

**Northern Joint Police Board
No. 1 2009/2010**

Minutes of Meeting of the Northern Joint Police Board held in the Council Offices,
School Place, Kirkwall, on Wednesday, 13 May 2009 at 1.30 p.m.

Present

Representing the Highland Council

Mr J Rosie	Mr H Wood
Mr G Smith	Mrs P Munro
Mr D Mackay (Substitute)	Mr P Corbett
Mrs D MacKay	Mr N Donald
Mr W J Ross	Mr R Wynd (Substitute)
Mr M Rattray (Substitute)	Mr D Cameron
Mr A Millar	Mr B Murphy
Mr I Renwick	

Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Mr N M Macleod	Mr P Carlin
Mr C Nicolson	Mr I Mackenzie

Representing Orkney Islands Council

Mr A Drever	Mr B Leslie
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Representing Shetland Islands Council

Mr A Cooper

Officials in attendance:

Mr I Latimer, Chief Constable
Mr G Sutherland, Deputy Chief Constable
Chief Superintendent L Stewart
Mrs E Ward, Force Director of Finance and Asset Management
Mrs A Sillars, Force Director of Human Resources
Mr R MacDonald, Force Estate Manager
Mr P Lamont, Force Head of Administration
Mr D Robertson, Treasurer's Office
Ms M Morris, Clerk
Mrs R Moir, Assistant Clerk

Mr N M Macleod in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr W MacKay, Mr H Fraser, Mr J Finnie and Mr G Marsden, The Highland Council, and Mr A Duncan, Shetland Islands Council.

2. Presentation on Youth Diversionary Activities

Constable Roseanna Macsween gave a presentation to the Board on Youth Diversionary Activities, during which she drew attention to a range of initiatives promoted by the Force, often in partnership with other relevant agencies, including:

- Blue Light discos, providing a safe environment for young people
- Restorative Justice programmes, consisting of a staged series of warnings designed to address minor crimes/offences, or non-offence-based anti-social behaviour
- Street Sports, such as football, rugby and twilight basketball
- Operation Youth Advantage, a 5-day residential course facilitated by the Army and based at an Army barracks
- Choices for Life, a multi media themed show seeking to empower children through music, drama, education and fun to make their own choices
- Safe Highlands and Islanders, a Community Safety scheme aimed at Primary 7 school children
- Global Rock Challenge, a series of performing arts events promoting healthy life choices
- Cashback for Communities, using proceeds of crime money to create a programme of free activities for young people.

During discussion, Members highlighted the need to emphasise how small a proportion of young people became involved in offending, the importance of partnership working, the need to recruit and retain volunteers to assist with some of these initiatives and the benefits of developing good relations between officers and young people. Some Members drew attention to specific projects happening in their areas.

After discussion, the Board thanked Constable Macsween and **NOTED** her presentation.

3. Minutes – Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of Board Meeting of 14 November 2008.

4. Minutes – Finance and Policy Working Group

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Finance and Policy Working Group held on 1 May 2009.

The Board **APPROVED** the terms of the Minutes, subject to removal of Mr B J Murphy's name from the list of apologies.

Accordingly, the Board **NOTED**:

- i. the terms of a letter from the Scottish Police Services Authority setting out how that body intended to take forward its consultation exercise on a national model for forensic services in Scotland;
- ii. proposals by the Accounts Commission and HM Inspectorate of Constabulary for taking forward a programme of best value audits of police authorities and forces; and
- iii. the publication of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland's (HMCICS) Independent Review of Policing.

The Board also **AGREED** to homologate responses submitted in relation to (ii) and (iii) above.

5. Minutes – Complaints Working Group

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of Meeting of the Complaints Working Group held on 1 May 2009, subject to the complaint under reference at item 6 of those Minutes being dealt with at item 24 below.

6. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 2009/10

There had been circulated Report No. POL15/09 comprising a statement and commentary by the Chief Constable on Revenue Expenditure and Income for the period from 1 to 30 April 2009 and also outlining the Efficiency Savings plan being adopted by the Force to link in with the 2009/10 Revenue Budget.

The report also advised Members of recent Scottish Government statements on transitional arrangements for funding of police pensions, with Boards requiring to budget for 80% only of the commutation payments of officers becoming eligible to retire in the current financial year and the Scottish Government providing extra funding should this threshold be exceeded.

In speaking to the report, the Chief Constable drew attention to the increase achieved in officer numbers and, while recognising the financial challenges to be faced in future years, his aspiration that the Force's strength would exceed 800 by early 2010. During discussion, Members sought reassurances that this increase in strength would receive adequate back office support.

After discussion, the Board **NOTED** the position.

7. 3-Year Capital Plan 2009/10 to 2011/12

There had been circulated Report No. POL16/09 by the Chief Constable dated 29 April 2009 outlining proposals for the 3-year Capital Plan commencing 2009/10.

In speaking to the report, the Chief Constable drew attention to recent successful station completions, such as at Lairg, which had been officially opened the previous day. He confirmed his anticipation that the Glencoe project could be taken forward towards the end of the current financial year. In response to questions from Members, he confirmed that efforts were continuing to identify a suitable site for a new station in Fort William, and also that officers would seek to

achieve the most competitive terms for the Board's build contracts, particularly in light of current economic circumstances.

After discussion, the Board **APPROVED** the Capital Plan as circulated.

8. Estate Management Report

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL17/09 dated 5 May 2009 by the Chief Constable providing an overview of the Capital Projects Programme.

9. Procurement Report

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL18/09 dated 5 May 2009 by the Chief Constable on recent procurement activity.

10. Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL19/09 dated 29 April by the Chief Constable informing the Board of the content of the Northern Constabulary's 3-year Strategic Plan, copies of which were tabled at the meeting.

11. Best Value Audit

There had been circulated Joint Report No. POL28/09 dated 8 May 2009 by the Chief Constable and the Clerk on the forthcoming joint audit of Northern Constabulary and the Northern Joint Police Board, to be conducted by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Audit Scotland. The report set out the background to the audit and outlined the audit and inspection process that could be anticipated in line with the Best Value Audit and Inspection Framework. Member involvement would be an integral part of the process.

In speaking to the report, the Clerk confirmed that this would be one of two such audits being conducted in 2009 on a pilot basis, the other being in Tayside, whose audit was currently underway. Guidance supplied indicated that the audit would be carried out on a risk assessment basis. The audit team would make a presentation to the Board at its meeting on 28 August 2009 and would carry out field work, including a Member survey, commencing in late September. It was anticipated that the resulting report, which would be a public document, would be published by the end of the year.

The Clerk proposed that the Board undertake a self-assessment exercise based around meetings of the Finance and Policy Working Group in June and August, with a view to evidencing a presentation being made to the auditors on behalf of the Board, to be accompanied – although not required – by a written submission. The Chief Constable expressed his support for a co-ordinated Force/Board approach to the audit and inspection process and confirmed his intention to second a senior police officer to assist the Clerk's office with the necessary preparatory workload.

During discussion, the Convener and Vice Convener underlined the significance of the audit process and the importance of full engagement and adequate

preparation. Some Members expressed concern as to the timing of the development and the possible political agenda signalled, and emphasised the importance of evidencing robustly the qualities and benefits of the present policing structure in the Highlands and Islands.

After discussion, the Board **NOTED**:

- i. the proposal for the Best Value Audit of Northern Constabulary and Northern Joint Police Board; and
- ii. the actions, as detailed in the report, to be taken to commence the process of preparing for the audit and inspection process.

12. Single Outcome Agreements

At its meeting held on 14 November 2008, the Board had agreed that the issue of Single Outcome Agreements (SOAs) be a standing item on future agendas, to enable the Board to monitor progress.

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL20/09 dated 27 April 2009 by the Chief Constable on the reporting mechanism to the Scottish Government on single Outcome Agreements.

13. Public Sector Equality Duties – Gender Equality Scheme Annual Report

At its meeting held on 14 November 2008, the Board had delegated powers to the Clerk to prepare and publish the Board's revised Race Equality Scheme, and its annual report in relation to the Disability Equality Duty, by their respective due dates in late 2008. At its meeting held on 23 January 2009, the Board had noted that both documents had been duly published.

The Board **AGREED** to delegate powers to the Clerk, in consultation with those Members appointed to sit on the Force's Diversity Group, to finalise and publish the Board's annual report on its Gender Equality Scheme by the due date of 29 June 2009.

14. Freedom of Information – Publication Scheme

Members were reminded that the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 required the Board to adopt and maintain a publication scheme that had been approved by the Scottish Information Commissioner (SIC). The Board's current Scheme, approved in 2004, would expire on 1 June 2009. The new Scheme required to be drafted and published in accordance with SIC guidance.

There had been circulated Report No. POL21/09 dated 5 May 2009 by the Clerk setting out for approval a draft Scheme which had already, at his request, been submitted to and approved by the Commissioner.

The Board **APPROVED** the circulated draft Publication Scheme, with effect from 1 June 2009.

15. CoSLA Community Safety Executive Group

There had been circulated Report No. POL22/09 dated 1 May 2009 by the Clerk inviting the Board to approve the attendance of the Convener at meetings of the CoSLA Community Safety Executive Group.

The Board **APPROVED** the attendance of the Convener at meetings of the CoSLA Community Safety Executive Group and **AGREED** that he seek to hold pre-meetings with Constituent Authority representatives also attending these meetings.

16. Independent Custody Visiting – Annual Report 2008/09

There had been circulated Report No. POL23/09 dated 5 May 2009 by the Clerk setting out the 2008/09 Annual Report on the Board's Independent Custody Visiting Scheme.

The Board **APPROVED** the terms of the report and **AGREED** that:

- i. should the report style for inclusion in the Scottish Annual Report be changed significantly, the Clerk, in consultation with the Members of the Independent Custody Visiting Sub-Committee, make any appropriate changes to the Board report, prior to its submission for inclusion; and
- ii. the Clerk, in consultation with the Members of the Independent Custody Visiting Sub-Committee, identify an appropriate form of long service award in recognition of the contribution made by the Board's volunteer Independent Custody Visitors.

17. Chief Constable's Periodic Report

There had been circulated Report No. POL24/09 dated 5 May 2009 comprising his periodic report and covering Crime and Road Accident Statistics, the Crime Situation, Youth Crime and Drug-related Crime.

The Deputy Chief Constable highlighted the main features of the report and reminded Members of Northern Constabulary's success in achieving consistently high detection rates.

During discussion, Members generally welcomed the positive results achieved and commented favourably on the increase in officer numbers.

In response to questions/comments, the Chief Constable confirmed that:

- he was happy to work with communities to address concerns about call handling/response times
- Members were welcome to visit the Operations Centre to gain insight into its work
- Northern Constabulary continued to be one of the few forces that did not implement a "graded response", but responded to all reports of vandalism and anti-social behaviour

- information would be provided to Members on domestic abuse figures and a presentation made to a later meeting on this and a range of public protection issues.

After discussion, the Board **NOTED** the position.

18. Letters of Appreciation

There had been tabled and were **NOTED** 46 letters of appreciation received by the Chief Constable for the period from 1 January to 31 March 2009. There had also been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL25/09 dated 29 April 2009 by the Chief Constable illustrating letters of appreciation.

19. Media Coverage

There had been tabled and was **NOTED** a book of press cuttings, which had been available for inspection by Members prior to the meeting.

20. Complaints against the Police

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL26/09 dated 23 April 2009 by the Chief Constable regarding complaints against Police Officers from 1 January to 31 March 2009.

The Board **AGREED** that the Complaints Book specifying complaints against Northern Constabulary, which had been available for inspection by Members prior to the meeting, be declared exempt by virtue of Paragraph 1 of Part I of Schedule 7A of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973.

21. Execution of Deeds

The Board **NOTED** the deed recently executed on behalf of the Board, as set out in the Agenda for the meeting.

22. Exclusion of the Public

The Board **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A)4 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act, the relevant paragraphs being shown.

23. Removal Allowance: Mortgage Interest

Paragraph 1

There had been circulated to Members only Report No. POL27/09 dated 17 March 2009 by the Chief Constable on a request received for assistance in relation to mortgage interest.

The Board **APPROVED** the request.

24. Complaints Involving Senior Officers

Paragraph 1

At its meeting held on 23 January 2009, the Board had agreed to refer consideration of a complaint received relating to a senior officer back to the Complaints Working Group, further correspondence having been received from the complainant subsequent to the Working Group's meeting on 9 January 2009.

There had been circulated to Members only Report No CWG8/09 dated 23 April 2009 by the Clerk, previously considered by the Complaints Working Group at its meeting held on 1 May 2009, together with a draft letter of response from the Clerk to the complainer reflecting the views of the Working Group, as agreed at that meeting (item 6 of the Minutes circulated at item 5 above refers).

After discussion, the Board **AGREED** to take no further action, on the grounds that the allegation was unfounded, and **APPROVED** the circulated draft letter of response to the complainer reflecting the views of the Working Group.

The meeting ended at 3.05 p.m.