

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, 30th August, 2019 at 9.30 am

Present:- Councillors G Turnbull, (Chairman), N. Richards, E Robson, E Small, H Scott and G Turnbull.
Mr M Dickson - NHS Borders and Ms M Simpson - Voluntary Sector

Apologies:- Councillor D Moffat.

In Attendance:- DC Chief Superintendent J McKenzie, Chief Inspector S Reid, Local Senior Officer S Gourlay, Group Manager M Jaffray, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Ms A Beavon, Violence Against Women Coordinator, Ms W Marsden, Partnership Intelligence Analyst, Ms J Pringle, Project Manager, Mr D Scott, Senior Policy Advisor, Ms S Smith, Communities and Partnership Manager and J Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer SBC.

1. **WELCOME**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Clair Henderson, Head of Strategy and Collaboration from the Police Division of Scottish Government.

2. **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 14 June 2019.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

3. **STRATEGIC POLICE PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 Clair Henderson, Head of Strategy and Collaboration for the Police Division of Scottish Government was in attendance to facilitate a discussion on Strategic Police Priorities (SPPs). Copies of a discussion paper had been circulated with the agenda together with a link to the public consultation document. Ms Henderson began by advising that the priority, during the consultation period, was to ensure that local views were heard and that these be considered as part of the wider analysis of responses received. Ms Henderson explained the proposed six priorities were:- Crime and Security; Confidence; Partnerships; Sustainability; People; and, Evidence. The following points were raised by the Board in response to the Consultation:-
- 3.2 Crime and Security – clarity was sought on the meaning of ‘equality and human rights to support criminal justice outcomes’. Ms Henderson advised that this was about the wider justice system and the importance of equality and human rights through the process. However, she would request rewording for clarity. Ms Beavon added that in terms of gender there was a significant difference within the criminal justice system and the focus needed to be on gender and human rights.
- 3.3 People – The Board highlighted that many of the issues dealt with by police related to mental health. It would be appropriate for a strategic priority for development training in mental health. Chief Superintendent McKenzie advised that training on mental health issues was part of police officers’ annual training requirements. There was also proactive work with partner agencies to provide appropriate support.

- 3.4 The 10% rise in assaults on police officers was highlighted as a matter of concern. The Board asked that officers be equipped with personal protection equipment to be able to carry out their duties safely.
- 3.5 Confidence – The Board considered that evidence gathering should include all evidence, not just that which supported a prosecution. ‘Ethical’ also required clarification.
- 3.6 Sustainability – the Board intimated that Scottish Government should increase police funding. Reference was made to the Community Action Team, funded by the Council, which was addressing issues important to the public. Ms Henderson advised that she would feedback into the Spending Review.
- 3.7 Measurement of strategic priorities – the Board asked that Scottish Government review crime recording and that total crime figures should not include groups 5 and 7 (road traffic) and only include crimes reported to police. Independent measures, such as the Scottish Crime and Justice Survey, should also be used. This would ensure public confidence that figures were an accurate reflection of progress. Measurements of crime should also be rate per 10,000 population, especially when comparing areas. Information analysis on complaints about a particular service was also noted.
- 3.8 The Chairman thanked Ms Henderson for her attendance and for the opportunity extended to the Board to participate in the Strategic Police Priorities consultation.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

MEMBER

Councillor Small joined the meeting during discussion of the above consultation.

4. PROGRESS REPORT/UPDATE ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE SCOTLAND

- 4.1 Chief Superintendent McKenzie began his report by explaining the change to reporting format, which now detailed a breakdown of all crime types within each group. He advised that solvency rate for Group 1 crime was current at 75% - one of the highest solvency rates in Scotland, with common assault rates of 71% - which was above the average. He reiterated his commitment to focus on violent crime and antisocial behaviour as detailed in the Policing Priorities 2019/20. Chief Superintendent McKenzie then discussed mobile working, explaining that officers would have access to a hand held device which would enable them to undertake administration and input crime reports, whilst working in the community. There had been a successful pilot project in Dundee, which would be rolled out to the Scottish Borders. Officers’ training on devices would commence in October. Another new initiative was the Contact Assessment Model (CAM), which would be used by front line staff. He explained that when a call to the police service was received, an officer would make an assessment based on threat, risk and harm. Lanarkshire had piloted CAM and based on the resolution process adopted a reduction response officer attendance had been secured whilst maintaining a service to the public.
- 4.2 With regard to the community action team (CAT), Chief Superintendent McKenzie advised that six additional officers would be appointed by the end of 2019. He emphasised that that there would be no reduction in community police officers as a result of the CAT, however, he would be carrying out a review to ascertain areas of good practice in relation to Community Policing with the aim of enhancing service delivery. He then went on to advise of successful national multi-agency work in relation to missing person which would be implemented in the Scottish Borders. He also explained that when dealing with people in crisis, it was important to assess the correct service for their needs. He then referred to a proposed safe site pilot in West Lothian where individuals could be removed to a place of safety, explaining that there were logistical issues around a safe place in the Scottish Borders. However, the Chief Executive was supported of the principle and he would bring

back further details to a future meeting. In response to a question requesting police reports to community councils, he advised that it was not feasible to provide 69 individual reports, a review was ongoing and going forward reporting would be in terms of multi member ward data. The Community Council network was noted as a possible point of contact for distribution.

- 4.3 Chief Inspector Stuart Reid then presented Police Scotland's Scrutiny Report for the Q1-April 2019 to June 2019 compared against the same reporting period the previous year. Copies of the report had been circulated with the Agenda.
- 4.4 Protecting People (Q1 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
There had been a decrease in missing person incidents to 174 (172). The report highlighted that quarterly meetings with NHS Borders had resulted in a Missing Person Protocol, to enable allocation of policing resources to the most vulnerable in the community. There had been an increase of 83% in Racially Aggravated Conduct to 11 (6). The detection rate was 92.3%, a 7.7% reduction. There had been an increase in Sexual Crimes to 65 (51). The detection rate was 64.6% which was an improvement of 17.5%. Reports of lewd and libidinous practices had risen in recent weeks. Additional resources within the Public Protection business area had been allocated to this area. There were 263 (270) Domestic Abuse Incidents reported. The detection rate was 73.3%. Chief Inspector Reid referred to the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Scotland Act and the rise in reporting incidents, which had been anticipated.
- 4.5 Reducing Violence. There were 10 (8) incidents of serious assault, five of which had a domestic aggravator. There were 6 (1) robberies, due to this low number the increase showed as 500%. There were 233 (220) Common Assault incidents, 30% of which had alcohol aggravators.
- 4.6 Reducing Antisocial Behaviour. There were 1454 (1508) reported incidents, a reduction of 3.6%. Chief Inspector Reid advised that they continued to support the Best Bar None initiative, currently focused on Galashiels and Hawick's night-time economy.
- 4.7 Tackling Substance Misuse. Drug Supply, Production and Cultivation – There had been a reduction of 29.4% to 12 (17). Tackling substance misuse remained a priority and policing teams continued to respond to intelligence in relation to drug misuse.
- 4.8 Road Safety. There were 2 fatal (2), 21 serious (15), and 38 (37) slight road casualties. The report also detailed the number of offences related to motor vehicles. There had been a rise in the number of drink/drug driving detections. Concerned by this, a three week campaign based around detection and prevention had commenced, which highlighted the personal impact and possible consequences of drink/drug driving. Chief Superintendent Mackenzie added that it was imperative that landlords and the community reported any concerns to the police.
- 4.9 Acquisitive Crime. There were 443 (339) incidents of dishonesty. There were 62 (47) house-break-ins; 35 (18) in relation to dwellings, 14 (10) in respect of garages and 13 (19) other businesses.
- 4.10 Community Action Team (CAT). During the period the Community Action Team had carried out 118 hours of foot patrols, 133 mobile patrols, 27 static road check, issued 14 fixed penalty notice and 209 parking tickets.
- 4.11 Complaints. To conclude the report, Chief Inspector Reid advised that there had been 14 complaints received with two, relating to the quality of service provided.
- 4.12 In response to questions, it was advised that the statistics for drink/drug driving could be separated for future reporting. In terms of the CAT, practicalities around branding would be considered. The tasking for the CAT followed on from monthly meetings, once CAT 2

was operational, details on location of tasking could be included in the report. However, details of ongoing or proposed tasking would not be available as this was live, sensitive information. Regarding the theft of agricultural equipment this was cross border, organised crime. As there was a large rural road network to cover, the police asked that any reports of suspicious vehicles or individuals be reported to them. PC Walker added that he was involved in setting up a rural partnership to promote preventative measures in response to rural crime. There was approximately 30 Special Constables across J Division, with recruitment ongoing locally and nationally. Chief Inspector Reid highlighted the valuable support provided by Street Pastors.

DECISION NOTED

- (a) **The report; and**
- (b) **That an update on CAM be presented to the November meeting.**

5. PROGRESS REPORT/UPDATE ON SERVICE MATTERS - SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

- 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 thanking Board members for attending the SFRS engagement event the previous day. He referred to the national negotiations around pay and conditions, explaining that it was hoped that agreement might be reached the following week. LSO Gourlay then updated on recruitment advising that a full-time support officer for Peeblesshire area would commence shortly, with appointment to the post early 2020. He went on to explain that the Scottish Government annual performance review of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would be held on 25 September at Peebles Hydro, invitations to this event would be issued to Board members. Finally, the Newbridge Training Centre was scheduled to complete on 10 September and details of any opening event and/or visit opportunities would be brought forward when available.
- 5.2 Group Manager (GM) M Jaffray then presented the SFRS Local Plan Performance report for the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019.
- 5.3 Reduction of 'Dwelling Fire' – There had been 19 dwelling fires, a 27% decrease since the same period last year. Three had been started deliberately, with cooking the cause of seven of the fires and three attributable to careless disposal of smoking materials.
- 5.4 Reduction of 'All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal) - There were three casualties, three less than the same period last year. This was the lowest rate in five years.
- 5.5 Reduction of 'All Deliberate Fires Excluding Dwellings' – There had been 48 incidents, an increase of one since the same period last year. Scottish Borders was below average in this category and continued to undertake prevention work in this respect, with their community action team considering local solutions where appropriate.
- 5.6 Reduction of 'Special Service – RTCs' – The SFRS attended 18 RTCs, a slight increase of two compared to last year. The SFRS continued to attend cross border incidents when required.
- 5.7 Reduction of 'Special Service Casualties – All' – There were 25 Special Service casualties, an increase in five in comparison with the same period last year, two of which were unfortunately fatal.
- 5.8 Reduction of 'False Alarm – Equipment Failure' – There had been 189 false alarm incidents, with equipment failure accounting for 132. This was a welcome decrease and GM Jaffray acknowledged support from NHS Borders and introduction of the Take 5 initiative.

- 5.9 GM Jaffray then went on to discuss Prevention and Protection activities. Copies of a report detailing figures from Quarter 1 (1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019) had been circulated with the agenda. The report detailed that home fire safety visits were ahead of target, with referrals from partner agencies e.g. the Safer Communities Team and housing associations, important in identifying individuals at risk. SFRS youth engagement work with young offenders also continued to have a positive impact.
- 5.10 In response to a questions, LSO Gourlay advised that there were no concerns around recruitment but they could always do more. However, the SFRS were considering a range of options including flexible, contractual arrangements to attract recruitment of retained firefighters. Regarding development of a young workforce, the SFRS attended schools to attract young people to the service. With regard to equipment, the SFRS were considering smaller fire appliances, capable of carrying the same equipment. SFRS staffs' local views would be sought prior to any changes to appliances.

DECISION

NOTED the report.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman adjourned the meeting from 11.20 am to 11.30 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 2019 to 30 June 2019. The Violence Against Women Coordinator, Ms Beavon, highlighted the main points:-
- 6.2 Through effective partnership working fewer adults and children experience Gender Based Violence. There were 263 incidents in the period 1 April 2019 to 30 June 2019, seven less than the same reporting period last year. There were 13 referrals to domestic abuse services, an increased by 7.1% in the same period. Ms Beavon highlighted the importance of partnership working to ensure prompt referrals for adults and children experiencing gender based violence. Regarding information sharing and GDPR, COSLA were writing to the Chief Constable of Scotland and the Scottish Government to find a way forward with this issue. Regarding trafficking, The Violence Against Women Partnership would next focus on trafficking as there was a potential route through the Scottish Borders.
- 6.3 Through effective partnership working fewer people experience antisocial behaviour, with a reduction in antisocial behaviour incidents by 3.6% during the period. Ms Beavon advised that the noise monitoring equipment had been upgraded and work was ongoing in relation to a noise monitoring app.
- 6.4 Work in partnership to reduce injury and prevent accidents – road safety remained a key focus for the team. The number of casualties on roads was 13% higher than the same period in 2017, with two fatalities, 21 serious injuries and 38 slight injuries. With regard to underage drinking, Ms Beavon explained that the Don't Buy it, Don't Supply it campaign had continued this year. Regarding bogus caller, there had been 49 incidents reported in the period. The SB Alert newsletter had sent out advice on ways to avoid becoming a victim of such criminals. In response to a question regarding water safety and 'No Swimming' signs missing in Kelso, the Safer Communities Team would discuss with Neighbourhood Services.
- 6.5 Ms Beavon concluded her report by advising that the Safer Communities Team were relocating to Public Protection based at Langlee, Galashiels.

DECISION

NOTED

(a) **The report; and**

- (b) **To request that the Safer Communities Team advise Neighbourhood Services of missing 'No Swimming' signage.**

7. **NO COLD CALLING ZONE**

PC Nick Walker, Crime Prevention Officer, was in attendance to give a presentation on No Cold Calling Zones. PC Walker began by advising that the No Cold Calling Zone was a well-established process, with one of the first zones in the Scottish Borders introduced in Coldstream in 2012. Currently there were over 50 zones which covered 4,188 houses. Zones were usually targeted where there was a high number of vulnerable residents. The aims of the No Cold Calling Zone were: to reduce the instances of doorstep crime, bogus workmen, distraction burglaries and to deter cold callers from going into those areas. The Zones also empowered householders to say 'No' to cold callers. PC Walker went on to explain that the police would assist in setting up a No Cold Calling Zone, which was then owned and managed by the community. Each householder in the Zone received a welcome pack which included a window sticker, advice on dealing with cold callers, information on home security, call blocking technology and a safer communities booklet. Zones could be set up through community councils, neighbourhood watch groups and residents' associations; the only cost to the community was signage. PC Walker concluded his presentation by clarifying that No Cold Calling Zones acted as a deterrent and conveyed a clear message that cold callers were not welcome. They were not intended to prevent charities collecting, politicians canvassing or legitimate leafletting. The Chairman thanked PC Walker for the informative presentation, PC Walker advised that he would arrange for example information packs to be made available to community councils when requested.

DECISION

NOTED the No Cold Calling Zone presentation.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Friday, 8 November 2019 at 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 11.30 am.