

**Northern Joint Police Board
No. 3 2009/2010**

Minutes of Meeting of the Northern Joint Police Board held in the Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday, 27 November 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Present

Representing the Highland Council

Mr J Rosie	Mr H Wood
Mr G Smith	Mrs P Munro
Mr W MacKay	Miss J Campbell (Substitute)
Mrs D MacKay	Mr N Donald
Mr W J Ross	Mr D Cameron
Mr H Fraser	Mr B Murphy
Mr A Millar	Mr B Gormley
Mr I Renwick	

Representing Comhairle nan Eilean Siar

Mr N M Macleod	Mr M Macleod (Substitute)
Mr C Nicolson	

Representing Orkney Islands Council

Mr A Drever

Representing Shetland Islands Council

Mr A Duncan	Mr A Cooper
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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
Mrs M Grigor, Treasurer's Office
Ms M Morris, Clerk
Mrs R Moir, Assistant Clerk
Ms L Lee, Clerk's Office
Mr S Taylor, Clerk's Office

Mr N M Macleod in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr P Corbett and Mr G Marsden of The Highland Council, Mr P Carlin and Mr I Mackenzie of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar and Mr R K Leslie of Orkney Islands Council.

2. Scottish Policing Awards

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL49/09 dated 13 November 2009 by the Chief Constable on Northern Constabulary successes in the recent Scottish Policing Awards.

3. Presentation – Public Protection

Acting Detective Inspector Eddie Ross made a presentation to the Board on Public Protection Issues, during which he explained how public protection was co-ordinated across Northern Constabulary and described the range of services provided, which included Child Protection, Sexual Offence Liaison Officer, Offender Management, Adult Support & Protection, Domestic Abuse – Violence against Women, Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferencing and Safer Highland.

In response to questions raised, Detective Inspector Ross advised that:-

- the definition of what constituted a serious sexual assault would be outlined in the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009
- the increase in reported domestic abuse could be seen as a change in the public's attitude towards the service offered; however, the rise was a cause for alarm
- there had not been any problems recruiting members of the Force for these specialised jobs
- when recruiting Child Protection Officers the Force sought to ensure a good balance between male and female officers; however, Detective Inspector Ross's unit was predominantly made up of female staff
- prior to any child interview, detailed planning took place and education, health and social work departments would be consulted
- regular meeting took place with other forces to share experiences.

Following discussion on the issues raised, the Board **NOTED** the presentation.

4. Minutes – Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of Board Meeting of 28 August 2009.

Arising from the Minutes, the Board **NOTED** that the Orkney Community Planning Partnership (OCCP) had agreed to invite this Board and the Highland and Islands Fire Board jointly to nominate one Member to sit on the OCCP Steering Group; and **AGREED** to nominate Mr A Drever to the position, with Mr R Leslie as substitute, as required.

5. Minutes – Audit Working Group

There had been circulated Minutes of Meetings of the Audit Working Group of 28 August and 30 October 2009, together with, for information, Report No. Aud10/09 dated October 2009 by the Senior Audit Manager for Audit Scotland, comprising her finalised Report to Members and the Controller of Audit on the 2008/09 Audit, which summarised Audit Scotland's findings from their 2008/09 audit of the Northern Joint Police Board, the draft Report having previously been considered by the Working Group at its meeting on 30 October.

The Board **APPROVED** the Minutes of Meetings.

6. Minutes – Complaints Working Group

There had been circulated and were **APPROVED** Minutes of Meeting of the Complaints Working Group of 30 October 2009.

Arising from the Minutes, the Vice Convener thanked the Professional Standards Unit for their role in identifying whether there were any trends within complaints against the Police. The Vice Convener also drew attention to proposed Member involvement in the implementation of a rolling random sampling audit of closed complaints files.

7. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 2009/10

There had been circulated Report No. POL50/09 dated 7 November 2009 by the Chief Constable comprising a statement and commentary on Revenue Expenditure and Income for the period 1 August to 31 October 2009.

In speaking to the report, the Chief Constable advised that:

- police officer recruitment had been stopped until Spring 2010; however, officer numbers currently stood at 807, which met targets previously set
- discussions would take place with the Scottish Government regarding the reimbursement of costs incurred on pensions
- the budget had been kept tight with the intention that the proposals for voluntary redundancy in the current financial year would be funded from the underspend in the budget.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

8. Revenue Budget 2010/11 Minutes - Finance and Policy Working Group

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Finance and Policy Working Group held on 16 November 2009, together with (a) Report No. F&P3/09 dated 13 November 2009 by the Chief Constable updating Members on progress with the 2010/11 revenue budget and (b) Report No F&P4/09 dated 13 November 2009 by the Chief Constable providing the Working Group with details of the steps to be taken to balance the revenue budget for 2010/2011 through an Efficiency Scrutiny Plan for 2010/11, both reports having previously been considered by the Working Group at its 16 November meeting.

During discussion the Board was advised that:

- the Convener and Chief Constable had held positive and constructive meetings with each Constituent Authority to discuss the budget proposals
- every effort was being made to prepare a budget which would keep the 2010/11 requisitions at standstill levels or below
- having no structural budget deficit, Northern Constabulary was starting from a healthier position than some other forces
- the Force was facing many unavoidable cost increases, such as utilities and multi-year pay settlements
- the Chief Constable intended to maintain a Force strength of 800 officers
- nevertheless, as people costs represented some 83% of the budget, it was inevitable that savings had to be found in staff costs; however, it was important to seek to retain jobs within the Highlands and Islands
- although many efficiencies had already been implemented as a result of the Force Review, every opportunity was being sought to achieve further savings, including exploring the potential for shared services

Members acknowledged the serious constraints to be faced. They welcomed the intention to maintain officer strength and to seek only voluntary redundancies at this stage among support staff, while recognising that more difficult decisions might be required in future years.

Attention was drawn to the need to identify opportunities to make savings in the Board's own running costs. Whilst it was accepted that meeting costs were higher when the Board met in one of the Islands Constituent Authorities, it was emphasised that this happened only once per electoral cycle for each Islands authority, and there was a general view that it was important to reflect the diversity of the Board's membership and responsibilities.

Following discussion, the Board **NOTED**:

- i. the progress currently being made with regard to the building of the 2010/11 budget, with a view to final approval at the Board's January 2010 meeting; and
- ii. the proposed Efficiency Scrutiny Plan for 2010/11.

The Board also **AGREED** that a report be submitted to the next meeting on possible Board efficiency savings.

9. Voluntary Severance

There had been circulated Report No. POL51/09 dated 17 November 2009 by the Chief Constable seeking Board approval of a scheme to implement voluntary severance for Police Support Staff, to assist in achieving efficiency savings.

In response to a question, the Chief Constable outlined possible scenarios where either the post or the individual seeking voluntary redundancy would not be replaced. He also highlighted that there could be instances where individuals with specialist skills would require to be retained. He also recognised the concern of Islands Members that posts might tend to be centralised and stressed that any potential compulsory redundancies would be assessed on a case by case basis.

The Board **AGREED** the need for Voluntary Severance and to devolve responsibility for implementation to the Chief Constable, and **NOTED** that a report

would be submitted to the next meeting setting out more detail on numbers, costs and the likely impact on Service operations and other staff.

10. Best Value Review of Shared Services and Collaborative Working

There had been circulated Report No. POL52/09 dated 17 November 2009 by the Chief Constable advising Members of his intention, following the recent budget discussions with the Constituent Authorities, to commence a Best Value review of Shared Services and Collaborative Working.

In speaking to the report, the Chief Constable highlighted the potential for further centralisation, for example through expansion of the functions of the Scottish Police Services Authority, which could threaten the retention of jobs in the Highlands and Islands. The Chief Constable emphasised that he was opposed to any such moves and outlined his desire to keep jobs in the local area.

The Board **NOTED** the terms of the report and **AGREED** the following appointments to the Force's Best Value Review Programme Board:

Mr N M Macleod
Mr W J Ross

Mrs P Munro
Mr A Drever

Mr A Cooper

11. Capital Expenditure Monitoring Statement 2009/10

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL53/09 dated 6 November 2009 by the Chief Constable comprising a statement and commentary on Capital Expenditure for the period 1 August to 31 October 2009.

12. Procurement Report

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL54/09 dated 7 November 2009 by the Chief Constable on recent procurement activity.

13. National Command and Control System

At its meeting held on 28 August 2009, the Board had noted the then position on procurement of a National Command and Control System and had agreed to support the Chief Constable in seeking to ensure that this Board was not left with any outstanding contractual penalties in relation to its current contractual arrangements.

There had been circulated Report No. POL55/09 dated 3 November 2009 by the Chief Constable updating the Board on the current position on procurement of a National Command and Control System.

The Board **NOTED** the update and **AGREED** to reaffirm the Board's support for the Chief Constable in seeking to ensure that the Board was not left with any outstanding contractual penalties in relation to its current Intergraph Public Safety contract.

14. Estate Management Report

There had been circulated Report No. POL56/09 dated 7 November 2009 by the Chief Constable providing an overview of the Capital and Management Projects

Programme and updating Members on the development of a Draft Sustainable Construction Statement.

During discussion, the Vice Convener highlighted that it was vital for the Force and the Board to demonstrate their commitment to the delivery of sustainability principles in design and construction.

The Board **NOTED** the progress on approved projects and **APPROVED** the Draft Sustainable Construction Statement, subject to the inclusion of reference to the importance of local sourcing, where appropriate.

15. Best Value

There had been circulated Report No. POL57/09 dated 19 November 2009 by the Clerk updating the Board on progress in respect of the recent Best Value inspection of the Northern Joint Police Board, with particular reference to the Self-Assessment Action Plan agreed by the Board at its August meeting, specifically in relation to Member development and the consideration of dedicated support for the Board.

Responding to concerns raised, the Convener advised the Board that he was conscious of the timing of the latter recommendation, given the current issue of voluntary redundancy. He explained that the recent EFQM Assessment had identified a need for the post to ensure that the Board could operate effectively.

In response to a question, the Clerk advised the Board that the Job Description in Appendix 2 would be amended to reflect the wording in the report that the post would not necessarily need to be based in Inverness.

The Board **NOTED** the progress of the Best Value Inspection and the intention to conduct a Training Needs Analysis; and **AGREED** the appointment of a Development Officer for the Board for an initial period of 12 months, as detailed in the report.

16. Single Outcome Agreements

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL58/09 dated 13 November 2009 by the Chief Constable informing the Board of Northern Constabulary progress on implementing its Single Outcome Agreement undertakings in relation to all four constituent Local Authorities.

17. Chief Constable's Crime Situation Report

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL59/09 dated 9 November 2009 by the Chief Constable comprising his periodic report and covering Crime and Road Accident Statistics and the Crime Situation.

18. The Policing Pledge

There had been circulated Report No. POL60/09 dated 12 November 2009 by the Chief Constable setting out Northern Constabulary's Policing Pledge.

In response to a number of questions, the Chief Constable advised that:

- the Pledge would be issued in different font sizes and various formats, including on the Constabulary website
- there were no anticipated changes in the immediate future regarding the Force's call management approach; however, should this change, the wording on the Pledge would be amended to reflect this
- Officer presence at Ward Forums would continue, as it was an important point of contact for the public.

Following discussion, the Board **NOTED** the report.

19. Service Point Strategy

There had been circulated Report No. POL61/09 dated 12 November 2009 by the Chief Constable updating Members on the development of the Force Service Point Strategy.

During discussion, the Vice Convener highlighted developments in Golspie, where a shared location involving the Council's Service Point, the Police and the Voluntary Sector (Citizen's Advice Bureau) would shortly be opened. The shared building would be permanently manned throughout the day by Council appointed staff, with police officers available at different times of the day.

The Board **NOTED** the Report.

20. Equalities

Members were advised that the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which had come into effect in 2006, required public bodies subject to the Disability Equality Duty to publish an annual report on progress towards meeting the Disability Equality Duty and to review their Disability Equality Schemes after 3 years. The review obligation could be met by early adoption of a Single Equality Scheme, covering all the statutory equalities strands, which would in any case become a requirement under the pending Single Equality Act.

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No POL62/09 dated 11 November 2009 by the Chief Constable setting out Northern Constabulary's Single Equality Scheme 2009-2012 and Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2009.

As work on the Board's Single Equality Scheme 2009-2012 and Disability Equality Scheme Annual Report 2009 had not yet been completed, Members **AGREED** to delegate powers to the Clerk to finalise and publish these by the due date of 4 December 2009, in consultation with those Members appointed to sit on the Force's Diversity Progress Group.

21. Review of Discretionary Policies under the Local Government Pension Scheme

There had been circulated Report No POL63/09 dated 2 November 2009 by the Treasurer on changes in the Highland Council Pension Fund's policy on Pension Transfers under the discretions contained in the Local Government (Scotland) Pension Scheme 2008.

The Board **NOTED** that the Highland Council Pension Fund would no longer accept “transfers in” from Personal Pension schemes, other than in exceptional circumstances; and **AGREED**, in relation to Board employees, to restrict the period for accepting the initiation of a “transfer in” from Other Occupational Pension Schemes to 12 months from entry to the Local Government Pension Scheme, other than in exceptional circumstances.

22. Corporate Governance

i. Scheme of Delegation

There had been circulated and was **APPROVED** Report No. POL64/09 dated 2 November 2009 by the Clerk recommending updates to the Board’s Scheme of Delegation.

ii. Standing Orders for the Conduct of Meetings

There had been circulated and was **APPROVED** Report No POL65/09 dated 2 November 2009 by the Clerk recommending a number of amendments to the Board’s Standing Orders for the Conduct of Meetings.

23. Letters of Appreciation

The Board **NOTED** 62 letters of appreciation received by the Chief Constable for the period from 1 July to 30 September 2009. There had also been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL66/09 dated 5 November 2009 by the Chief Constable illustrating letters of appreciation.

24. Complaints against the Police

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL67/09 dated 5 November 2009 by the Chief Constable regarding complaints against Police Officers from 1 July to 30 September 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.

25. 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.

26. Schedule of Meetings

There had been circulated Report No. POL68/09 dated 4 November 2009 by the Clerk recommending a schedule of meetings for 2010.

The Convener advised the Board that correspondence had been received from Unison on behalf of support staff members of Northern Constabulary suggesting that visits to the Islands for meetings should be cancelled in the interest of efficiency of the service and in light of the reduction in resources.

During discussion, the Convener emphasised the Board's duty to represent all four constituent authorities on the Northern Joint Police Board.

During discussion, a number of comments were made, including:

- it was important to recognise that, as a joint board, the status of all constituent authorities should be respected
- it was appropriate to look at the way meetings on the Islands were organised to identify any cost efficiencies
- meeting outside of the peak tourist times would add value to the local economy
- it was important for the morale of Islands officers and support staff to have access to the Board
- the tendency towards longer meetings should be taken into account when considering possible dates for holding both this Board and the Highland and Islands Fire Board on the same day in Inverness
- the use of Video Conferencing facilities should be developed further.

The Board **APPROVED** the proposed dates of 11-12 May 2010 (in Lerwick) and 27 August 2010 (in Inverness) and **AGREED** to defer decision on a November 2010 date to permit further consideration of the relative scheduling of this meeting in relation to that of the Highland and Islands Fire Board.

27. 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 item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 7A of the Act, the relevant paragraph being shown.

28. Police Housing

Paragraphs 1 & 12

There had been circulated to Members only and was **NOTED** Report No. POL69/09 dated 17 November 2009 by the Clerk concerning recent developments in relation to housing.

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.