

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, 12 February 2016 at 9.30am.

Present: Councillors D. Moffat (Chairman), S. Aitchison, A. Nicol, G. Turnbull.
Mr G. Higgs, Voluntary Sector, Mr. H. Waltl, BFSB.

Apologies: Councillors B. Herd, R. Stewart. Julia Mulloy, SBHA, Fiona Young,
CJA.

In Attendance: Chief Superintendent G. Imery, Police Scotland, Chief Inspector A.
McLean, Police Scotland, Inspector T. Hodges, Safer Communities
Team Manager, A. Perry, LSO, Scottish Fire & Rescue Service,
Group Manager A. Girrity, 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 those present. He advised that Mr Paul Rooney had stood down from the Scottish Police Association. Mr Rooney had attended this Board over a number of years and thanks were expressed for all his help.

2. MINUTE

There had been circulated copies of the Minute of the meeting held on 13 November 2015.

DECISION

APPROVED the Minute.

3. MATTERS ARISING

With reference to paragraph 5(b) of the Minute, Chief Inspector McLean advised that there had been two incidents involving wheelchair users, with one resulting in the report of a hate crime which had been detected. He further advised that there were no suitable facilities in the Tweeddale area for young driver courses, however if demand increased for these courses in this area this would be investigated again. The Chairman advised it would be well received if these courses could be held in the Berwickshire area rather than just the central Borders.

DECISION

NOTED.

4. PROGRESS REPORTS/UPDATES ON CONSOLIDATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

4.1 Police

Chief Superintendent Imery advised that the new Chief Constable had commenced work with Police Scotland in January and that he was already meeting teams across the country and he planned to visit local areas at an early stage and arrangements would be made for him to meet Councillor Moffat, Chairman of the Police, Fire and Rescue and Safer Communities Board. Police

Scotland would continue to evolve toward the ethos of prevention and partnership working to ensure positive outcomes. This was a move away from the transactional targets that Police Scotland had started with. The ethos of crime prevention and partnership working had been the approach taken within the Scottish Borders for many years. Chief Superintendent Imery advised that the budget would be challenging for all and Members would have noted reports in the press about the budget gap in Police Scotland for 2015/16. Significant efforts were being made to close the gap by the end of March 2016 and plans were underway for next year's budget in collaboration with the Scottish Police Authority. The public inquiry into historical child abuse was Government-led focussing on institutions. This abuse went back decades and the inquiry would have particular demands on those involved. For the first time violence was showing some increase in the Scottish Borders with more serious and common assaults compared with the same period last year. This increase was not as big as other parts of the Division. On a positive note the solvency rate for serious assaults was 89.7%. The Chairman referred to meetings of Duns Community Council when parking problems at the Market Square, Duns were often discussed, and it was agreed that Chief Inspector McLean liaise with Councillor Renton and the Duns Community Council about parking issues.

- 4.2 Chief Inspector A. McLean presented the Police Progress report covering the period April 2015 to December 2015 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. In relation to Priority 1 – Protecting People figures showed an increase in the number of Adult at Risk Referrals made to partner agencies of 11% on 2014/15 figures, 100 more referrals were made, which was positive. Priority 2 – showed a 5.1% increase in Common Assaults reported TYTD compared to the same period last year. This equated to 28 more victims compared to last year. In respect of reducing the number of anti-social behaviour incidents there had been a 7.7% reduction (311 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 03/01/2016, officers in the Scottish Borders conducted a total of 249 stop and searches, of which 57 proved positive (22.9%). Unfortunately, owing to current reporting methods, a further breakdown of stop and search activity into individual categories was impossible; therefore the number of searches conducted under the Misuse of Drugs Act could not be reported. An enhanced version of the National Stop & Search Database commenced on 1 June 2015. The enhanced data base brought significant changes to the process of data capture and methodology for recoding data. No previous year to date figures were provided because it had been previously acknowledged that this data was not 100% accurate, therefore comparisons would provide misleading results or invalid conclusions. There had been a 21.8% decrease in the number of visits to licensed premises, which equated to 342 fewer visits. Priority 4 – Making our roads safer – there had been a 1.6% reduction (1 fewer casualty) in the year to date. The number of people killed this year to date was 6, which was 1 fewer fatality than the same period last year. The number of serious injuries was unchanged 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. Priority 6 – Tackling Acquisitive Crime – there had been a decrease in the number of housebreaking to dwellings leading to 10 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 2.1%

reduction in theft of motor vehicles in the year to date which equated to 1 fewer victim of this type of crime.

- 4.3 In discussing detection rates the Chairman suggested that Police Scotland issue a press release because this was a good news story. In response the Chief Superintendent suggested that rather than the information coming from Police Scotland that the Board be encouraged to be advocates for Police Scotland and the Chairman agreed to issue an appropriate press release. A request was made by the Chairman for the Board to be provided with a private report on an overview of work going on behind the scenes on Serious Organised Crime and the Chief Superintendent advised she would ask Detective Superintendent Pat Campbell to action this.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the report.**
(b) **AGREED that**

- (i) **Chief Inspector McLean liaise with Councillor Renton and Duns Community Council in relation to parking issues at the Market Square, Duns.**
- (ii) **the Chairman issue an appropriate Press Release relating to detection rates.**
- (iii) **a private paper on work going on behind the scenes on Serious Organised Crime would be presented by Police Scotland at future meetings.**

4.4 Fire and Rescue Service

LSO A Perry presented information on the restructure and budget implications within the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service. He advised that he was being moved to a different post and arrangements for his replacement were ongoing. He referred to service improvements because of closer working with emergency services. The LSO Chief Officer's fund was being used to provide low level adaptations to prevent slips, trips and falls in the home and a programme of work was being supported with additional monies from SBC Cheviot Quality of Life funding. Although not directly benefiting the service itself it would improve community safety. In referring to the out of hospital cardiac arrest pilot he advised that fire officers in Hawick had successfully intervened and saved a person's life. ITV Borders were currently liaising with the Fire and Rescue Service in regard to a 23 minute slot which would encompass a standard day in a firefighter's life focussing on partnership working and contributions made relating to safety in the community. During the discussions which took place LSO Perry answered a number of questions relating to recruitment of fire officers who were now trained at a new centre at Cambuslang and of the progress in migrating the three control centres in Scotland to Tolcross, Edinburgh. Group Manager A. Girrity explained that the high volume pump would no longer be in the area and that Hawick staff were undergoing training regarding water rescue techniques. A request was made for information relating to 'falls week' and other initiatives in 2016 and a calendar of events would be issued to Members for their information.

- 4.5 There had been circulated copies of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) Performance Report covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2015. In summarising the report, Group Manager A. Girrity advised that with regard to Priority 1: Reduction of Dwelling Fires, the SFRS had attended 82 dwelling fires in comparison to 60 for the same Year to Date (YTD) reporting period last year, this

represented a 35% increase. Six of these fires had been started deliberately although none in the last quarter. Cooking and cooking appliances continued to be the most common cause of dwelling fires with the majority occurring in single occupancy dwellings, 25% of accidental dwelling fires involved persons over 65 years old. Priority 2: Reduction in Fire Fatalities and Casualties, the report noted that there had been 15 fire related casualties in this reporting period, this was an increase of six compared to the same period last year. The YTD period had seen one fire fatality, there had been six non-fatal fire casualties this quarter all suffering from slight smoke inhalation with one requiring hospitalisation. There had been no fire fatalities this quarter. Priority 3: Reduction of Deliberate Fire Setting indicated that there had been 89 deliberate fires in this YTD reporting period, an increase of 12 in comparison to the same reporting period last year. Conversely, comparison with the previous quarter had seen this type of activity reduce almost 60%. As noted in previous reports, the ward areas of Galashiels and District and Tweeddale showed significant increases in the first two quarters. 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 79 RTCs, this was an increase of one compared to the same period last year. Over a third of these RTCs occurred in the last quarter. There had been 43 RTC related casualties in this YTD period with five of these being fatalities. The most recent fatality involved an adult male on the A7 south of Hawick in December. The Service used Hydraulic Rescue Equipment on 31 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 617 Unwanted Fire Alarm Signals during this quarter, representing a decrease of 73 incidents compared to the same period last year.

- 4.6 Group Manager A. Girrity referred to other notable prevention activities. The Living Safely in the Home Working Group covered holistic home safety, slips trips and falls, with a focus on people aged 65+ and had the aim of reducing Accident and Emergency admissions. A pilot in respect of this was being held in the Cheviot Area. He gave background information about the Polmont Young Offenders Reintegration initiative led by the SFRS which was aimed at preparing individuals for reintegration into the community; and the completion of this course would result in an accredited award. S. Smith referred to work taking place with homework clubs and of the setting up of a buddy system for school children. In regard to the CPR/Defibrillator training in partnership with British Heart Foundation, he explained that all fire stations in the Borders had been supplied with a set of manikins and self-teaching DVDs. Training on CPR was open to communities and would be facilitated by SFRS staff within local fire stations. Information in respect of the training programme would be advertised locally. Group Manager Girrity concluded his presentation by giving information on the involvement of SFRS activities in relation to flooding during Storms Desmond and Frank.

DECISION

- (a) **NOTED the report.**
- (b) **AGREED that Group Manager Girrity circulate the seasonal Community Safety Calendar 2016 to Members for their information.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11.15 a.m. and reconvened at 11.25 a.m.

4.7 Safer Communities

There had been circulated copies of the Safer Communities Performance Report covering the period 1 April 2015 to 31 December 2015. Inspector T. Hodges advised that since his last report the Safer Communities Team had been very busy with the increased demands of the festive period and the recent unprecedented flooding throughout the Scottish Borders. He advised that performance in relation to the indicators remained overall very positive. He then went on to highlight the following: in relation to gender based violence the figures were very positive which reinforced the current robust police processes and value of the Domestic Abuse Pathway project. Every incident was of course one too many but Safer Communities were continuing to prioritise high-risk cases through well-established multi agency MARAC and MATAC processes. Training continued to be delivered to local police officers in respect of the Domestic Abuse Advocacy Service and processes in respect of referrals were currently being looked at with a view to reducing the time officers spend on related paperwork. A concerning figure relating to the delivery of training to professionals was highlighted on page 3 of the report and this training was now being carried out via an online training module. Inspector Hodges had requested that it be confirmed whether or not this could provide suitable statistics to inform future meetings of the Board. Safer Communities supported Scottish Borders Rape Crisis in its successful 'Reclaim the Night' March in December. This took place in Galashiels and highlighted the violence against women agenda. It was supported by the local MP and MSP resulting in excellent media coverage.

- 4.8 The report on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) indicated a small rise in the reported incidents and Inspector Hodges clarified that whilst the incidents reported to the police had indeed fallen – Safer Communities figures were based upon the reports made to all agencies including Registered Social Landlords. Figures had now been received from Scottish Borders Housing Association (SBHA) which meant a recalculation of the YTD figure which should now read 89.9 which equated to a very small rise of just over 2 incidents per 1,000 population which remained well below the baseline figure. In referring to the figure in red on page 5 of the report, figures were now available from SBHA which amended the YTD figure to 697 and the variance to –14% which was an amber indicator as opposed to red. This was explained by the festive period, with the number of interventions reducing owing to the festive holiday. The 2015 Scottish Borders Household Survey had echoed the reasons why many people seemed reluctant to report ASB and the ASB Partnership intended to look at a suitable media campaign to address this in the next financial year. With the exception of reports of vandalism all of the indicators in relation to Alcohol and Drugs were fairly positive despite the festive season. The vandalism figure was still considerably lower than the baseline figure and was a smaller percentage rise than reported at the last Board meeting. Breaking these figures down further it would appear that the increase was in the autumn months with the figures for December and January decreasing considerably in line with previous years. Whilst still concerning, the renewed focus of local police officers in respect of high volume low level crime and the work of the Local Integration Officers in schools and youth groups could only have a positive influence on this issue. He explained it was difficult to correlate the percentage of these crimes where substance misuse had been a contributing factor. However, the other indicators in this area would suggest a more positive picture in respect of alcohol related incidents in our towns and villages. In respect of page 7 of the report, Local Integration Officers continued to work closely with partners in education, the third sector and local Community Police Officers to influence the attitudes and behaviour of young people in respect of alcohol and drug misuse. The data provided by health colleagues was by its very

nature unable to truly quantify the impact of the current work undertaken in this area. In respect of injury prevention in the home, the Safer Communities Team continued to buck the trend in respect of seasonal rises in this area with very positive figures in respect of emergency hospital admissions for both the elderly and children. Phase 2 of the national Building Safer Communities Programme had now completed its Strategic Assessment in respect of Unintentional Harm. It was anticipated that this would result in a very positive national drive to the prevention of injuries in the home which Safer Communities would fully engage with. With reference to injury prevention on our roads, Inspector Hodges advised that Safer Communities would continue to target their activity towards the most vulnerable road users in an effort to address poor driver behaviour. An event targeted at elderly drivers was planned for the Spring. For younger drivers, the Institute of Advanced Motorists was staging a Borders Under 17's Driving Day on 21 May 2016 at Charterhall in Berwickshire – this was aimed at those approaching the legal age to drive with a view to influencing attitudes and behaviours and was being supported by John Cleland, Scottish Borders Council (and officers from Police Scotland's Road Policing service). Details of both events would be circulated to Members to enable them to attend the events if they so wished.

**DECISION
NOTED.**

5. PRESENTATION ON RURAL CRIME PREVENTION

PC Nick Walker, Crime Prevention Officer, Safer Communities Team, gave a presentation on Preventing Rural Acquisitive Crime in the Scottish Borders. He explained that rural crime incorporating wildlife crime, vandalism/fire raising and theft occurred outwith cities and towns with populations of less than 2,000. Owing to farmers not implementing crime prevention techniques, theft had a significant impact on the business of the farmer; therefore it was important to do something about this. Common examples of theft from farms and rural businesses were machinery/tools, quad bikes, ATV's, tractors, livestock, fuel and oil. PC Walker explained how rural acquisitive crime was being tackled by means of six specific areas of work incorporating (a) direct crime prevention advice; (b) media engagement; (c) partnership "walk and talk" events; (d) forensic security marking; (e) rural "no cold caller zones"; and (f) SB Alert Messaging system. Crime prevention booklets had been produced and sent to 1,100 farms; crime prevention presentations were given at local NFU meetings and crime prevention surveys were carried out at victim farms. Demonstrations of security systems, crime prevention equipment and fire safety techniques were explained during partnership "walk and talk" events, and the next event was due to be held in the Tweeddale Area in the Spring. In regard to forensic security marking, with the help of Police and SBC funding, 200 selected DNA marking Kits for farms had been purchased. Each kit was unique to the farm it was issued to. PC Nick Walker explained that the crime prevention processes in place had resulted in a fall in rural crime. It was noted during the discussion that the NFU had not contributed financially to the DNA kits but they had promoted them. The theft of livestock was a big issue in Tweeddale and Berwickshire, and PC Nick Walker explained that a pilot study might be carried out with a farmer who was keen to be involved to explore the chipping of livestock. A suggestion was made that similar presentations might be welcomed at the Area Fora.

**DECISION
NOTED and thanked PC Nick Walker 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 13 May 2016
Friday 26 August 2016
Friday 11 November 2016
Friday 10 February 2017
Friday 9 June 2017

**DECISION
NOTED.**

The meeting concluded at 12.20 p.m.