

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, 22nd June, 2018 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillors: G Turnbull (Chair from para 2), E Robson, H Scott, E Small, Mr M Dickson - NHS Borders, Ms J Mulloy – SBHA, Mrs M Simpson - Voluntary Sector.

Apologies: Councillors W McAteer, D Moffat.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent L Clark, Chief Inspector A McLean, Police Scotland; Group Manager, D Girrity & LSO S Gourlay, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Mr J Alexander, Scottish Ambulance Service, Ms A Beavon – Violence Against Women Coordinator, SBC, Mr D Scott, Senior Policy Advisor SBC, Ms S Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager SBC, J Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer SBC.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR**

Mr Scott advised that the first item on the Agenda was appointment of Vice-Chairman. Councillor Scott seconded by Councillor Robson moved that Councillor Turnbull be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board and this was agreed.

DECISION

AGREED that Councillor Turnbull be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Police, Fire & Rescue and Safer Communities Board.

MEMBER

Councillor Turnbull in the Chair.

2. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Malcolm Dickson, NHS representative who had replaced Mr Davidson on the Board. He also introduced Mr John Alexander from the Scottish Ambulance Service and there was a round of introductions.

DECISION

NOTED and welcome:

- (a) Mr M Dickson as the NHS representative to the Board; and**
- (b) Mr Alexander who was attending on behalf of the Scottish Ambulance Service.**

MEMBER

Councillor Small joined the meeting.

3. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 9 February 2018.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE

- 4.1 With reference to paragraph 3.1 of the Minute, Chief Superintendent Clark advised that the establishment of the policing communication toolkit for 'J' Division was ongoing.
- 4.2 With reference to paragraph 3.10 of the Minute, Chief Inspector McLean advised that Police Scotland were exploring the inclusion of statistics on response times, details of complaints and detection rates for 999 and 101 calls in their Scrutiny Reports. However, to carry out in depth analysis was a significant undertaking.
- 4.3 With reference to paragraph 4 of the Minute, Mr Scott, Senior Policy Advisor, advised that the COSLA Police Scrutiny Conveners and Scottish Police Authority (SPA) had formed a Working Group which would include looking at the engagement of Scottish Police Authority (SPA) members on local Scrutiny Committees. An update would be provided to the Board when more information was available.

DECISION NOTED.

5. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS

- 5.1 Chief Superintendent Clark advised that in response to an incident in Jedburgh, there had been the first deployment, by a specially trained officer, of a Taser in Scotland. The deployment would be evaluated and any learning points captured. Chief Superintendent Clark, further advised that there had been an increase in drug deaths in the Scottish Borders, this reflected the national increase and there was no specific trend. Work was ongoing to obtain intelligence and when completed an overview would be presented to the Board. Chief Superintendent Clark concluded by advising that changes to the armed response deployment model meant that armed response officers were now dispatched to a wider range of incidents; a briefing could be presented to the Board if required.
- 5.2 Chief Inspector McLean then presented Police Scotland's Scrutiny Report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, copies of which had been circulated with the Agenda. The report was in the new format, intended to be user friendly, and feedback would be appreciated.
- 5.3 Domestic Abuse – During the period there was a 12% rise in the number of incidents reported, this reflected an increase in victims' confidence in reporting incidents. This enabled early engagement with the most appropriate support agency, such as the DAAS, and highlighted the importance of strong partnership working. Early intervention had also reduced the number of future criminal acts.
- 5.4 Road Safety – The report showed that there had been a reduction in all categories. There had been an increase in educational initiatives provided within the Scottish Borders, such as the Drivewise project, Over 65s refresher training sessions and motorbike advance driving training.
- 5.5 Violent Crime – There had been a 10% rise in Serious Assault, which Chief Inspector McLean clarified was partly due to a change in classification. However, over the same period, there had been a 15% decrease in violent crime. Initiatives to reduce the impact of violent crime continued such as the Best Bar None scheme, No Knives, Better Lives programme and the continuation of weekend, high visibility patrols in problem areas.
- 5.6 Antisocial Behaviour – The report detailed that there had been a 9% increase across all antisocial behaviour categories apart from disturbances. Chief Inspector McLean quantified, that the increase was in relation to antisocial communications e.g. texts, apps and Facebook. The Police Community Action Team (CAT) was working with the Safer Communities Team to target individuals and key areas. Racially aggravated conduct had slightly decreased and the 94% detection rate was a positive reflection of the work being undertaken by police and partner agencies.

- 5.7 Drugs and Alcohol Misuse – Chief Inspector McLean advised that there had been an increase in drug related deaths. Police Scotland had achieved success in severely disrupting supply and positive lines of enquiry were continuing.
- 5.8 Protecting People – There had been a 2% reduction in missing person incidents. Chief Inspector McLean clarified the classification grades, explaining the difference between low, medium and high grade incidents and the differing response dependent on classification. He also referred to the vulnerable persons' database which allowed the police to flag up concerns to relevant support agencies.
- 5.9 Acquisitive Crime – There had been a 10% increase. However, the last quarter had seen a decrease. Prevention played an important role and Chief Inspector McLean highlighted the road check programme and fast response vehicle which had contributed to the decline.
- 5.10 Demand & Analysis - There had been 31,473 incidents reported, a 7% increase since 2016/17. Of these incidents, 3,448 were reports of crime which highlighted the number of incidents which were not crime related and connected to mental health issues or supporting people in distress. This was reflected nationally.
- 5.11 Chief Inspector McLean concluded his report by advising that during the period, Police Scotland had received 105 complaints, with 114 separate allegations. There was a mix of reasons for the complaints, which could not be disclosed because of confidentiality. However, for an area as large as the Scottish Borders the number of complaints was considered low.
- 5.12 In response to a question regarding unregistered charity bags being delivered to householders, Chief Inspector McLean advised that every incidence was investigated in conjunction with Trading Standards. With regard to cybercrime, Chief Superintendent Clark advised that if an area was being targeted the public were made aware. She highlighted that, due to implementation of the new banking protocol, a bank fraud had recently been prevented. Regarding over 65s refresher driving training, Chief Inspector McLean explained that attendees were given information on alternatives to driving and that GPs could advise patients on their fitness to drive. Referring to the support offered to children using drugs and/or alcohol, Chief Inspector McLean clarified that support was linked through schools and there was also referrals made to Social Work. The Board then discussed the sharing of information on crime matters and it was noted that it would be useful for the NHS to be included.
- 5.13 The Chairman thanked Chief Superintendent Clark and Chief Inspector McLean for their attendance and report. He advised that Councillor McAteer was pursuing the upgrading of CCTV and the Board would receive an update at the next meeting.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) That an overview on the increase in drug related deaths be presented to the Board;**
 - (b) That a briefing on the armed response deployment model be presented to the Board at a future meeting; and**
 - (c) The Chairman, Councillor McAteer, would update on CCTV at the next meeting.**
6. **POLICE COMMUNITY ACTION TEAM (CAT)**
- 6.1 Chief Inspector McLean then gave a briefing on the work of the Police Community Action Team (CAT). He explained that the CAT was funded by the Council and comprised one sergeant and six officers. The CAT was in addition to Police Scotland's current

establishment and would not be deployed to routine calls or events. The CAT Strategic Oversight Group made decisions as to what the CAT's priorities were and would also analyse effectiveness. Chief Inspector McLean provided a summary of the CAT's first two months' activity which included issuing 175 parking tickets, alcohol seizures, drug searches, issuing of antisocial behaviour orders and engaging with the needle exchange programme.

- 6.2 In response to questions, Chief Inspector McLean advised that they were considering joint training packages with other organisations to exchange information. Mrs Simpson advised that the voluntary sector would be interested in receiving a briefing on the work of the CAT and would forward a list of meeting dates to Chief Inspector McLean out with the meeting. It was noted that any issues for the CAT should be referred, in the first instance, to the Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager - Mr Graham Jones, who would take forward for consideration by the CAT Strategic Oversight Group. Mr Scott indicated that the CAT's performance monitoring report process was under development and its reports would be submitted to the Board and the Council's Executive.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) The work of the Police Community Action Team (CAT); and**
- (b) That the CAT's performance monitoring process was under development and its reports would be submitted to the Board and the Council's Executive.**

7. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) Local Plan Performance Report. Local Senior Officer (LSO) Gourlay began his report by updating on the SFRS transformation programme, advising that progress on this was linked to negotiations on pay and conditions between the Fire Brigade Union and the UK employers. He further advised that the new dedicated training and health & wellbeing facility was expected to be completed by the end of the year and an update would be presented to the next meeting. He mentioned that it would be worthwhile for Board members to visit the facility and that could be organised in due course. It was noted that Mr Scott Forbes had recently retired from the SFRS and the Board expressed their thanks for his contribution to the SFRS and the work of the Board. In response to questions, LSO Gourlay advised that SFRS were constantly reviewing and investing in its transport fleet. In terms of shift management, it was the intention to build a whole-time shift pattern of four days on and four day off as its core.
- 7.2 LSO Gourlay then presented the SFRS Local Plan Performance Report for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, copies of which had been circulated with the Agenda. In summary:
- 7.3 Reduction of 'Dwelling Fires' – There had been 100 dwelling fires recorded, an increase from nine the previous year. A number of the incidents had been extinguished prior to SFRS attendance, highlighting the importance of early warning devices in reducing casualties.
- 7.4 Reduction of 'All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal)'. There had been 17 casualties over the period including one fatality. In response to a question, LSO Gourlay explained the risk assessment process and the categorisation of properties into low, medium and high risk. He advised that partnership working was important to identify those at greatest risk from fire, which often resulted in cross agency referrals of joint home safety visits. There were also additional audits carried out when national incidents occur. For example, the Cameron House Hotel fire at Loch Lomond had resulted in risk assessments being refreshed for all similar types of premises. With regard to compliance with fire safety

regulations, LSO Gourlay advised that if a property did not comply with the required legislation, the SFRS would enforce compliance and ultimately could prohibit use of the premises.

- 7.5 Reduction of 'All deliberate fires excluding dwellings' - There had been 150 incidents during 2017/18, 40% of which occurred in the Galashiels and District Ward.
- 7.6 Reduction of 'Special Service - RTCs' – There had been a 10% decrease from the previous year. However, road traffic collisions within the Scottish Borders were still above the national average.
- 7.7 Reduction of 'Special Service Casualties – All' – There had been 95 Special Service casualties during the period; an analysis of incidents was detailed in the report.
- 7.8 Reduction of 'False Alarm – Equipment Failure' – There were 885 unwanted firm alarm signals (UFAS) during the year, equipment failure accounted for 602 of these. LSO Gourlay explained that there was a significant cost (approx £1,900.) associated with attendance at an UFAS. Last year 56% of SFRS activity had been responding to UFASs of which 12% were from primary and secondary schools. Although the SFRS had engaged with schools to attempt to resolve the issue, UFASs continued. The SFRS were now considering an initiative that would reduce SFRS's attendance at schools. Schools would still be required to carry out a full evacuation, however educational disruption and road risk would be minimised. The SFRS would be discussing their proposals with the Chief Executive and would update the Board at the next meeting. In response to a question, Mr Girrity advised that responsibility for UFASs lay with the property owner.
- 7.9 LSO Gourlay concluded by referring to SFRS partnership working, highlighting the success of the Drivewise initiative. He also referred to a Staying Safe event which had been held at Hawick Fire Station. The event had been successful, delivering medical advice, safety and CPR training, it was anticipated that this event would now be extended across the Scottish Borders.
- 7.10 The Chairman thanked LSO Gourlay and Group Manager Girrity for their attendance and report and noted their concerns around UFASs, particularly in relation to schools.

DECISION

NOTED:

- (a) **The report;**
- (b) **The concern at the number of UFASs;**
- (c) **That an update on discussions on the proposals to minimise attendance at UFASs at schools be presented to the next meeting; and**
- (d) **An update on the new training facility would be provided at the next meeting.**

8. SCOTTISH AMBULANCE SERVICE

Mr John Alexander, Head of Ambulance Service East Region, gave a brief overview of the operation of the ambulance service in the Scottish Borders. He explained that there were five ambulance stations, covering emergency and patient transport. With regard to initiatives, they were working with the NHS on a Falls Strategic Group and a CPD pathway. They had also established specialist paramedics who were integrated with local health centres and highly trained in assessment. The Scottish Ambulance Service was currently being reviewed by an external agency to ensure it could meet future demand. The Chairman thanked Mr Alexander for his attendance and overview of the Service.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11.20 am and reconvened at 11.30 am.

9. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- 9.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Ms Andrea Beavon, Violence Against Women Coordinator, presented the report and highlighted key points:-
- 9.2 Priority 1 – Reduce the level and Impact of Gender Based Violence through effective partnership working. During the period there had been a 70% increase in referrals to the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (DAAS). This was attributable to the new referral mechanism from Police Scotland and an increased awareness of the Service among client groups. Key areas of pressure included the introduction of new domestic abuse legislation and an increase in self-referrals locally
- 9.3 Priority 2 – Reduce the level and impact of Substance Misuse through effective partnership working. Ms Beavon highlighted the success of Best Bar None, the underage drinking initiative, the 'Don't Buy It, Don't Supply It' campaign and advised that work was underway to refresh the Arrest Referral Scheme.
- 9.4 Priority 3 – Reduce the level and impact of crime and antisocial behaviour through effective partnership working - There had been a slight increase in referrals to the mediation service but a decline in the outcome of results. This was linked to a change in working practice around identification of suitable disputes for mediation. Key activities were the Safer Internet Day, aimed at keeping school children safe online, and the Young Farmers led crime and fire safety event. In response to a question regarding mediation in respect of neighbouring disputes, Ms Mulloy advised that ultimately the focus of solutions was on residents remaining in their own homes.
- 9.5 Priority 4 – Reduce the level and impact of poor driving behaviour through effective partnership working – Motorcycle accidents continued to increase, the circumstances of each accident was considered with a view to making the road networks safer. Key activities during the period included an advanced motorists' event held in conjunction the SFRS.
- 9.6 Priority 5 – Reduce the level and impact of accidents in the home through effective partnership working – The Living Safely in The Home project in the Cheviot locality had been a success and would be rolled out to the Teviot and Liddesdale area. A single point of contact had been agreed with the NHS which would sustain the resilience of referrals.
- 9.7 In response to questions, Ms Beavon explained that tackling domestic abuse included focused prevention work with children and young people in schools to ensure that they are able to identify healthy and unhealthy behaviours in relationships. Ms Beavon also referred to the Caledonian System, which had been running for a number of years in the Borders and delivered by Criminal Justice. This was a Court ordered programme for men, aimed at changing their behaviour and reducing the risk of harm to women and children. With regard to funding, Ms Beavon advised that currently the Safer Communities Team had 12 members of staff delivering specialist domestic abuse support services, all of which had significant investment from external funders (Big Lottery and Scottish Government). Funding for these services would end in 2020. With regard to the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme, the DASS encouraged use of the Scheme and there had been 10 applications processed by Police Scotland in the last 12 months. Ms Beavon further advised that there was no evidence that alcohol caused violent or abusive behaviour to partners. The Chairman thanked Ms Beavon for the informative report.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

10. **EQUALLY SAFE - PRESENTATION**

- 10.1 Ms Beavon followed her report by giving a presentation on Equally Safe. Ms Beavon explained that Equally Safe had been launched in 2016, the vision of which was to ensure women and children were free from all forms of violence and abuse and the attitudes that helped to perpetuate it. Ms Beavon said the reporting structure and that delivery of the Strategy was through partnership working with key partners in the public, private and third sectors including NHS Borders, Police Scotland, Border Women's Aid and Children 1st.
- 10.2 Ms Beavon then detailed the four equally safe priorities: Priority 1 was embracing equality and mutual respect and rejecting all forms of violence. Delivery of this priority included supporting positive media reporting and guidance for journalists. There was also the opportunity for children/young people to shape the services they had access to e.g. Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery (CEDAR) participation worker. Priority 2 concerned social cultural, economic and political equality. This priority would work to ensure women's needs in relation to transport and communications were considered. Assistance was also given to employers to develop workplace policies to support staff. Priority 3 related to early and effective interventions to prevent violence and maximise safety and wellbeing, this involved collaborative working towards a sustainable funding model and supporting the workforce to be more confident in responding to gender based violence. Priority 4 was focused on men desisting from all forms of violence and perpetrators of such violence receiving a robust and effective response, delivery of which involved engagement with partners and stakeholders to improve court outcomes for victims.
- 10.3 Ms Beavon went on to advise that the Equally Safe priorities for 2018/19 included increasing referrals from a wider range of partner agencies e.g. midwifery; developing policies and practice frameworks e.g. Forced Marriage and Trafficking (FMT) and supporting service user involvement. Incidents of domestic abuse reported to Police Scotland for 2017/18 numbered 1,080, and this was expected to continue to increase over the next three years. Going forward strategic considerations included reviewing how public protection would continue to be delivered in the Scottish Borders and securing funding to maintain existing domestic abuse services.
- 10.4 In response to questions, Ms Beavon advised that with regard to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), no charges had been brought against anyone in Scotland. With regard to information sharing, Ms Beavon advised that high risk cases were flagged to all partner agencies through the MARAC process. In respect of changes in attitude towards domestic violence, Ms Beavon explained that historically women did not report incidents but now they had the confidence to access services they could trust. The Chairman thanked Ms Beavon for the interesting presentation and congratulated the Safer Communities Team on the Equally Safe project.

DECISION

NOTED the presentation.

11. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and advised that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday 31 August 2018 at 9.30 am.

DECISION

NOTED.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 pm