

**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, 8th February, 2019 at 9.30 am

Present:- Councillors G. Turnbull (Chairman), D. Moffat, N. Richards, E. Robson,
H. Scott, E. Small.
Mr M Dickson - NHS Borders, Mrs J Mulloy - Scottish Borders Housing
Network and Ms M Simpson - Voluntary Sector

In Attendance:- DC Chief Superintendent L Clark, Chief Inspector S Reid, Police
Scotland; Group Manager - M Jaffray, LSO S Gourlay, Scottish Fire &
Rescue Service; Mr G Jones, Safer Communities & Community Justice
Manager SBC, Ms W Marsden, Partnership Intelligence Analyst, SBC,
Mr D Scott, Senior Policy Advisor SBC and J Turnbull, Democratic
Services Officer SBC.

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and there was a round of introductions.

2. **MINUTES**

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

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE**

3.1 With reference to paragraph 3.11(b) of the Minute, the Senior Policy Advisor, Mr Scott, advised that the statistics would be referred to in the Police update.

3.2 With reference to paragraph 5.7(b) of the Minute (Crucial Crew), the Safer Communities Manager, Mr Jones, advised that Eildon Mill had been demolished and various options had been considered. Costs for a similar venue to host a similar event were likely to be prohibitive as there was no reoccurring budget for the event, transport and other associated costs were already several thousand pounds. There was also a significant resource requirement from the Police and Fire Service to facilitate the event. Mr Jones explained that he had secured a digital resource from Glasgow City Council (Go Safe Scotland) at no cost. The material had lesson plans and other resources written by education staff on a variety of topics with input from practitioners. This resource linked to the Curriculum for Excellence. Work was underway, with Education, regarding building this into the school syllabus so that all topics were covered; this was not the case under the previous arrangement. A report has been prepared for the Corporate Management Team.

3.3 With reference to paragraph 6.3 of the Minute, a report on the review of priorities and reporting arrangements had been circulated and would be discussed during the Safer Communities update.

DECISION

AGREED that a report be presented at the next meeting on the cost of the Crucial Crew event and options for a revised format of delivery.

MEMBER

Councillor Robson joined the meeting during consideration of the above item.

4. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATE ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE

- 4.1 Chief Superintendent Clark gave an overview of service matters and an update on recent appointments. She advised that Chief Inspector Andy Mclean had retired and introduced Chief Inspector Stuart Reid who had been appointed from within the Division. The Division was now fully staffed with the appointment of Greg Banks as Superintendent for Service Delivery. The Chief Superintendent also advised that the Division was planning for Brexit and was hoping to brief the four local authorities on progress in March.
- 4.2 Chief Inspector Reid then presented Police Scotland's Scrutiny Report for the period 1 October 2018 to 31 December 2018, copies of which had been circulated with the Agenda.
- 4.3 Domestic Abuse – During the period there had been an 8.7% reduction from last year in domestic abuse incidents which positively reflected the work being carried out by Police and partner agencies in the Scottish Borders. Chief Inspector Reid advised that every domestic abuse incident was thoroughly scrutinised and reviewed. Significant change to legislation was expected to increase recorded incidents. In response to a question, Superintendent Reid advised that officers would receive training to ensure they understood the new legislation relating to psychological offences. Mr Jones added that the Safer Communities Team would support this training.
- 4.4 Road Safety - There had been an increase in the number of people killed and seriously injured, 40% of which involved motorcyclists visiting the Scottish Borders. During the Festive period, over 40 road checks had been carried out with 22 road traffic offences detected. The addition of two mobile camera units and a further two 'Pop-up Bobs' were effective tools against speeding. Drivewise would continue and now included a motorcycle programme which was hoped would positively impact figures going forward
- 4.5 Violent Crime – There had been a 25% reduction in Serious Assault over the period. The 86.7% robbery detection rate was in line with the national detection rate.
- 4.6 Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) – There had been a slight fall in all antisocial behaviour incidents with 385 incidents compared to 394 the previous year. Decreasing incidents remained a priority and the Community Action Team (CAT) continued to tackle incidents through engagement, patrolling and enforcement.
- 4.7 Drugs and Alcohol Misuse – There had been a 30.2% increase in the detections for drug related offences and enforcement with the CAT taking a leading role. Residents were encouraged to engage with Crimestoppers to report any activity.
- 4.8 Protecting People (Missing Persons) – There had been a 21.4% increase in missing person incidents. The majority of those reported had a vulnerability, with mental health related issues being most prevalent. Chief Inspector Reid advised that during the seven month period they had received 135 reports of missing persons from the Borders General Hospital (BGH). In response to a question, Mr Reid advised that Superintendent Dalglish was liaising with NHS colleagues to address the issue. Mr Dickson advised that he would consider the Border General Hospital's search protocol and discuss with Chief Inspector Reid. In response to a question regarding the use of social media to assist with missing persons, Chief Superintendent Clark advised that social media was used when appropriate but privacy issues had to be managed.
- 4.9 Acquisitive crime – Housebreaking - There was a 10.6% decrease over the period in housebreaking and theft compared with the same period last year. The detection rate for Acquisitive Crime was 35% and for housebreaking was 20.6%, which positively reflected work around increased security to deter criminals including a structured patrol matrix

during the hours of darkness and increased foot patrols during the festive period. In response to a question, Chief Inspector Reid advised that house breaking was defined as dwelling or non-dwelling (business premises), others were sheds, lock ups etc.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

5. ARMED RESPONSE VEHICLE OFFICER

The Chairman welcomed Inspector Andy Hall, who was present to give a briefing on Police Scotland's Armed Response Vehicle (ARV) Officers. Inspector Hall began by advising that ARV officers were specialist fire arm officers who attended priority incidents where a situation could worsen if they did not intervene. Their priority was to deescalate incidents and stop any threat to life. Inspector Hall detailed the appointment process for ARV Officers, which included: an 11 week training course every four years, refresher training every six weeks, a stringent paper process to assess abilities and annual authorisation by the Commanding Officer. Inspector Hall explained that incidents were assessed by the ARV Commanding Officer, before authorising deployment of ARVs. ARV officers also supported colleagues by responding to a wide range of incidents with an emphasis on public protection. ARVs contained night vision equipment to assist with missing person searches, specialist equipment for forcing entry into buildings, and first aid equipment including defibrillators to enable the provision of emergency medical assistance. Inspector Hall responded to questions explaining that the single police authority had increased fire armed availability and improved capability. He also advised that over the five year period, ARV officers had only deployed arms twice, neither of which had been fatal. The Chairman thanked Inspector Hall for his attendance and informative briefing.

DECISION

NOTED the briefing on the role of Armed Response Vehicle Officers.

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

- 6.1 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS) Local Plan Performance Report. Local Senior Officer (LSO) Gourlay began by explaining that Martin Blunden had been appointed as new Chief Officer, commencing his appointment on 16 February. A Watch Manager had also been appointed to support five stations in the Berwickshire cluster. Referring to the Newbridge training project, he advised that the facility would be completed on 18 March, with training commencing in May. Regarding the SFRS transformation project, negotiations were still ongoing on the reinstatement of the Out of Hour's Cardiac Arrest scheme.
- 6.2 Group Manager (GM) Jaffray then presented the SFRS Local Plan Performance Report for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda. He firstly referred to the tragic minibus accident on 29 December, advising that the SFRS had attended and provided assistance. The Board commended the work of the emergency services in response to this incident.
- 6.3 Reduction of 'Dwelling Fires' – There had been 76 incidents, an increase of five compared to the same period last year, 11 of these were started deliberately. Cooking still remained the main cause of incidents. GM Jaffray highlighted the importance of smoke detectors, and that SFRS continued to target high risk groups in order to drive down fire risk within local communities.
- 6.4 Reduction of 'All Fire Casualties' – There had been 12 casualties, two less than last year. Seven casualties required hospital treatment for what was thought to be minor injuries, with first aid being given on all occasions by SFRS.

- 6.5 Reduction of 'All Deliberate Fires Excluding Dwellings' – There had been a welcome 25% decrease with 104 incidents recorded. It was noted that this trend was below the rest of Scotland.
- 6.6 Reduction of 'Special Service Road Traffic Collisions' (RTC) - The SFRS had attended 67 RTCs, a 3% increase compared to the same period last year. GM Jaffray advised that they were receiving increased number of calls from the police and ambulance service which was positive, as the SFRS could assist with removing casualties from vehicles and making accident scenes safe.
- 6.7 Reduction of 'Special Service Casualties – All' - There was 67 Special Service casualties during the reporting period, a 4% decrease in comparison to the same period last year.
- 6.8 Responding to questions, GM Jaffray advised that Police Scotland considered road accident statistics when determining road accident prevention initiatives. The Board suggested that SFRS statistics should also be considered to promote necessary improvements to roads. With regard to 'Special Service Casualties' GM Jaffray explained that 'Hazmat' referred to Incidents involving hazardous materials. With regard to the high volume pump he advised that this had been deployed from Hawick to Dundee. However, the SFRS still had access if required in the Scottish Borders and it had recently been on standby in Galashiels. Hawick now had a dedicated Swift Water Rescue Team. The Chairman referred to the Scottish Government consultation on fireworks. LSO Gourlay advised that legislation sat with Westminster. The SFRS's view was for stricter legislation and a ban from public use unless appropriately risk assessed and licensed, an update would be provided to the Board following the consultation period.
- 6.9 GM Jaffray then went on to advise on Prevention and Protection Activities. Copies of a report detailing figures from Quarter 1, October 2018 to 31 December 2018 had been circulated with the agenda. GM Jaffray explained home fire safety visits had increased and highlighted the importance of partnership liaison to offer support to those most at risk of fire within their homes. During the reporting period referrals had been received from: MARAC, Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (DAAS), British Red Cross, Housing Associations, NHS and Social Services. GM Jaffray went on to advise of other work including the delivery of 55 Community Safety events, the continual success of Drivewise, and involvement in the Falls Strategy Review forum at Borders General Hospital. With regard to future works streams, the SFRS continued to engage with those who managed properties and schools to look at various options to reduce the number of UFAS calls. In response to a question regarding the relationship between the increase in fire safety visits and the reduction in fires. GM Jaffray advised that there might have been an impact, although analysis had not been carried out.

DECISION

NOTED the report

7. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance report covering the period from 1 April 2018 to 31 December 2018. Mr G Jones, Safer Communities & Community Justice Manager, highlighted the main points:-
- 7.2 Priority 1 – Reduce the level and Impact of Gender Based Violence through effective partnership working. The number of incidents reported to Police Scotland was down by 7.6%. However, the number of referrals to all domestic abuse services remained static.
- 7.3 Priority 2 – Reduce the level and impact of Substance Misuse through effective partnership working. There had been a 2.2% rise in the number of alcohol related incidents. There has been a lot of proactive work by the CAT aimed at addressing ASB concerns in the community.

- 7.4 Priority 3 – Reduce the level and impact of crime and antisocial behaviour through effective partnership working. There was a 5.6% reduction in people being monitored for antisocial behaviour which showed that early interventions were having a positive affect. Mr Jones added that they were presently trialling noise monitoring equipment which would avoid having to escalate monitoring to Environmental Health. There had been a decrease in referrals to mediation but this was not uncommon.
- 7.5 Priority 4 – Reduce the level and impact of poor driver behaviour through effective partnership working. Around 600 young people had participated in the pre-driving experience at Charterhall; with 223 older drivers attending the information sessions. Funding from Transport Scotland for Drivewise had concluded. However, alternative funding opportunities were being explored to enable the project to continue.
- 7.6 Priority 5 – Reduce the level and impact of incidents in the home through effective partnership work. Materials from the 'Keep you child safe' poisoning campaign had been distributed to childcare venues accompanied by digital medial activity.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

8. SAFER COMMUNITIES TEAM - PROPOSED SCRUTINY REPORT STRUCTURE FROM 1 APRIL 2019

- 8.1 There had been circulated a briefing note by the Safer Communities Team on proposed changes to the scrutiny report structure from 1 April 2019. The briefing note explained that following on from the Strategic Assessment work the Safer Communities Team had been reviewing the performance indicators currently presented to Scrutiny each quarter. Changes to the indicators were proposed which would more accurately reflect the work of the team and allow for better scrutiny of the service in delivering their priorities. A draft revised report had been circulated with the agenda to enable Scrutiny Board members to review the proposed changes prior to the meeting. Ms Marsden discussed the changes, explaining that the new format would allow for rationalisation of information and avoid duplication of reporting by Safer Communities, which had already been provided by the SFRS and Police. Ms Marsden then discussed the new priorities which would allow for analysis of targets, performance and work with partner agencies. This would also include looking at demand and responses and measuring the interventions which proved successful. Mr Jones added that the narrative of the reports would change slightly depending on seasonal intervention activity during the quarter.
- 8.2 With regard to information on hospital admissions being included in the new report, Ms Marsden advised that no information would be lost, but the frequency of reporting would change, for example, hospital admission statistics could be reported annually. However, if Board members required any specific performance indicators these could be supplied. The Board welcomed the new reporting formal and noted that the report could be adjusted going forward. It was also suggested that subjects could be scrutinised in more detail, for example road safety, with each of the three services inputting into the reporting process.

DECISION

NOTED the proposed changes to the Safer Communities Team scrutiny report.

MEMBER

Councillor Robson left the meeting during consideration of the above report

9. PRESENTATION - SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

- 9.1 The Chairman welcomed Police Constable (PC) Anne McNair, Divert/Deter Officer for Lothian and Scottish Borders who was in attendance to give a briefing on Serious Organised Crime (SOC). PC McNair began by explaining that Serious Organised Crime involved more than one person, in a coordinated and controlled plan, with the potential to cause serious harm, involving financial gain and victimised individuals, particularly

vulnerable and young people. Types of SOC included the supply of illegal drugs, counterfeiting, money laundering, fraud and 'cuckooing'. SBC and Police Scotland had a multi-agency robust action plan to tackle SOC including the Antisocial Behaviour Unit, Police CID, CAT and community police as well as initiatives such as the banking protocol – where banks identified and protected potential victims from suspicious cash transactions. To conclude, PC McNair highlighted the need to raise community awareness and encouraged reporting suspicious activity through Crimestoppers.

- 9.2 In response to questions, PC McNair advised that young people could report concerns anonymously to the Scottish Borders School Police Liaison Officers. With regard to 'cuckooing', PC McNair explained that this was when people took over another person's home or property to distribute drugs in the area, there had been no reported cases in the Scottish Borders of this. With regard to Cold Caller Zones, PC McNair explained that this could protect older members of the community; and the local community police team would be able to provide further information how these were operated. PC McNair explained that the Scottish Borders Alert System was effective and used where appropriate to share information with the community. The Chairman thanked PC McNair for her attendance and informative briefing on SOC.

DECISION

NOTED the briefing.

10. **DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and advised that the next meeting was scheduled to take place on Friday, 17 May 2019 at 9.30 am. The following dates had been confirmed by Council for 2019/20

Friday, 30 August 2019
Friday, 8 November 2019
Friday, 7 February 2020
Friday, 15 May 2020.

DECISION

NOTED the meeting dates for 2019/20

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm.