

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

MINUTES of Meeting of the POLICE, FIRE &  
RESCUE AND SAFER COMMUNITIES  
BOARD held in Council Chamber, Council  
Headquarters, Newtown St Boswells on  
Friday, 14th June, 2019 at 9.30 am

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Present:- Councillors H Scott, (Chairman), N. Richards, E Small.  
Mr M Dickson - NHS Borders, Mr H Coyle - Scottish Borders Housing  
Network and Ms M Simpson - Voluntary Sector

Apologies:- Councillors D Moffat, E Robson and G Turnbull.

In Attendance:- DC Chief Superintendent J McKenzie, Chief Inspector S Reid, Inspector J  
McGuigan Police Scotland; Local Senior Officer S Gourlay, Station Manager  
M Mitchell, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Mr C Bain, Senior Antisocial  
Behaviour Manager, Mr D Scott, Senior Policy Advisor, Ms S Smith,  
Communities and Partnership Manager and J Turnbull, Democratic Services  
Officer SBC.

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1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed Chief Superintendent John McKenzie to his first meeting and advised that Chief Superintendent Clark had retired. The Board extended their thanks to Chief Superintendent Clark and wished her well for the future. The Chair then welcomed Henry Coyle, representing the Scottish Borders Housing Network (SBHN) and Colin Bain from the Council's Safer Communities Team.

2. **MINUTES**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 8 February 2019.

**DECISION**

**APPROVED the Minute.**

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE**

With reference to paragraph 3.2 of the Minute (Crucial Crew), the Senior Policy Advisor, Mr Scott, advised that the Council's Corporate Management Team had endorsed the proposal to incorporate the Go Safe Scotland resource into the school curriculum.

**DECISION**

**NOTED.**

4. **PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE SCOTLAND**

- 4.1 Chief Superintendent McKenzie began his report by advising that he welcomed his new role as area commander and working with the Board. His focus would be on violent crime, antisocial behaviour, protection of the most vulnerable and improving the quality of life for people within the Scottish Borders. He explained that there would be a number of challenges ahead, particularly in relation to missing persons and issues surrounding the misuse of alcohol, both of which would involve partnership working as these were not just policing issues. He welcomed the Board's scrutiny function and going forward suggested

providing more localised information to assist the Board. He advised that he was committed to the Community Action Team (CAT) and appreciated the provision of this valuable resource. With regard to deployment of the second CAT he explained that this was an additionality and therefore required the recruitment of further officers. The recruitment process could take three to six months. However, he anticipated the appointment of three officers by September, with the full complement of six by the end of 2019. He advised that Kenny McDonald had been appointed as the new Assistant Chief Constable for this area and would be engaging with Members in the next few weeks.

- 4.2 Chief Superintendent McKenzie went on to advise that he anticipated discussions with local authorities regarding a new Police Scotland contact assessment model, which was being piloted in Lanarkshire. Following evaluation, there was an indication that the model might be introduced within J Division by early January. He would bring back further detail following the pilot evaluation. He concluded his report by advising that the year would be challenging with a reduction of £200m from the policing budget nationally. However, Police Scotland would continue to provide a quality service to the Scottish Borders and J Division.
- 4.3 Chief Inspector Stuart Reid then presented Police Scotland's Scrutiny Report for the period 1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019, copies of which had been circulated with the Agenda.
- 4.4 Domestic Abuse – During the period there had been a 7.1% reduction from last year in domestic abuse incidents. This reduction might reflect positively the work being carried out by Police and partner agencies. However, the figure might also reflect that domestic violence was often under reported. Chief Inspector Reid highlighted the work to tackle perpetrators and the support of victims through MARAC and MATAC which had contributed to the decrease. In terms of sexual crime incidents, Chief Inspector Reid advised that numbers had reduced to 188 from 201 the previous year. Mr Coyle, Scottish Borders Housing Network (SBCN) advised that they were working on early intervention in terms of domestic abuse and would discuss further with partners following the meeting.
- 4.5 Road Safety - There had been an increase in the number of people killed and seriously injured on the roads by 33% and 18% respectively. Despite targeted awareness in the motorcycle community, six of the deaths were motorcyclists, the circumstances attributed to rider or error/speed. Mobile camera units continued to be deployed to hotspot areas, the aim of which was to provide increased road policing throughout the Scottish Borders to influence driver behaviour and reduce road casualties. It was noted that 40 people had been reported for dangerous driving, 303 detected for speeding and 273 for insurance during the reporting period.
- 4.6 Violent Crime – There had been an increase of 37% in recorded crimes of violence which equated to 29 more crimes compared to the previous year. The detection rate had increased 3% to 78% from last year. Serious assaults had also increased 15% - 61 incidents compared to 53 last year with a detection rate of 80%. There were 20 reported crimes of robbery compared to nine last year with a detection rate of 60%. There was a 100% reduction in the number of murders with none reported compared to three the previous year. Regarding licensed premises, Chief Inspector Reid advised that 159 licensed premises' visits had been carried out and he highlighted the Rape Crisis Scotland campaign which allowed any customer feeling threatened after meeting someone to get help by approaching the bar and 'Asking to speak to Angela'.
- 4.7 Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) – There had been a slight increase in the number of ASB incidents with 5,740 being reported compared to 5,682 the previous year. Following a successful trial, re-deployable CCTV cameras were being introduced to assist with tackling ASB and crime. Youth Community Officers' focus this quarter was on issues arising during holidays.

- 4.8 Drugs and Alcohol Misuse – A proactive and intelligence led approach led by the CAT had seen a 45.8% rise in detections for drug related offences, a significant increase. With regard to alcohol misuse, 159 licensed premises checks had been conducted. Police Scotland were also collaborating with the Council regarding the possible implementation of alcohol byelaws in the Scottish Borders.
- 4.9 Protecting People – There had been an increase of 21.5% in missing person incidents to 707 from 582 the previous year. The increase highlighted the impact these resource intensive incidents placed upon police.
- 4.10 Acquisitive crime – Housebreaking had increased slightly to 256 reports compared to 236 last year with a detection rate of 21.9%.
- 4.11 Prevention and Activity Highlights  
Chief Inspector Reid then went on to discuss the operations and activities from 1 January to 31 March 2019, outlining the Drivewise programme for older drivers and the work of the CAT. In conclusion, the report highlighted that tackling violent crime would be a priority moving forward. To tackle this, the division had introduced Operation Parejos, which had a focus on crimes in communities.
- 4.12 In response to questions, it was advised that detection rates were higher in the Scottish Borders, compared to other areas of Scotland. With regard to CCTV, this was an important investigatory tool and Police Scotland welcomed any opportunities to increase coverage; CCTV also increased public confidence. With regard to missing persons, Chief Inspector Reid advised that through partnership working with NHS Borders there had been an improvement and he thanked the NHS for their cooperation. There was then a discussion on police recruitment, shift patterns, and areas covered, officers explained that the recruitment of Special Constables was ongoing, although more challenging in the Scottish Borders; CAT officers worked shift patterns including weekends and appropriate officers were deployed each day to target risks. Mrs Simpson representing the Voluntary Sector advised of the increase in scamming incidents and Chief Inspector Reid would discuss with her further out with the meeting.

## **DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

## **5. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - FIRE & RESCUE**

- 5.1 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) Local Plan Performance. Local Senior Officer (LSO) Gourlay began by giving an update on new appointments to the service, including the new Chief Officer, Martin Blunden. He also advised that he had submitted a business case for two additional retained support officers; one to be based in Peebles, the other in Hawick. LSO Gourlay then referred to the national negotiations around pay and conditions, explaining that the National Joint Council had recently met and as a result a formal offer was being discussed. Hopefully, this would allow the continuation of the transformation agenda and the developing role of firefighters across Scotland. Referring to the Newbridge Training Centre project, he advised that owing to issues with Scottish Power, completion of the facility had been delayed. However, train the trainer events would commence late summer.
- 5.2 Station Manager (SM) Steve Mitchell then presented the SFRS Local Plan Performance report for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.
- 5.3 Reduction of 'Dwelling Fire' – There had been 102 dwelling fires compared to 100 for the same period last year, 12 of which had been started deliberately. Cooking accounted for 36 of these fires with a further seven attributable to careless disposal of smoking materials.

- 5.4 Reduction of 'All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal) - There was 20 casualties during the period, two more than the same period last year. There was one fatal casualty over the period.
- 5.5 Reduction of 'All Deliberate Fires Excluding Dwellings' – There had been 135 incidents during the period, a 10% decrease. Many of these cases were linked to anti-social behaviour, with 23% occurring in the Galashiels and District Ward. With regard to prevention activities SFRS continued to target risk areas and worked with community partners when appropriate.
- 5.6 Reduction of 'Special Service – RTCs' – The SFRS attended 86 RTCs which represented a decrease of 6% compared to last year. Hydraulic rescue equipment was used on 31 occasions to extricate persons trapped in vehicles.
- 5.7 Reduction of 'Special Service Casualties – All' - There had been 94 Special Service Casualties during the reporting period, a 7% decrease in since last reporting year.
- 5.8 Reduction of 'False Alarm – Equipment Failure' – There had been 951 false alarm signals, of which 645 related to equipment failure – an increase of 41 since the previous year. With regard to the SFRS' enforcement policy for UFAS, LSO Gourlay explained that the SFRS had a multi stage approach, including enforcement correspondence, visits and audit of the premises.
- 5.9 In response to a question regarding the Out of Hour's Cardiac Arrest scheme, LSO Gourlay advised that firefighters were committed to this scheme and it was hoped to reinstate and roll out the pilot across the Scottish Borders. It was noted that the Community Planning Strategic Board had congratulated the SFRS on this scheme and their partnership working which provided a valuable resource to the community. Regarding deliberate fires, LSO Gourlay advised that following incidents, a joint investigation with police was carried out. There had been a number of prosecutions as a result, information could be provided to the Board via Police Scotland.
- 5.10 The Board acknowledged that second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, Mr Coyle advised that following the tragedy, Scottish Borders Housing Network (SBHN) in partnership with the SFRS, had sent out a communication, in terms of assurance to tenants. LSO Gourlay added that the SFRS had carried out an evaluation of dwellings in the Scottish Borders and no issues had been identified. Scottish Government legislation was being introduced which would have an impact on landlords in terms of providing fire safety measures in properties, for example up to and including sprinkler systems.
- 5.11 SM Mitchell then went on to discuss the Prevention and Protection activities. Copies of a report detailing figures from Quarter 4, (1 January 2019 to 31 March 2019) had been circulated with the agenda. The report explained that due to new staff joining the team and not being fully trained the annual targets had not been achieved. This would be addressed over the coming months. The main focus would be providing Home Fire Safety Visits to those at greatest risk of fire. With regard to partnership working, the SFRS Community Action Team had delivered Fire skills programmes in the Scottish Borders. The Local Authority Liaison Officer continued to attend Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference meetings and successful actions from these have been delivered. Future work stream priorities included reducing the number of UFAS calls they attended. In response to a questions, LSO Gourlay explained that the majority of UFAS were from educational establishments, followed by hospitals. The policy relating to UFAS was currently under review and involved working with partners in schools and hospitals. NHS Borders had introduced the Take 5 initiative which was having a positive impact on the number of calls. The SFRS had suggested a number of options for schools. However, they required the Council's support to pilot these options across one or two schools. With regard to the use of artificial intelligence, LSO Gourlay explained that the technology existed but there was a cost implication. Regarding staffing levels, LSO Gourlay

explained that there would be further national station reviews, retained recruitment had improved and members of staff provided a high level of cover. Concluding the report, LSO Gourlay advised that the copies of the draft strategic plan had been circulated with the agenda. Any comments were required by 18 July. Mr Scott advised that the Plan was in line with Council policies with its emphasis on prevention and working in partnership with communities, the public and private sectors.

## **DECISION**

**(a) NOTED the report.**

**(b) To request officers facilitate discussion between SRFS and SBC's Education Department in relation to Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 10.50 am to 11.05 am.

### **6. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES**

- 6.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance report covering the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Mr Colin Bain, Senior Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager, highlighted the main points:-
- 6.2 Priority 1 – Reduce the level and Impact of Gender Based Violence through effective partnership working. The number of incidents reported during the period was 1,005, 77 incidents lower than 2017/18. Referrals to DAAS had also reduced. Referrals to all domestic abuse services was similar to last year, with more support being received by the most vulnerable clients with complex needs. The Gender Based Violence Strategic Assessment had been completed and would form the basis of revised reporting to the Scrutiny Board.
- 6.3 Priority 2 – Reduce the level and impact of Substance Misuse through effective partnership working. Proactive drug enforcement activity had resulted in an increase in disclosures to RSLs for consideration around potential tenancy breaches. Mr Bain highlighted that the number of alcohol related issues had increased by 1% this year, due to the proactive work being done when policing events and addressing ASB concerns in the community. In response to a question, Mr Bain explained the referral process. Mr Coyle added that RSLs referred to appropriate agencies to support tenants in order to sustain tenancies. Mrs Simpson advised that the voluntary sector worked with a number of organisations across the Scottish Borders, they could access funding and would be pleased to provide support.
- 6.4 Priority 3 – Reduce the level and impact of Crime and Antisocial Behaviour through effective partnership working. ASB and vandalism had remained consistent to the same period last year. The report advised that there had been a 7.5% reduction in people being monitored for antisocial behaviour, Mr Bain explained the significance of early intervention in partnership with RSLs and a consistency of approach. It was noted that referrals to mediation had been lower and that the Mediation Officer had taken on an additional role as Gypsy Traveller Liaison Officer and balanced demand across the two functions. Mr Coyle advised that a noise app had been piloted and he could provide feedback. SBHN had also been piloting CCTV achieving a reduction in fly tipping which had a positive impact on communities.
- 6.5 Priority 4 – Reduce the level and impact of Poor Driver Behaviour through effective partnership working. Group 7 motor vehicle driving offences had risen since the same period last year with a detection rate of 91%. The successful Drivewise project continued and had been redesignated as a charity, dates had been set for further over 65 sessions. Planning was underway for a Schools' Countryside Day, with road safety a key feature for community safety.

- 6.6 Priority 5 – Reduce the level and impact of incidents in the home through effective partnership work. The Go Safe Scotland resource, was being embedded in the school curriculum. Subjects such as spotting hazards, poisoning, burns, choking and falls has been incorporated, in addition safety equipment was suggested in the inputs.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the report.**

7. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 7.1 The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Friday, 30 August 2019 at 9.30 am.

- 7.2 The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and commended the work of the police, fire service and safer communities' team and the level of cooperation between services and partners. He then invited attendees to view one of Police Scotland's Armed Response Vehicles, temporarily located in the Members' carpark.

**DECISION**

**NOTED the next meeting was scheduled to be held on 30 August 2019.**

***The meeting concluded at 11.30 am***