

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL

MINUTE of Meeting of the POLICE, FIRE & RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES BOARD held in the Council Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on Friday, 16 September, 2016 at 9.30 am

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

Apologies:- Councillor R. Stewart, Ms J. Mulloy, SBHA.

Absent:- Ms F. Young, CJA, Mr H. Wattl, 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, Mr D. Scott, Senior Policy Adviser SBC, Inspector J. Hulford, Safer Communities SBC, K. Mason, Democratic Services Officer, SBC.

1. CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman advised that two Scottish Borders projects were recently shortlisted at the Scottish Community Safety Network awards. These National Awards celebrated community based projects and there had been 64 entries across four categories. The Safer Communities team won in one of the four categories, the Innovative Media Campaign. Led by the Police and supported by Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the National Farmers Union, this followed 18 months of promoting their Rural Crime Prevention project which led to a 62% reduction in the value of rural theft. In the Wider Partnership category the emergency planning team were runners up for their work on the Safety Advisory Group process. This provided a structured process for event organisers to follow to ensure that the safety of participants and members of the public was treated as a priority. PC Nick Turner and Sergeant Justin Hulford, Safer Communities Team were present at the meeting and the Chairman presented them with their award.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 3 June 2016.

**DECISION
APPROVED the Minute.**

3. MATTERS ARISING

- (a) With reference to paragraph 4.3 (b) (i) of the Minute relating to Police Scotland investigating the possibility of providing statistics to a future meeting in regards to the number of Police complaints which were upheld and partially upheld. Chief Inspector McLean advised he had been informed that it would not be possible to provide this information because of the manner in which records were kept. Members expressed disappointment and Superintendent Clark undertook to re-investigate this request.

**DECISION
AGREED that Superintendent Clark would re-investigate the request for the provision of providing statistics to a future**

meeting in regards to the number of Police complaints which were upheld and partially upheld.

- (b) With reference to paragraph 4.3 (b) (ii) Inspector Hodges was asked to provide a flow chart on the process partners used to share information on anti-social behaviour matters. Mr Scott advised that this would be dealt with in the Safer Communities Presentation.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

4. PROGRESS REPORTS /UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS

- 4.1 Superintendent Clark referred to ongoing national issues such as budget challenges and a number of emerging crimes such as cybercrime and changes to legislation. In referring to the delivery of a quality service and building in the confidence of the public in the Borders he advised that in regard to divisional resources, 899 were deployed across 4 local authorities (West Lothian, East Lothian, Mid Lothian and the Scottish Borders). This was made up of 20% Community Officers and 80% Response officers. Response Officers were spread across the Scottish Borders in different locations and they would immediately respond in times of crisis and they were tasked by the area control room working where the demand was. Community Officers worked out of three community policing areas. He explained that morning meetings took place at 8.30 a.m. when Chief Inspector McLean would review what had happened over the past 24 hours, he would then feed the information to Superintendent Clark's meeting and a decision would be taken on the priorities for the division at that point. He assured Members that when demand and priority was in the Scottish Borders, the response would be from across the Division and he was comfortable that a first class local area Commander was in place to look after the area. He referred to the dedication of Inspectors, Sergeants and Police Constables who would do their best for the Scottish Borders. This was highlighted by the current investigation into the serious assault and robbery in Galashiels earlier in the month, which had seen a significant level of specialist resources from across the Division deployed to the case. The Chairman asked if it would be possible for an Officer from Bilston Glen to attend the next meeting of the Board to give a presentation on the work being carried out in the control room at Bilston Glen and it was agreed that Superintendent Clark would action this. In response to questions raised about Special Constables, Superintendent Clark advised that there was a significant amount of effort being spent at the moment on the recruitment of Special Constables. There were difficulties retaining Special Constables because they sometimes used this as a stepping stone to becoming a regular Police Officer. A question was raised relating to the general security of the network and Superintendent Clark advised that he would report on information relating to airwaves at a future meeting.
- 4.2 Discussions took place relating to Police Officer presentations at local area fora at which sometimes only a few community councillors were present and a question was asked about how the information could be filtered down to members of the community and Superintendent Clark gave information on police use of local media. Mr Scott was asked to look into how SB Alert might be a useful link for this purpose.
- 4.3 The Chairman advised that he hoped that a representative from both the Police Scotland Board and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services Board would be able to attend future meetings of this Board.

- 4.4 Chief Inspector A. McLean presented the Police Progress report covering the period April 2016 to June 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 2014/15,
- 4.5 Priority 1 – Protecting People, referrals for the first quarter of 2016/17 were showing a 4.8% increase on the 2015/16 figures. 19 more adult at risk referrals had been made which was positive.
- 4.6 Priority 2 –Reducing Violence, Disorder and Antisocial Behaviour, showed a 19.1% increase in Common Assaults reported in the first quarter of 2016/17 when compared to 2015/16 and this equated to 33 more victims. In respect of reducing the number of anti-social behaviour incidents there had been a 2.6 % reduction (33 fewer incidents) in the first quarter when compared to the same time period in 2015/16 which was positive. With regards to increasing the reporting of hate crime, there had been a decrease in the number of recorded victims in the first quarter of 2016/17 compared to the same time period in 2015/16.
- 4.7 Priority 3 - Tackling substance misuse. During the period 01/04/2016 to 30/06/2016, officers in the Scottish Borders conducted a total of 81 stop and searches, of which 26 proved positive (32.1%). There had been a 78.3% decrease in the number of visits to licensed premises, which equated to 350 fewer visits.
- 4.8 Priority 4 - Making our Roads Safer, there had been a 40% increase (8 more casualties) in the first quarter of 2016/17 when compared to 2015/16. The number of people killed this year to date was 7, which was 4 more fatalities than the first quarter last year. The number of serious injuries had also increased compared to last year in the same time period
- 4.9 Priority 5 - Tackling serious and organised crime, cash seizures were lower than the value seized in the first quarter of 2015/16. There were strict criteria which had to be present to allow seizures under the POCA legislation and unfortunately there had been occasions when the criteria had not been met, which meant no seizures could be made. It was encouraging to see a 41.7% increase in the number of detections for drug supply in the first quarter of 2016/17 when compared to the same time period in 2015/16.
- 4.10 Priority 6 -Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There had been a decrease in the number of housebreaking to dwellings in the first quarter of 2016/17, with 3 fewer victims reported. There had been a 37.5% reduction in theft of motor vehicles in the year to date which equated to 6 fewer victims of this type of crime.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the report.**
- (b) **AGREED that Superintendent Clark would liaise with Officers from Bilston Glen and ask that a representative attend the next meeting of the Board to bring members up to date with work being carried out in the control room at Bilston Glen.**
- 5.1 LSO David Farries advised that the public consultation period had ended for the new Scottish Government Fire and Rescue Framework for Scotland. Further, the public consultation on the SFRS Strategic Plan 2016-19 had closed on 9th August. A new forum had been created at which the SFRS Board would meet at least twice yearly with COSLA, for information sharing purposes. He referred to the service

transformation agenda and the pilots which had taken place in the Scottish Borders. Living Safely in the Home in the Cheviot Ward had proved successful so far and had already led to positive outcomes with 9 referrals being made by SFRS crews to occupational therapists for help with aids or adaptations to make living at home safer. Out of hospital cardiac arrest attendances for SFRS continued at quite a pace and were now almost “business as usual” even although this work was still at a trial stage. It was anticipated that due to the evolving nature of the safety advice SFRS were currently giving to members of the community in their homes the current “Home Fire Safety Visits” would at some stage become known as “Home Safety Visits”. The TD1 youth initiative had ran a course across the school summer holidays and 6 young people from Galashiels had been presented with certificates after successfully completing the course. The relationships established with the young people would continue through a Role Model Mentoring program. He advised the SFRS was committed to ensure there was a good level of training to make fire fighters safer and gave information on hot fire training facilities available for use at Dumfries and Thornton. A portable training and entrapment unit was also located in Lauder to assist in training of crews in the Scottish Borders. The review of specialist equipment was coming to fruition with the impending removal of the high volume pump from Hawick. This was being replaced with the swift water safety team. The next retained duty system station visit for members would be at Peebles Fire Station on 17 January 2017.

- 5.2 There had been circulated copies of the SFRS Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 30 June 2016. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Girrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 21 dwelling fires in comparison to 34 for the same Year to Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this represented a 62% decrease. Two of these fires had been started deliberately. Cooking continued to be the most common cause accounting for nearly 60% of all accidental dwelling fires. A quarter of these incidents involved persons 65 years of age or over. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 3 fire related casualties in this YTD reporting period, Unfortunately, an adult female in Hawick had died in a fire fatality in April. The other two casualties in this reporting period suffered slight smoke inhalation with one attending hospital as a precautionary measure. Priority 3: There had been 32 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, a decrease of 12 in comparison to the same reporting period last year. On a less positive note, comparison to the previous quarter showed an increase of 20 incidents of this type. Over half of deliberate fires were started in Tweeddale East, Galashiels and Jedburgh districts collectively. The majority of these incidents once again involved refuse, grass and woodland. It would be reasonable to suggest that the quarterly increase could be attributed to the change in seasons and weather. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) indicated that the SFRS attended 30 RTCs, compared to 18 for the same reporting period last year. There had been 38 RTC related casualties in this YTD period with four of these being fatalities. The Service used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on nine occasions during this YTD period to extricate casualties. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 190 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing a decrease of 7 incidents compared to the same reporting period last year.
- 5.3 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 570 visits had been delivered during this reporting period and a breakdown of the delivery was provided by ward area as detailed in the report. He referred to the TD1 youth project and advised on another similar pilot scheme for Peebles High School. The Community Action Team along with the SFRS Youth engagement team successfully delivered a Fire skills programme at Polmont Young Offenders Institute which involved 10 young people in June. This was a direct response to work

planned through the Community Justice priorities in the Scottish Borders. Housing Association referrals total for this quarter was 113, which included those received from the Homelessness Service and Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service. Group Manager Gourlay answered questions relating to referrals from Housing Associations and explained that information relating to fly tipping could be reported to Crime Stoppers.

5.4 There had been circulated copies of a report on the Local Fire Plan Development. LSO Farries advised that the purpose of the report was to seek the Board's views on the development of the next iteration of the Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan (the Plan). He explained that the current, and first, Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan 2014-17 was approved through local scrutiny arrangements in March 2014. The Plan was a 3 year plan and was due to expire at the end of March 2017, a copy of the plan was attached to the report. In recognising that the Plan must reflect national organisational priorities and objectives and meet community needs and expectations, from a local perspective, there was a range of drivers which would support an argument to delay production of the next plan. The LSO recognised the need for SFRS to be fully engaged with the production of the LOIP in the Scottish Borders and highlighted a desire to encompass this work in the local Fire plan. Taking into consideration the main drivers the Local Senior Officer for Midlothian, East Lothian & Scottish Borders proposed that the current Plan was extended until December 2017. The extension of the Plan would allow a Plan development timeline to be adopted as follows:-

- (a) Monitor and horizon scan emerging SFRS organisational, and external stakeholders, strategic priorities, objectives and plans (June -Dec 2016),
- (b) Conduct in depth data analysis of local activity/incidents and emerging risks to inform local priorities and needs in the Scottish Borders area (Jan -March 2017),
- (c) Engage with key stakeholders, partners and members of the community on first tranche priorities, objectives and expectations (April-June 2017),
- (d) Develop new draft Plan for the Scottish Borders (May-July 2017),
- (e) Consult with key stakeholders, partners and members of the community on the draft Plan (August -October 2017), and
- (f) Submit draft Plan for the Scottish Borders for Council approval November – December 2017.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the reports.**
- * (b) **AGREED to recommend to Council that the current Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan be extended until December 2017 and to approve the proposed timeline for the production of the next Scottish Borders Local Fire Plan.**

6. ORDER OF BUSINESS

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.

7. PRESENTATION – COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

Mrs Jeanette McDiarmid, Depute Chief Executive People gave a presentation on the Service Review of the Scottish Borders Safer Communities Function. In undertaking

the review the following were taken into consideration:- (a) The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015; (b) Community Planning Localities Model; (c) Community Planning Reducing Inequalities Strategic Plan; (d) The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016; and (e) Police and Fire Service Reform. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act meant working together to prevent and reduce reoffending. The national intelligence model was a key process for taking forward local community safety work and this comprised (a) undertaking a strategic assessment and priority setting, (b) tasking and coordination; (c) identifying problems/targets and manage risk; (d) developing a strategic direction; and (e) making tactical and resource decisions. The Community Safety Unit would follow the national intelligence model. If the right intelligence was available then there would be an awareness of what was happening in the community. Mrs McDiarmid referred to ongoing community safety issues such as anti-social behaviour, problems over the festive period and doorstep crime. A robust interview process would be put in place for the recruitment of the leader of the Community Safety Unit and it was suggested that Julia Mulloy be invited to be a member of the interview team. Mrs McDiarmid was thanked for her informative presentation.

PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY - SAFER COMMUNITIES

- 8.1 Sergeant Hulford referred to the new format of the report which reflected the work carried out earlier in 2016 to assess the strategic priorities of the team. The report was presented under five priority headings (Gender Based Violence, Substance Misuse, Antisocial Behaviour, Accident Prevention Roads, Accident Prevention Home). In relation to gender based violence a number of actions had been taken to help improve the service further and to streamline processes so that victims were supported sooner. This had included changing the way referrals from Police Scotland were received, disclosing information under the Power to Tell and Right to Ask processes, and meeting with the Court Service to establish better victim outcomes. Sexual offences which were domestic abuse related had increased but the figures remained relatively low and would include historical offences, these could be from many years past and reflected the improved confidence of these victims. In relation to substance abuse work continued to reduce the level and impact and three new performance indicators had been introduced. Although the number of alcohol related ASB incidents had risen slightly, this was still part of an ongoing downward five year trend. The Safer Communities Team continued to intervene at the earliest opportunity and this had included multi-agency activity in two hotspots in this period, carried out by the Police ASBU and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs).
- 8.2 A new process had commenced whereby when any tenant of a RSL who had their house searched under warrant resulting in drugs production or supply charges, a disclosure would be made to the RSL to enable them to take appropriate action. Previously RSLs would not do this until conviction which could, owing to the seriousness of the charges, not be for many months. Safer Communities continued to deliver a wide range of road safety initiatives and the trend of there being zero children killed or seriously injured continued in the first quarter. 130 young drivers had attended the Skills for Life programme over the last two years. A pre driver event had been held at Charterhall with 90 young people attending over two days where they were able to experience driving in a safe environment. The first older driver event had been piloted with another planned for 2016 and a motorcyclist focussed event had also been held with over 40 participants.

**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 11 November 2016

Friday 10 February 2017

Friday 9 June 2017

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 12.45 pm