

Lothian and Borders Police Board Newsletter

April 2011



Appointment of New Member to Board

The Board welcomed Councillor Bill Cook in place of Councillor Donald Wilson from the City of Edinburgh Council as a new member.

Best Value Audit and Inspection

The Board heard a presentation from Audit Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary on the forthcoming joint Best Value Audit and Inspection of the Board and the Force. The auditors will be working closely with Force staff and officers and Board officers and Members over the summer period. The final report is expected to be published in December.

Tackling Serious Organised Crime (SOC) and Major Crime

The Board heard a presentation by Detective Chief Superintendent Malcolm Graham on developments relating to serious and organised crime.

The Force launched its strategy for tackling serious and organised crime in September 2009 following the publication of the [National Strategy](#) earlier that year.

The Strategy has achieved considerable success: several crime groups have been broken up and 64 individuals have been convicted, some of whom were leading members of these groups. Much of this activity has been underpinned by partnership working. Members sought regular future updates on this area of policing, and also discussed working with other Forces to combat crime groups; scope to reduce the demand for drugs; and measures to avoid other groups taking advantage of gaps created by conviction of key individuals.

Following a review in 2010, the Force is now reorganising to form the Force Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Unit and Major Investigations Team (MIT). These will further improve

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the effectiveness of the Force whilst realising annual efficiency savings of £0.5m. The Force will update the Board in six months time on progress.

Policing Performance

The Chief Constable presented [a performance report](#) covering April 2010 to February 2011 showing that overall crime in Lothian and Borders in groups 1 to 4 (crimes against the individual) continues to fall; there was a 9.5% reduction compared to the equivalent period last year (4,726 fewer crimes).

[A national report](#) shows that, in Lothian and Borders, these types of crimes fell at over twice the national rate during the first nine months of 2010/11.

The Board discussed the recent increase in violent crime (in part due to changes in reporting practices and a very low base in the previous year); sought reassurance for the gay community in the light of recent murders; and debated the reducing trend in Anti-Social Behaviour and the impact of prevention activities.

The Chief Constable reported that the Force Communications Centre performed exceptionally well in terms of response to incidents; between April and December 2010, 94% of calls were responded to within Force target time. This is the best rate reported by any force in Scotland.

The Board heard that sickness absence rates amongst Police Officers are below the Scotland-wide rate. Members discussed the relatively high rates of sickness absence amongst Police Staff and heard how the Force is currently addressing the issue and that the trend was down.

Investigation of Complaints about the Police

The number of formal complaints recorded against the Force continues to decline: there was a 7% decrease in formal complaints and an 18% decrease in the number of on duty allegations. The improvement in Lothian and Borders is one of the best in Scotland.

Force Strategic Plan 2011-2014

The Strategic Plan was approved by the Board, following consideration of the issues by Members at earlier meetings and seminars. The Vision, Values and Strategic Objectives remain unchanged from the previous plan approved by the Board last year: the Force aims to work with partners to create community wellbeing through four Strategic Objectives of prevention, response, investigation and protection. The new plan increases the scope for Board members, partners and communities to participate in setting local priorities

[Scottish Government](#)

[Lothian and Borders Police Force](#)

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Transforming the Service (TTS) Update

Members have been working closely with the Force over the last year on this programme which will deliver over £5m cashable savings for the financial year 2011/12 across a broad spectrum of Force activity.

Work is also progressing on a Quad Force project with Fife, Central and Tayside looking at collaborative working and shared services in roads policing, firearms provision, legal services and training.

Scottish Government Consultation on the Future of Policing in Scotland

Members considered a draft response to the [Scottish Government's consultation on the future of policing in Scotland](#) based on a discussion of the Government's proposals at a recent Board seminar. It was agreed that Members should have a further opportunity to contribute views before the response is finalised.

Lay Diversity Advisers' Annual Report 2010

Members were presented with the Lay Diversity Advisers' Annual Report. Lay Diversity Advisers are independent members of the community who monitor and influence police strategy and operations in relation to diversity and equality. The Board expressed its appreciation for the work the advisers have undertaken during the year and their ongoing commitment to the Scheme. For more information on the Scheme, please see the [Lay Diversity section](#) of the Board's website.

Custody Visiting Scheme – Reappointment of Custody Visitors

The Board reappointed six Custody Visitors following the conclusion of their first three year appointment. There is a vacancy for one position, if you would like to find out more about this please see the [Custody Visiting page](#) on the Board's website.

Partnership Working – Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership

Crime in the Borders has fallen by 10% and the Chief Constable presented a report which outlined the contribution of [Scottish Borders Community Planning Partnership](#) to this success.

Notable achievements include the [Rape Crisis Centre](#) which was created by the first partnership in Scotland between a local authority and Rape Crisis Scotland.

New Websites



Members viewed the [new Board website](#) and a prototype of the new Force site. Both sites have been significantly improved; the Force site will provide local crime figures by postcode area, and access to local community officers and community Safer Neighbourhood Teams. The Force site will be relaunched in the late spring.
