

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, 3 June 2016 at 9.30am.

Present: Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), S. Aitchison (from para 4), B. Herd,
A. Nicol, R. Stewart, G. Turnbull. Mr G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector, Ms
M. Lyle, SBHA, Dr D. Steele, NHS Borders.

Apology: Ms F. Young, CJA.

In Attendance: Divisional Commander (DC) Chief Supt. Ivor Marshall, Police
Scotland, Chief Inspector A. McLean, Police Scotland, Inspector T.
Hodges, Safer Communities Team Manager, 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, K. Mason, Democratic
Services Officer, SBC.

1. WELCOME

The Chairman extended a welcome to observers from Her Majesty's Fire Service
Inspectorate who were carrying out a full inspection of the Scottish Fire and
Rescue Service within the Scottish Borders during the months of July and August.
He also welcomed Divisional Commander (DC) Chief Superintendent Ivor
Marshall, Police Scotland and LSO David Farries, Scottish Fire and Rescue
Service to their first meeting of the Board.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 12
February 2016.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

3. MATTERS ARISING

(a) With reference to paragraph 4.3 (b) (i) of the Minute, Chief Inspector
McLean advised that Councillor Renton had met with Community Police
Officers who had explained the issues they encountered in respect of
timescales and local people abusing the parking system in the Market
Square, Duns. As a result of this Councillor Renton was much more aware
of the issues Police Officers had to deal with.

DECISION

NOTED.

(b) With reference to paragraph 4.3 (b) (ii) in relation to issuing an
appropriate Press Release relating to detection rates Members were
advised that this had proved complex because it was not just detection
rates which should be highlighted but the other aspects of Police work
and links with the Police Scotland media unit needed to be established.

A communications strategy for the Board to deal with this also covering Fire and Rescue and work in Safer Communities was being developed.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

- (c) With reference to paragraph 4.3(b) (iii) of the Minute, Members were advised that Police Scotland was not yet in a position to present a private paper on work going on behind the scenes on Serious Organised Crime but this would be undertaken at future meetings.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

4. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

MEMBER

Councillor Aitchison joined the meeting during discussion of the following item.

4.1 Police

Divisional Commander (DC) Chief Supt. Ivor Marshall thanked Members for their welcome and explained he had been in his new post for 3 weeks and he was trying to get up to speed with Lothian and Scottish Borders Division. He was committed to local policing and delighted to have been appointed. He referred to the importance of partnership working where positive constructive collaborate arrangements were in place and he paid tribute to Chief Supt Imery in regard to this. He considered the Boards priorities were correct and he assured Members that efforts in relation to serious organised crime were not diminished but he could not refer to those because of the confidentiality surrounding this matter. There had been good progress in relation to reducing rural housebreakings. The new Chief Constable had undertaken to refresh and change performance framework. Previously targets were chased which missed the point of what policing was all about and important broader conversations would take place about prevention and intervention to reduce crimes. He referred to budget challenges and advised that various meetings would be taking place to ensure Police Scotland kept on track towards a budget settlement.

- 4.2 Discussions took place relating to race hate crime figures which had increased and it was noted that Police Scotland had worked with George Higgs to make it easier for people to report race hate crimes. Reporting of hate crimes had increased because people now felt confident to report issues to the police. Detection rates for hate crime in the Borders continue to be high.

- 4.3 Chief Inspector A. McLean presented the Police Progress report covering the period April 2015 to March 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, 113 more referrals had been made, which was positive. In relation to

Priority 1 – Protecting People performance was slightly worse compared to last year but 1.8% better than target.

Priority 2 – showed a 7.7% increase in Common Assaults reported in 2015/16 compared to the same period last year. This equated to 55 more victims compared with same period last year. In respect of reducing the number of anti-

social behaviour incidents there had been a 7.9% reduction (402 fewer incidents) in the year to date compared to the same time period last year.

With regards to increasing the reporting of hate crime, there had been a significant increase in the number of recorded victims of hate crime in the year to date and it was noted that this was largely due to the spike in offences occurring in Quarter 2.

Priority 3 - Tackling substance misuse. During the period 01/06/2015 to 31/03/2016, officers in the Scottish Borders conducted a total of 322 stop and searches, of which 77 proved positive (23.9%).

Priority 4 - Making our Roads Safer, there had been an 11.5% increase (8 more casualties) in 2015/16 when compare to 2014/15. The number of people killed this year was 8, which was 1 more fatality than last year. The number of serious injuries had also increased compared to last year.

Priority 5 Tackling serious and organised crime, cash seizures were currently lower than the value seized at the same point last year, this was because specific criteria which had to be present to seize cash under POCA, simply not being there for officers to make seizures. It was encouraging to see a 6.7% increase in the number of detections for drug supply, with 64 offences detected in 2015/16.

Priority 6-Tackling Acquisitive Crime. There had been a decrease in the number of housebreaking to dwellings leading to 29 fewer victims of this type of crime in the year to date when compared with the same time period in 2014/15. There had been a 12.9% reduction in theft of motor vehicles in the year to date which equated to 8 fewer victims of this type of crime.

Concern was raised in relation to speeding on borders roads in particular the A7 and the A698, and the Chairman advised that any issues should be reported to Police Scotland. Chief Inspector McLean advised that a safety campaign in regard to "making roads safer" would be in place in the next few months. Road checks in relation to drink driving had taken place at various times during the day and night, the results of which were disappointing because of the high number of people who had been caught drinking and driving.

It was noted that partner agencies shared information relating to anti-social behaviour and a request was made that Inspector Hodges circulate a flow chart on how this worked. In discussing the lack of information regarding licensing of air rifles Members were advised that anyone with queries should in the first instance contact Police Scotland's licensing department. It was noted that the Court system had improved because rather than Police Officers having to attend Court until their case was called, Offices now received a phone call from the Court Service to alert them as to the time when a particular case would be heard. In regard to the number of complaints per year a request was made for information on how many complaints were upheld and partially upheld and Chief Superintendent Marshall undertook to provide these statistics.

DECISION

(a) NOTED the report.

(b) AGREED that

- (i) **Police Scotland would investigate the possibility of providing statistics to a future meeting in regard to the number of police complaints which were upheld and partially upheld;**
- (ii) **Inspector Hodges would provide a flow chart on the process partners used to share information on anti-social behaviour matters.**

4.4 Fire and Rescue Service

LSO David Farries introduced himself and thanked the Board for providing him with the response which was made to the consultation on the new Fire & Rescue framework for Scotland. The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service had now produced their draft Strategic Plan for 2016-2019 which developed the expectations set out in the Scottish Government Framework. A 10 week online consultation period began on 31 May 2016. The Strategic plan acted as a bridge between the framework and their Scottish Borders Local Plan. He valued the view of the Board on its concerns about the need to balance national priorities with the needs of local communities which was a key focus of the Board's feedback and was important to the Fire and Rescue Service team within the Scottish Borders. The 2016-2019 Strategic plan gave the Fire and Rescue Service the space to be ambitious whilst looking differently at their service delivery. The Board would be aware of service transformation agenda and the Fire and Rescue Service was already seeing the benefits of the ways that their resources could be used to benefit local communities in innovative ways. The Out of Hospital Cardiac Arrest trial was ongoing with an enhanced response in Hawick, Lauder and Coldstream. The Service was currently in the final preparation stages of the Living Safely in the Home initiative which would initially run in the Cheviot area, this project harnessed their vast experience in prevention and allowed them to assist in reducing unintended harm to vulnerable people. It would of course be wrong for the Service to lose focus on what was considered their 'traditional' core responsibilities and with that in mind the Service continued to explore ways of improving their operational response. Training remained the key component in ensuring firefighters were kept competent and safe. The Service had recently completed the training of their second swift water rescue team in the Borders at Hawick; this team would be able to work alongside colleagues from Gala at water rescue incidents and in response to the type of large scale flooding incidents seen in recent years throughout the region. LSO Farries had recently secured funding to renovate the old smoke house facility also at Hawick Fire Station into a simulated domestic dwelling which would be used for breathing apparatus and search and rescue training. This venue would benefit crews from across the borders. A further commitment to improving their operational response came in the form of a major investment in brand new state of the art Hydraulic Rescue Equipment for the area. The Service had managed to bring half of the 10 sets of equipment available in the East of Scotland to the Scottish Borders and stations across the area had been selected to provide a good coverage. LSO Farries hoped that Board members would be able to attend the events which they had been invited to in Duns, Selkirk, Gala, Kelso and Peebles over the remainder of the year. The Service had put together a programme which afforded Members the opportunity to visit Retained stations, speak to crews on the ground and observe training exercises.

- 4.5 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 31 March 2016. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Girrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 109 dwelling fires in comparison to 84 for the same Year to Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this represented a 30% increase. Six of these fires had been started deliberately although none in the last quarter.

Cooking continued to be the most common cause of dwelling fires, over 50% started in single occupancy dwellings. A quarter of these fires involved persons 65 years old or over. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 18 fire related casualties in this reporting period, this was an increase of three compared to the same period last year. Six of these casualties went to hospital with the SFRS administering oxygen to 12 casualties. The YTD period had seen one fire fatality, there had been three non-fatal fire casualties this quarter all suffering from slight smoke inhalation. There had been no fire fatalities this quarter. Priority 3: Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting indicated that there had been 100 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, an increase of 11 in comparison to the same reporting period last year. Wood, scrubland, refuse and straw bales accounted for the majority of these incidents. The decrease in the last quarter was consistent with the months of autumn and winter. Priority 4: Reduction in Road Traffic Collisions (RTCs) indicated that the SFRS attended 107 RTCs, compared to 92 for the same reporting period last year. Further analysis showed that 31% of these casualties occurred in the third quarter. This was an increase of one compared to the same period last year. There had been 74 RTC related casualties in this YTD period with six of these being fatalities. The most recent fatalities involved two adult females at separate incidents in February. The Service used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on 32 occasions during this YTD to extricate casualties. Priority 5 related to the Reduction of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals and it was noted that there had been 791 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing a decrease of 114 incidents compared to the same period last year. Members noted a report by Group Manager S. Gourlay on unwanted fire alarm signals. Group Manager S. Gourlay updated Members on home fire safety visits. It was confirmed that the Fire and Rescue Service would be present at St Boswells Fair.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.30 a.m. and reconvened at 11.40 a.m.

4.6 Safer Communities

MEMBERS

Councillors Aitchison and Stewart left the meeting during discussion of the following item.

Inspector Hodges advised that when taking up this post last year he highlighted his thoughts on the current reporting process for Safer Communities and Members agreed that the existing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were often not up to date and not an accurate reflection of Community Safety issues in the Scottish Borders nor of the work undertaken on the Board's half by his team. Inspector Hodges advised it was his intention that this would be the last time he would bring to the Board this old style of report and at the end of his submission he would introduce the new Safer Communities KPIs and proposed reporting format.

- 4.7 The Safer Communities Team continued to embrace the partnership model with Police, Fire and Rescue and NHS Colleagues working alongside Council Officers in the co-located unit at Council Headquarters. Whilst they were a small team with very limited resource their ability to reduce the level and impact of issues in a number of areas was testament to this effective partnership working. Gender Based Violence:- the Pathway Project was now entering a transition year with partnership funding agreed through to next financial year. A Multi – Agency Project Board under the

Chair of Depute Chief Executive J. McDiarmid was being established to secure the long-term sustainability of their Domestic Abuse Services and they were already working closely with the Scottish Government and the Big Lottery to secure continued external funding to ease the financial burden on local partners. Reports of Domestic Abuse remained fairly constant on the last financial year and whilst some might expect these figures to have fallen given the robust approach by Police Scotland and work of support services, Inspector Hodge's view was that a more approachable and victim centred structure was in place which was encouraging previously unreported abuse. Overall the response and subsequent provision for victims and children affected by Domestic Abuse in the Scottish Borders remained very good and the number of children on the Child Protection Register as a result of Domestic Abuse reduced by 11% and the number of homeless presentations as a result of Domestic Abuse was also starting to show a positive reduction. The only figure which Members might question was that relating to surveyed clients reporting a perceived reduced risk as a result of engaging with the service however this was a "normal" reflection of areas of risk which any service would be unable to influence e.g. perpetrator behaviour continuing to be abusive during child contact. The Scottish Borders Equally Safe Strategy was out for consultation and this would direct the work of partners to address gender-based violence in its widest sense.

- 4.8 Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour:- As the Local Area Commander had already reported a welcomed reduction in calls to the Police regarding Anti-Social Behaviour in the last financial year, the Safer Communities figure which took into account all reports made to Police, Anti-Social Behaviour Team and RSLs saw a very small increase. When examining in details this could be explained by the strong approach taken by partners to this issue over a number of years. Whilst no form of Anti-Social Behaviour was acceptable for those who live, work and visit the Scottish Borders, the Team had seen a significant drop in the number of more serious cases and a rise in more minor matters, which could be addressed, directly by RSLs or the Anti-Social Behaviour Team without the need for Police attendance. Residents now appeared to have the confidence to report more minor matters knowing that these would be addressed whenever possible. The significant drop in Anti-Social Behaviour Orders granted by courts to Borders residents demonstrated this. In 2015 only 6 new orders were granted compared to 20 the previous year and 22 in 2013. Considering that from initial report by a member of the public to an ASBO being granted could take several months and the cost to the public ran into thousands of pounds this demonstrated the Team's move to Early and Effective Intervention was both beneficial to those affected and the public purse. The figure regarding the number of Early Interventions was one which highlighted the need to improve reporting practices and future reporting would capture a range of activities which current recording practices had not. This week saw the welcomed addition of 3GS Dog Fouling and Littering Enforcement Officers to the area. Through their partnership analyst they would be provided with weekly tasking based on public complaints, information and intelligence and ensure they were deployed with equity throughout the localities in the Scottish Borders. They would complement the Council's 'Responsible Dog Owner Strategy' and the Team would continue to raise awareness and encourage preventative initiatives such as the Green Dog Walkers recently started in Newtown St. Boswells. The Team was also working with the Escape Youth Centre in Hawick with a view to a project in the town later this summer. Rural Crime remained a focus for the Team which continued to actively engage with the farming community to maintain the impetus of last year's Initiatives. This week, the team represented Police Scotland at the NSA Scotsheep event at Blythbank where over 7,000 attendees from through the UK and abroad gathered for the annual event. The Crime Prevention stall was one of the busiest there and very positive feedback was received. The Farm Fire Safety and Crime Prevention event would take place on Thursday 9 June between 13:00 and 15:30hrs at Haswellsykes Farm outside Peebles.

Members would be more than welcome to attend. In relation to substance misuse the Common Riding season and the hard work of the Safety Advisory Board and Licensing Officers and Officials would again be put to the test. Last year saw a very safe summer of events which concluded this spring with a successful Sevens circuit. The increased footfall at Melrose Sevens as a result of the Borders Railway presented a number of challenges but those did not result in anything of note as a result of the over consumption of alcohol. The Safer Communities Team were working closely with the Youth Borders management team to assist in addressing emerging trends with young people in the five localities. This included reducing the alcohol and substance misuse issues and the impact these had in the community. Currently initiatives were being scoped in both Kelso and Peebles. In relation to accidents in the home, the figures presented were only provisional from NHS Borders and might rise by a small percentage. However, there was a small rise in hospital admissions in the over 75s as a result in falls. Whilst in comparison with last year this was not of concern, it represented a fairly substantial increase on the five-year average. The Safer Communities Team was an active partner in the Safe Living in the Home Initiative, which was to be launched in Cheviot this summer under the stewardship of Group Manager Andy Girrity. Inspector Hodges encouraged Members to attend the launch events and support this preventative initiative, which aimed to reduce unintentional harm in the home not only for the increasing elderly population but also for pre-school children. Whilst the figures in respect of accidents in the home for under 5s appeared to be showing a more positive trend, Paul Richardson the Council's Community Safety Officer had carried out detailed research and identified a number of trends in relation to Child Safety this would be addressed as part of the Team's new Action Plan. Next week was National Child Safety Week and Paul Richardson had been working with partners and would be active at a number of events across the Borders. Poor Driver Behaviour - as suggested by Board members last year the Team had started to roll out an Older Drivers Initiative under the banner of Borders Driver Gold. This was an opportunity for drivers over 60 to update their driving skills and confidence on the road, as well as refresh their knowledge on topics such as the Highway Code and modern driving techniques. The first two events were scheduled for 15 and 27 June at the Burnfoot Community Hub and the Team had worked closely with the Hawick Driving Instructors Association and other partners to develop a programme hopefully to be taken around the region over the next year. In addition to the existing young drivers training which the Team now ran annually (current course concluded on 19 June at Duns), a very successful event under the Institute of Advanced Motorist at Charterhall was supported by Safer Communities, Police Scotland and SFRS on 21 May. Approximately 80 young people aged 14-17 had one to one driver instruction amongst many other road safety activities in a safe and controlled environment. This was no mean feat to organise but was supported not only by the Chairman, Councillor Moffat but local MP and MSP as well as Executive Officers from Police Scotland and SFRS. A positive trend was that of motorcyclists killed or seriously injured in the Scottish Borders and Safer Communities continued along with Police Scotland to work locally with partners to ensure this remained a priority. These events demonstrated a continued commitment to addressing poor driver behaviour by all partners in the Scottish Borders.

- 4.9 In respect of the new reporting format, Inspector Hodges advised that following a detailed Strategic Assessment undertaken by the Partnership Analyst involving all Safer Communities partners, The Priorities for the Safer Communities Team for 2016-19 had been set and a detailed Action Plan had now been prepared and was awaiting final review and sign off. As a result of this work, Inspector Hodges had revised the KPIs for Safer Communities and believed not only that these were a better indicator of the areas of business the Team was working in but were performance measures which the Team could be accountable for as opposed to the more generic statistics in

the current report. In consultation with the Chairman, the Team had developed a reporting format which they felt would be more meaningful for Board Members and clearly showed not only how the Team was performing but highlighted the successes, issues and activities in each of the priority areas.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED.**
- (b) **AGREED to endorse the new reporting format.**

5. PRESENTATION – SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE – AT THE HEART OF COMMUNITIES

Colin Baxter, A & E Team Leader gave a presentation on the work of the Scottish Ambulance Service. He gave background information in relation to the history of the service and changes in uniform since 1948. The South East Division covered 2,457 square miles. In 2013/14 the Service responded to 686,530 accident and emergency incidents, carried out 1,140,048 non-emergency patient journeys, and flew 3,427 air ambulance missions. The average response time to life-threatening calls throughout Scotland was 6.5 minutes. The Service employed 4,232 staff, of whom 550 were in support services and administration and 14 were Board members. The Patient Transport Service carried almost 1.6 million patients every year. This service was provided to patients who were physically or medically unfit to travel to hospital out-patient appointments by any other means ensuring they could still make their appointments. The Service also handled non-emergency admissions, discharges, transport of palliative care patients and a variety of other specialised roles. In June 2012 the result of a tender process for a new seven-year air ambulance contract was announced. Commencing in April 2013, the winning tenderer Gama Aviation continued to provide two rotary and two fixed-wing aircraft on a 24 hours basis throughout Scotland. The aircraft based in Glasgow were regularly used by the UK's only Emergency Medical Retrieval Service. In late 2012 a charity was founded to provide a further air ambulance to work alongside the state-funded aircraft. The Charity Air Ambulance commenced operations in 2013 and operated a Eurocopter EC-135 helicopter based at Perth Airport, crewed by Scottish Ambulance Service paramedics. Special Operations Response Teams had been set up in the north, east and west of Scotland to respond to major incidents including nuclear, chemical and radiological ones. These teams had specially equipped vehicles with decontamination equipment on board. The Scottish Ambulance Service operated three Ambulance Control Centres which provided command and control and 999 call taking facilities for the Service; these were located in Cardonald, South Queensferry and Inverness. The Service had its own dedicated training academy within the campus of Glasgow Caledonian University. Ongoing projects consisted of (a) public access to defibrillators in all towns and villages in the Scottish Borders; (b) stroke management/fast tracking for rapid thrombolysis etc; and (c) a falls prevention strategy.

DECISION

NOTED and thanked Mr Baxter for his interesting and informative presentation.

6. 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 16 September 2016
- Friday 11 November 2016
- Friday 10 February 2017
- Friday 9 June 2017

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 12.15 p.m.