

**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, 7th February, 2020 at 9.30 am

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

Apologies:- Mr H Coyle, SBHA, Chief Inspector S Reid.

In Attendance:- Chief Superintendent J McKenzie, Inspector J McGuigan, Superintendent A
MacInnes, Police Scotland; Local Senior Officer S Gourlay, Group
Commander M Jaffray, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service; Mr J Alexander,
Scottish Ambulance Service; Safer Communities and Community Justice
Manager, Senior Policy Advisor, Communities and Partnership Manager and
J Turnbull, Democratic Services Officer, SBC.

1. **WELCOME**

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

2. **MINUTE**

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 8 November 2020.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

3. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTE**

With reference to paragraph 5.10(b) of the minute of 8 November 2019, it was noted that the Safer Communities and Justice Manager had raised the issue of Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals with the Council's Education's service and a response was still awaited.

DECISION

NOTED.

4. **MOBILE WORKING DEVICE**

4.1 With reference to paragraph 4.13(b) of the minute of 8 November 2019, Chief Superintendent McKenzie introduced PC Paul Owenson, who was in attendance to demonstrate Police Scotland's new mobile working device. The new device would allow officers to complete administration tasks and activities without having to return to their base. The device would also allow officers to be more visible in communities and enhance local engagement. A project to work through the introduction of the device in the Scottish Borders was started in November 2019 and would be completed in the next few weeks, when the device would be rolled out as for operational use.

4.2 PC Owenson began by explaining that the mobile working device was a Samsung Galaxy Note 9 which had been adapted for police use. Mobile coverage was provided by EE, the network with the widest mobile coverage in the Scottish Borders. PC Owenson then demonstrated the device on the screen and highlighted the Apps available to officers

which included: person searches, vehicle searches, shift details and domestic abuse guidance. With regard to the person search, the device allowed for a search to be carried out which had previously required radio contact with an officer based at the station. The device also displayed any warnings relating to individuals, which was beneficial in terms of officer safety. The device could also log callers' details, phone number and addresses – with a map displaying their location which was useful in rural locations. Officers were also able to view and send texts and emails; log incidents; complete jobs; edit word documents; circulate photographs of missing persons and suspects, photograph evidence, CCTV stills or injuries; all without returning to their base station. Additional apps included: access to police intranet for briefings, St John's Ambulance First Aid training, and a translation app. Functions would be updated and reviewed regularly to improve service delivery.

- 4.3 In response to questions, PC Owenson advised that information relating to evidence required for Court would be transferred from their mobile device and stored on a base laptop and used when required. Regarding data protection, Chief Superintendent McKenzie explained that the device was compliant with data protection legislation. Regarding officer safety, there was an alarm button on the device and the base station could identify location; officers' existing radio systems had also been retained. Regarding the lack of mobile signal in Eyemouth, Inspector McGuigan advised that officers in the location had not reported any issue with mobile coverage. The Chairman thanked PC Owenson for his attendance and his demonstration of the new mobile working device.

DECISION NOTED.

5. **PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON SERVICE MATTERS - POLICE SCOTLAND**
Chief Superintendent McKenzie began by saying that the Police Contact Assessment model would 'go live' on 23 March 2020 in the Scottish Borders. He advised that a consultation on the closure of Coldstream Police Station had been circulated for the local community's views. It was noted that the station had not been operational since 2016. Chief Superintendent McKenzie further advised that the consultation on renewal of the Local Policing Plan had achieved 628 responses from the Scottish Borders. The Strategic Assessment was being prepared and the draft Plan would be circulated to Board members for their comments. In response to a question, Superintendent MacInnes advised that the consultation period could be extended to allow feedback from Coldstream Community Council, following their election. The final draft plan would be submitted to the Board before being submitted to the Scottish Borders Council for its approval.
- 5.2 Inspector McGuigan then presented Police Scotland's Scrutiny Report for Q3 - April 2019 to December 2019 compared to the same reporting period the previous year. Copies of the report had been circulated with the Agenda. Inspector McGuigan began by advising that Quarter 3 had seen the total number of crimes recorded increasing by 10%. However, this was an improving position when compared with Quarter 2 (15%). During the quarter there had been a decrease in serious assaults, road casualties, antisocial behaviour, all housebreaking and missing persons.
- 5.3 Protecting People (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
Although there had been decrease in missing person incidents to 500 (552), there remained a need to commit a significant number of resources to incidents in order to protect the most vulnerable members of the community. In response to a question regarding the support received from NHS Borders, Inspector McGuigan advised that good assistance was received with representatives from NHS Borders attended Police Liaison meetings where each incident was discussed and learning points were disseminated to those concerned.
- 5.4 Domestic Abuse incidents had increased to 863 (746), 457 of these incidents resulted in a crime being recorded giving a conversion rate of 40.9%. Proactive bail checks continued

to be robustly enforced, with 29 detections for bail offences this year to date, a rise of 81.3% when compared to the same period in 2018/19.

- 5.5 Racially Aggravated Conduct had risen with 14 (11) crimes reported. 22% of which were against police officers. It was indicated a number of hate incidents had been committed by children (aged 16 and under) and Youth Community Officers continued to work in partnership with education to address this.
- 5.6 Sexual Crimes had also risen in the period with 174 (120) crimes reported. Reports of rape were up by 16 and reports of Indecent/Sexual Assault had increased by 70% - an increase of 29 crimes. The detection rate for Group 2 crimes was high and had also increased by 18.9% since the same reporting period last year and was at 74.7% and the rape detection was higher at 77.1%
- 5.7 Reducing Violence (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
There had been a small increase in Crimes of Violence to 71 (69). Within this group, serious assault had reduced to 30 (34); robberies and common assaults had increased from 15 (7) and 745 (647) respectively. Weekend patrols continued to target violence and disorder.
- 5.8 Reducing Antisocial Behaviour (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
Incidents continued to reduce 4,142 (4,429). Inspector McGuigan highlighted the Borders Blue Zone, an initiative in conjunction with Live Borders, providing young people with the opportunity to interact in a positive environment whilst gaining health benefits through exercise. Two events in Hawick had already taken place with the third scheduled for this evening. Inspector McGuigan went on to advise of a 'Snapchat' gathering of youths in Melrose on Hogmany, resulting in additional officers being deployed to deal with the resulting disorder. The Events Plan team were mindful of the possibility of a similar event occurring in the Borders on Hogmany 2020 and would plan for this eventuality.
- 5.9 Tackling Substance Abuse Tackling Substance Misuse (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
Drug Supply, Production and Cultivation – There had been a reduction in detections of 42.1% to 44 (76). Whilst this was significantly lower than last year, an intelligence led approach resulted in the recovery of £80k of heroin and a male had been charged with being concerned in the supply of Class A drugs.
- 5.10 Road Safety (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
There were 4 fatal (10), 53 serious (58), and 85 (125) slight road casualties during the period, a reduction across the board. Work continued to prevent and detect antisocial driving and dangerous driving. There had been a 100% increase 38 (19) in the number of people detected for mobile phone offences reflecting police commitment to this offence. Targeting those who continued to drink and drive remained a focus and members of the community were encouraged to contact police should they suspect anyone of committing this offence.
- 5.11 Reducing Housebreaking (Q3 2018/19 figures shown in brackets)
There were 87 (59) house breakings; 37 (35) in relation to sheds and garages and 35 (80) other businesses. The overall detection rate was 35%, an increase compared to Quarter 2. Operation Talonstrike had been implemented as a result of the rise in acquisitive crime, with a resulting reduction in reported breakins to business premises.
- 5.12 Community Action Team (CAT)
During the period the CAT had carried out 166 hours of foot patrols, 33 static road checks, issued 212 parking tickets and undertaken 16 premise searches under a drugs warrant, with a 93.8% success rate for drug recoveries. In response to specific tasking, there had been a 67% reduction in relation to reported youth issues in Eyemouth in December compared to November. In Cheviot, static road checks carried out at Kelso Races had

resulted in 50 stops being carried out. Following a drugs warrant in Selkirk, £3,300 had been recovered in cash and drugs. In Teviot, the CAT had addressed youth issues in Mart Street, Hawick. Antisocial behaviour reports had also been addressed in Peebles town centre. In response to a question on whether the reports on CAT activity could be made available for the quarter under consideration by the Committee to align with the Police Performance report, Mr Jones said he would look into whether there was a solution to this matter.

- 5.13 Board members then raised a number of questions which were answered by officers. A specific question was raised with regards the police contribution to the paper submitted to Scottish Borders Council in relation to the provision of public space CCTV in the Scottish Borders. Chief Superintendent McKenzie commented on the provisions of the National CCTV Strategy and the position that the resource of CCTV was of benefit to partner agencies and communities beyond the limited scope of policing as suggested in recent media coverage. In addition the Chief Superintendent also commented on the role of CCTV to contribute to community safety and wellbeing in line with wider partnership objectives.
- 5.14 In terms of the specific point raised in relation to the mechanism adopted to engage with Police Scotland regarding sourcing comment, the Chief Superintendent confirmed that an email request for comment was sent by Scottish Borders Council to the Local Area Commander on 13 November 2019. A response indicating that the subject had been deferred to a national department was submitted on 14 November 2019. However, a response was not provided by the policing team in the Lothian and Scottish Borders prior to the deadline specified as 27 November 2019. The Chief Superintendent apologised that the opportunity to comment had been missed. The Chief Superintendent highlighted that paragraph 4.4 of the Scottish Borders Council report on the subject of CCTV, dated 30 January 2020, was entitled 'Police Position'. However, the comment attributed to the sourcing of data in the first sentence of the paragraph was actually 'council officers' and not 'police officers' a position that appeared to have caused some confusion. Chief Superintendent McKenzie's understanding was that the Council had agreed to continue to maintain a maintenance budget for the current asset. Going forward it was his intention to ask for further discussion with the Council to ascertain the CCTV footprint in its wider sense and determine the frequency and locations of usage.
- 5.15 Regarding custody cells, he explained that the facility in Hawick remained in use. The facility in Galashiels was being upgraded to allow additional accommodation and to minimise the travel time by avoiding transporting prisoners to Dalkeith and by extension maximising the time officers spent in the Scottish Borders. With regard to the new reporting format to Community Councils, feedback from some community councils had been positive. Individual reports to community councils was not possible, although they could consider including more localised information, police officers would also continue to attend meetings when appropriate. With regard to the provision of regular information on complaints against the service, he suggested that the numbers of complaints be reported to the Board twice yearly as this would be more meaningful. He would also bring back figures relating to 101 calls. Regarding child protection procedures, Chief Superintendent McKenzie confirmed that a multi-agency approach supported by multi-agency procedures, involving social work, police and health, were in place to protect children in the Scottish Borders. In respect of reports of wildlife crime and rural night thefts, Inspector McGuigan advised that they were aware of recent night activity and were working jointly to address this with Northumbria Police. There was also a dedicated Wildlife Liaison Officer in the Scottish Borders. In answer to a question regarding government funding, the Chair confirmed that COSLA had raised the matter of additional funding to be allocated for policing.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) **The report;**

- (b) That the numbers of complaints against the police service would be reported on a twice yearly basis; and
- (c) That 101 response call figures be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

6. **PROGRESS REPORTS UPDATE ON SERVICE MATTERS - SCOTTISH FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**

- 6.1 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 the national negotiations around pay and conditions advising the ballot process would conclude at the end of February, a further update would be provided at the next meeting. LSO Gourlay then advised that he would circulate a link to a short survey on local SFRS service provision with copies of the existing local plan, and requested support from the Board to complete the five minute questionnaire by 18 March 2020. LSO Gourlay then went on to refer to the Peebles High School fire on 28 November 2019. Approximately 63 different fire appliances had been on site during the incident, which had been one of the most challenging of his 27 years as a firefighter. Following the incident, home fire safety advice was provided to the surrounding community. The post fire audit was currently being progressed, the results of which would be reported to a future Board meeting. LSO Gourlay then went on to advise that a second Rural Watch Commander was now in post for the Peebles cluster. This meant that there was decent coverage in terms of retained station support. Finally, the Newbridge Training Centre was opened on 28th January 2020 by the Minister for Community Safety, Ash Denham and he suggested that Board members might be interested in a tour of the Centre, which he could facilitate.
- 6.2 Group Commander (GC) Jaffray then presented the SFRS Local Plan Performance report for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019, copies of which had been circulated with the agenda. He began by advising that during the period the SFRS had responded to 1231 incidents, a reduction of 30 incidents since the same period last year. False alarms accounted for 56% of emergency calls.
- 6.3 Reduction of 'Dwelling Fires' – There had been 65 (78) dwelling fires, a 17% decrease since the same period last year. Five of these fires had been started deliberately.
- 6.4 Reduction of 'All fire casualties (fatal & non-fatal) - There were 16 casualties, which was the same figure as last year. CG Gourlay advised that a Post Domestic Incident Response (PDIR) followed all domestic dwelling fires, offering reassurance and fire safety advice to households in the vicinity of the incident
- 6.5 Reduction of 'All Deliberate Fires Excluding Dwellings' – There had been 117 incidents, an increase of 13 since the same reporting period last year. Grass scrub, woodland and refuse fires accounted for 60% of all deliberate fires with many incidents attributable to antisocial behaviour. The SFRS's Community Action Team continued to work with partners to mitigate the risk of reoccurrence.
- 6.6 Reduction of 'Special Service – RTCs' – The SFRS attended 70 RTCs, a slight increase of one compared to last year. Hydraulic rescue equipment was required on 21 occasions to extricate persons trapped in vehicles.
- 6.7 Reduction of 'Special Service Casualties – All' – There were 61 Special Service casualties, a reduction in 10 from the same period last year. The SFRS continued to work with partners in order to reduce the amount of RTCs
- 6.8 Reduction of 'False Alarm – Equipment Failure' – There had been 687 false alarm incidents, equipment failure accounting for 502 of these incidents, with 156 for good intent and 29 of a malicious nature.
- 6.9 GC Jaffray then went on to discuss Prevention and Protection activities. Copies of a report detailing figures from Quarter 3 (30 September 2019 to 31 December 2019) had

been circulated with the agenda. GC Jaffray explained that fire safety audits had concentrated on high risk premises such as hospitals and care homes and the audits were on schedule to be completed by the end of quarter 4. GC Jaffray highlighted that 583 Home Fire Safety Visits had been delivered, the report detailed the breakdown of coverage across the Scottish Borders. Partnership working continued with support in delivery of Drivewise in Berwickshire. In February, SFRS would also participate in the 'Drive to Arrive' initiative aimed at individuals convicted of road related offences. GC Jaffray then went on to discuss the support and training through the referral process, with 105 referrals received from other agencies including: 20 from the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service (DAAS), 7 from the British Red Cross, 35 from Housing Associations, 11 from NHS and 8 from Social Services.

- 6.10 In response to a question regarding the rise from 5 to 14 of deliberate fires in mid-Berwickshire compared to last year, CG Jaffray advised that quarter 3 fire figures could be misleading as they incorporated Bonfire night and activity levels could be dependent on the weather. Regarding secondary fire classification, GC Jaffray clarified that this is where no property had been damaged, for example a single tree would be classed as a secondary fire.

DECISION

NOTED:-

- (a) The report;**
- (b) To request a short briefing on the outcome of Peebles High School post fire audit be presented to a future Board meeting; and**
- (c) To request a tour of the Newbridge Training Centre be facilitated.**

ADJOURNMENT

The Chairman adjourned the meeting from 11.05 am to 11.10 am.

7. SAFER COMMUNITIES UPDATE AND KEY ACTIVITIES

- 7.1 There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance reports covering the period from 1 April 2019 to 31 December 2019. The Safer Communities and Community Justice Manager, Mr Jones, explained that changes in the reporting format reflected their move into the public protection service and provided a single resource which would be suitable for both forums. The new report format also provided more information about the teams' activity. Mr Jones further advised that their move to Langlee had been delayed but would take place around Easter. Mr Jones then highlighted the main points:-
- 7.2 Through effective partnership working fewer adults and children experience Gender Based Violence. The number of domestic abuse incidents reported to Police Scotland had increased to 863. This was expected given the introduction of the new domestic abuse legislation. The number of referrals to all domestic abuse services was comparable to last year. Mr Jones advised that the change in the number of children accessing the CEDAR group programme would rise, once the postholder returned from leave.
- 7.3 Through effective partnership working fewer people experiences antisocial behaviour. The number of incidents had decreased by 6.5% due to a range of in activities such as mediation and work with partners such as the multi-agency antisocial behaviour review group. A presentation on the antisocial behaviour process followed this report.
- 7.4 Work in partnership to reduce injury and prevent accidents. The report explained that a National Hate Crime Awareness week had been held in October, supported by a range of organisations. A key focus of the event was identifying what constituted hate crime. As in previous years the Festive campaign focused on home safety, winter driving, causes of fire within the home, and personal safety. The team had

also undertaken an awareness raising exercise focused on the danger to children of blind cord strangulation, dangers posed by household cleaning products and burns.

DECISION

(a) **NOTED the report.**

(a) **AGREED the new reporting format.**

8. ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR UNIT

8.1 The Chairman then welcomed Mr Colin Bain, Antisocial Behaviour Officer, who was in attendance to give a presentation on the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Unit which focused on neighbour disputes. Mr Bain began by explaining that the antisocial behaviour service was front facing, supported by the police, NHS and RSLs. Antisocial Behaviour law was introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and allowed action, under civil legislation, where criminal law and balance of proof was not enough. Referrals to the Unit came from the ASBO Core Group which met every month. This Group was multi-agency based and included representatives from Police Scotland, Victim Support, NHS and RSLs. The Group considered every case and agreed the approach to be taken and how this was to be enacted. Mr Bain went on to discuss the demand for the antisocial behaviour service advising that currently there were 82 active complaints being investigated, of which 26 were linked to persons being monitored. Six of these complaints were for noise monitoring equipment, with the remaining 50 being followed up. Mr Bain went on to discuss some of the early interventions they offered, such as, telephone advice and, presentations to community groups. In response to questions, Mr Bain advised that when they received a call the first priority was to verify the information, which might mean installation of noise monitoring equipment. They would then look at ways of improving the situation, including offering mediation. The last resort was court action. The Chairman thanked Mr Bain for his attendance and presentation on the work of Antisocial Behaviour Unit.

DECISION

NOTED.

9. ALCOHOL & DRUGS PARTNERSHIP

9.1 The final presentation of the day was from Fiona Doig, Head of Health Improvement/Strategic Lead ADP and Susan Elliot, ADP Co-ordinator. Copies of a briefing paper had been circulated with the agenda giving an overview of ADP work Ms Doig began by advising that every local authority had an ADP, the role of which was to implement the national drug and alcohol strategies. Ms Doig explained that drug deaths had been increasing locally as well and nationally, with no apparent change in demographics. One of the actions in place to reduce drug deaths was the provision of naloxone which was administered if an overdose situation arose, 70% of known people at risk of overdose were now able to access naloxone, with 36% being used in emergency situations. Other actions to reduce drug deaths included a low threshold access to, and, provision of opioid substitute therapies (e.g. methadone) and follow up protocols for non-fatal overdoses. Actions were also planned to mitigate poverty and childhood adversity, and improve access for HIV/hepatitis prevention and treatment.

9.2 Ms Elliot then went on to advise of the work that the new Engagement Service Team were doing to actively work with people most at risk of drug related death. Ms Elliot referred to previous work with the Fire Service by delivering training on alcohol awareness and providing information about the support services available, reciprocally the drug and alcohol services were able to make direct referrals to the Fire Service for home safety visits. Ms Elliot then referred to a 'fake news' story which had stated that a syringe, with what appeared to be methadone, had been found in the street. The 'syringe' was found to be a Unison pen and this story demonstrated the challenges and stigma around people who were often the most vulnerable in the community. Ms Elliot concluded the presentation by advising that an ADP Strategy refresh would look at areas for improvement and involve people with lived experiences. They would also be considering

alcohol pathways, mental health and long term conditions. In response to a question around links with Child Protection and numbers of children impacted by drug or alcohol use, Ms Doig advised that approximately half of their service users had someone under 16 although rarely were these children within the home. Action for Children worked with children, family members or kinship carers to offer support. The Chairman thanked Ms Doig and Ms Elliot for their attendance and presentation on the work of the ADP

**DECISION
NOTED.**

10. **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next meeting was scheduled to be held on Friday, 15 May 2020 at 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 12.25 pm