POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held in Council Chamber, Council HQ, Newtown St Boswells on Friday, 10th February, 2017 at 9.30 am

Present:- Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), S. Aitchison, B. Herd, A. Nicol, G. Turnbull, Mr G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector.

Apologies:- Ms J. Mulloy, SBHA, Ms F. Young, CJA, Dr. D. Steele, NHS Borders.

Absent:- Councillor R. Stewart, Mr H. Waltl.

In Attendance:- Chief Superintendent I. Marshall, Inspector J. Scott, 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, 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.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman advised this would be the final meeting of the Board under the current Council and expressed thanks to the Board Members and staff for their assistance. He was honoured to have chaired the Board and he referred to the successes of the young drivers' initiative; and the domestic abuse service.

DECISION NOTED.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF THE BOARD

The Chairman advised that he had received a letter from Fiona Young, Chief Executive of Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority advising that due to the disestablishment of Lothian and Borders Community Justice Authority at 31 March 2017, she wished to formally notify the Board that she would no longer be in a position to attend the Board meetings. She wished the Board every success for the future.

DECISION NOTED.

3. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 11 November 2016.

DECISION APPROVED the Minute.

4. MATTERS ARISING

(a) With reference to paragraph 3(b) of the Minute, Councillor Turnbull advised that he together with Councillor Moffat and Douglas Scott had attended a visit to Police Scotland's Contact, Command and Control Division, Bilston Communication Complex on Thursday 19 January 2017. Presentations on the work of the Complex were given by Chief Superintendent Roddy Newbigging, Mrs Amada McDonald, the National Service Manager and Chief Inspector David Baird. Since

the last visit by the Board to the Bilston Communication Centre in May 2015 it was clear that significant changes had been made. These included: (a) a greater emphasis on quality of response and positive outcomes through its person centred approach; (b) a greater focus in ensuring that there was a clear end to end process from someone calling 999/101, the processing of the call through the Centre and the response by local police, and (c) an increased resilience through the connecting of the Centre virtually to the other Communication Centres in Govan and Motherwell with calls being able to be taken through these Centres if Bilston was busy and vice versa. During the visit it was clear that despite a very busy morning calls were being answered quickly and effectively with 999 calls answered almost immediately and 101 calls being answered within 6 seconds although the standard for 101 calls was 40 seconds. It was also evident that many of calls were from vulnerable people with social issues that could not be dealt with solely by Police Scotland. This reinforced the need for an increased partnership working by Police Scotland, Councils and Community Planning partners on prevention activities. Police Scotland indicated that they were open to visits from Councillors and Community representatives to increase awareness of, and confidence in the work of the Bilston Communication Complex.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (b) With reference to paragraph 4.8 of the Minute, Members were advised by Inspector Scott that it would be difficult to widen information on prejudice type – disability to include mental and / or physical disability.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (c) With reference to paragraph 6.3 of the Minute it was noted that road safety action was to take place in relation to the junction leading to the Borders General Hospital.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (d) With reference to paragraph 7.2 of the Minute, it was noted that a presentation on the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 would be heard later in the meeting.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICING 2016/17

There had been circulated copies of a letter dated 17 November 2016 from the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Police Authority to the Chairman 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. A copy of the proposed response was also circulated.

**DECISION
AGREED to approve the response.**

6. CONSULTATION ON HMICS SCRUTINY PLAN 2016 - 17

There had been circulated copies of a letter dated 17 November 2016 from the Chief Executive Officer of the Scottish Police Authority to the Chairman 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. A copy of the proposed response was also circulated.

DECISION

AGREED to approve the response.

7. PROGRESS REPORTS / UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS

7.1 Police Scotland

Chief Superintendent Marshall thanked the Board for all the support the police had received; he referred to excellent partnership working during a difficult period. He then went on to give an overview of the ongoing work on the national 2026 policing project – a 10 year strategy to achieve a sustainable operating model, during which there would be a programme of transformation. In referring to the refreshment of local Police plans, he advised that to enable full integration discussions would take place with the SFRS. Operation Jigsaw had seen certain individuals targeted on a day of action earlier in the week.

7.2 Inspector J. Scott presented the Police Progress report covering the period April 2016 to December 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.

7.3 Priority 1 – Protecting People, the performance was better when compared to last year and also better than target.

7.4 Priority 2 – Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour, showed a 3.3% increase in Common Assaults reported in the year to date when compared to 2015/16. This equated to 19 more victims. This was an improving picture from the first quarter of 2016/17. There had been a 3.6% increase (134 more incidents) in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. There had been problems with youths in particular in Hawick and Galashiels in December and initiatives were in place to address these issues and a multi-agency approach was being pursued. There had been an 18.2% 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.

7.5 Priority 3 - Tackling substance misuse. Officers in the Scottish Borders had conducted a total of 242 stop and searches of which 91 proved positive (37.6%). There was a 45.6% decrease in the number of visits to licensed premises, which equated to 561 fewer visits.

7.6 Priority 4 - Making our Roads Safer, there had been a 6.3% increase (4 more casualties) in the year to date when compared to 2015/16. The number of people killed this year to date was 10, which equated to 3 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

7.7 Priority 5 - Tackling serious and organised crime. Cash seizures were lower than the value seized in 2015/16. There had been a 17.5% decrease in the number of detections for drug supply in the year to date compared to the same time period in 2015/16.

7.8 Priority 6 -Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There had been a decrease (16) in the number of housebreaking to dwellings in the year to date.

7.9 During discussions regarding the statistics provided, Chief Superintendent Marshall reassured Members that Police Scotland in the Scottish Borders were highly performing compared with the rest of Scotland. The gathering of young people in the Transport Exchange at Galashiels was not perceived as anti-social behaviour and there was a disproportionate fear of crime because of the press and television. In regard to the behaviour of drivers, Chief

Superintendent Marshall advised analysis indicated that most of the time accidents could be attributed to driver inattention and/or not driving according to conditions; accidents were very seldom due to mechanical errors. Therefore it was important to educate and encourage people to driver better. In respect of bullying within Schools, Inspector Scott advised that Police Scotland worked hand in hand with school staff. It was noted that following on from the publication of the Bailey Gwynne school death report that Superintendent Andy Clark had met with Education officers in the Scottish Borders Council. At this meeting he reinforced what matters schools could deal with and those which had to be referred to Police Scotland; the information would be cascaded to all schools.

- 7.10 Members felt strongly that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority must take action to deal with the funding gap in future years that was identified in Audit Scotland's 2015/16 Audit of Scottish Policing Activity published in December 2016 and it was agreed that this comment be included in the response to the Scottish Policy Authority as discussed in paragraph 4.

DECISION:-

- (a) **NOTED the report; and**
- (b) **AGREED the response to the Scottish Police Authority as discussed in paragraph 4 above, should include the following comments:- Members felt strongly that Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority must take action to deal with the funding gap in future years that was identified in Audit Scotland's 2015/16 Audit of Scottish Policing Activity published in December 2016.**

8.1 Fire and Rescue Service

LSO David Farries referred to the attendance of observers from Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate at the meeting of the Board held on 3 June 2016, and advised that their report would be published on 14 February 2017 and would be available on line. He referred to the production of the SFRS local plan and partnership working with Police Scotland and the Local Authority who had been supportive in making our local plan effective in the community. He referred to issues resulting from the implementation of the Community Empowerment Act and of the willingness of the SFRS to overcome certain 'blockers'. He commented on challenges within the SFRS budget, structural changes being made and that the capital budget expenditure had been a positive story for the SFRS. The off station structure review budget was not only a driver for review but would look to provide the best service to refocus and ensure priorities were balanced. He gave information on the single common duty system which would come into force in April 2017 for the whole of Scotland, communities in the Scottish Borders would see no change, and the new duty system would allow staff to work closely together on a more regular basis. Members noted the importance of accepting invitations to attend events organised by Police Scotland and the SFRS.

- 8.2 There had been circulated copies of the SFRS Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2016. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Girrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 69 dwelling fires in comparison to 85 for the same Year to Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this represented a 19% decrease. Four of these fires had been started deliberately. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 15 fire related casualties in this YTD reporting period, this was an identical figure for the same period last year. Further analysis showed that three casualties went to hospital for precautionary checks suffering

from slight smoke inhalation or burns. Eleven casualties received first aid at the scene and did not require any further treatment. Priority 3: There had been 76 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, a decrease of 13 in comparison to the same reporting period last year, there was also a 43% decrease in comparison to the previous quarter. Within these figures, 75% were secondary fires and typically involved refuse, grass, scrub and woodland. A large number of these secondary fires were likely to be related to anti-social behaviour. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) indicated that the SFRS attended 76 RTCs, three less than the same reporting period last year; however there was a slight increase in the previous quarter comparison. There had been 62 RTC related casualties in this YTD period with six of these being fatalities. During the YTD period, the SFRS used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on 20 occasions to extricate casualties. Information was also presented relating to special service casualties. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 637 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing an increase of 20 incidents compared to the same reporting period last year.

- 8.3 There had been circulated copies of the report on Prevention and Protection Activities. Group Manager Gourlay advised that 792 home fire safety visits were delivered during this reporting period compared to 697 in the same period last year. The report provided a breakdown of the delivery by ward area. Group Manager Gourlay answered questions relating to the design and installation of fire alarms. It was noted that there was an hourly rate charge for a fire vehicle if the call out was not an emergency

DECISION NOTED

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.40 a.m. and reconvened at 11.50 a.m.

9.1 Safer Communities

There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2016 to 31 December 2016. Mr Graham Jones, Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, highlighted the key points in the report. Strategic Policy 1 - There had been an increase of 7 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 1.1% increase. 5 fewer reported sexual crimes related to domestic abuse in the year to date when compared to the same time period last year, which equated to a 35.7% decrease. There had been 58 fewer referrals in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. The aim was to increase referrals but the trend for the last 3 years had been downward. There had been a decrease in the number of cases discussed at Multi-Agency Risk Management Conference (MARAC) in the year to date when compared to the same time period on 2015/16. MARAC referrals were lower than the expected yearly total of 200. This projected figure was based on a national U.K. wide statistical indicator which suggested that a population the size of the Scottish Borders could expect 200 high risk cases per year. The number of high risk offender referrals to the end of quarter 3 of 2016/17 was 40% lower than recorded for 2015/16 for the same time period. There were 79 fewer children present in the home where domestic abuse incidents had taken place; this was a 28.3% reduction on the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. 52 fewer children witnessed domestic abuse, this was a 48.1% reduction for the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16 and was currently reversing a recent upward trend. There had been an increase in the number of homeless presentations from 60 in the year to date of 2015/16 to 85 in 2016/17. Strategic Policy 2: There had been a small decrease 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. There had been 78 interventions following anti-social incidents in licensed premises in the third quarter of 2016/17 bringing the total for the year to date to 208. There had been 23 referrals into the Anti-Social Behaviour process as a result of proactive drug enforcement. Strategic Policy 3: There had been a small increase in the number of group 1 – 5 victims recorded in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16, this equated to 21 additional victims. There had been an increase of 309 reported Anti-Social Behaviour incidents compared to the same time period in 2015//16. There had been an increase in the number of youth related Anti-Social Behaviour incidents in the year 2016/17 when compared to the same time period in 2015/16; if the current trend continued it was likely that youth incidents would show the first year end increase in 5 years. 287 more persons were being monitored for anti-social behaviour in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. The number of mediation referrals in the year to date was the same when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. Strategic Policy 4: In relation to reducing the level and impact of poor driver behaviour through effective working, it was noted that had been an increase of 3 road users killed on our roads in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16; and an increase of 1 road user seriously injured in the year to date when compared to the same time period in 2015/16. 2 children had been seriously injured on our roads in the third quarters, bringing the total to 4, the same as last year at this point. 5 young drivers had been killed or seriously injured in the year to date, which was the same number compared with the same time period in 2015/16. 6 older drivers had been killed or seriously injured in the year to date; this was a decrease on the same time period in 2015/16. Finally 14 motorcyclists had been killed or seriously injured in the year to date; this was an increase on the same time period in 2015/16. Strategic Policy 5: In relation to reducing the level and impact of accidents in the home through effective partnership working, for the time period 1 April to 31 July 2016 there had been an increase of 4 accidents in the under 5's recorded, when compared to the same time period in 2015. For the time period 1 April to 30 September 2016 there had been fewer recorded falls in the over 75s compared to the same time period in 2015. There had been a significant increase in the number of actioned Fire Service adult and child protection referrals received from Safer Communities.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

**10. PRESENTATION ON COMMUNITY JUSTICE - SAFER COMMUNITIES AND
COMMUNITY JUSTICE MANAGER - GRAHAM JONES**

- 10.1 Mr Graham Jones gave a presentation on the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016. In giving background information, Mr Jones referred to (a) National Strategy for the Management of Offenders Scottish Government 2006; (b) Community Justice Authorities established 2007; (c) Reducing Reoffending in Scotland Audit Scotland 2012; and (d) the Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016.
- 10.2 In giving statistical information in relation to the Scottish Borders, the following was noted (a) 2,916 recorded crimes groups 1 – 5 in 2015/16; (b) 255.7 crimes per 10,000 population (460.5 in Scotland); (c) 41.3% for crimes of dishonesty; (d) 55.7% detection rate (51.6% in Scotland); and (e) 28.4% reoffending rate (28.3% in Scotland) 2013/14.
- 10.3 Community Justice comprised of (a) 8 statutory partners and 7 outcomes; (b) a national strategy; (c) outcomes, performance and improvement framework; (d) guidance for local partners in the new model for Community Justice; (e) Community Justice in Scotland: A guide to self-evaluation; and (f) Scottish Borders Local

Outcomes Improvement Plan. Mr Jones referred to complex needs in the private, public and third sectors.

10.4 Sentencing Options included (a) formal Police warnings and fixed penalty notices; (b) Procurator Fiscal warning, fine, fixed penalty, compensation, diversion (specialist support or treatment); and (c) Court fine, community payback order, prison.

10.4 Background information was given in relation to employability skills, challenges and the three step approach to reducing reoffending.

DECISION

NOTED and thanked Mr Jones for his informative presentation.

11. 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 9 June 2017

Friday 25 August 2017

Friday 10 November 2017

Friday 9 February 2018

Friday 18 May 2018

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 pm