

**NORTHERN JOINT POLICE BOARD
NO 5 2006/2007**

Minutes of Meeting of the Northern Joint Police Board held in the Council Chamber, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Friday, 30 March 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Present

Representing the Highland Council

Mr G M Smith	Mrs J N Home
Mr R Saxon	Mr P Corbett
Mr W J Ross	Mr W J Smith
Mr D Allan	Mrs C Cumming
Mrs I MacCallum	Mr A S Park
Mrs V MacIver	Mr B M S Dunlop
Mr E C Mackinnon	Mrs O J Macdonald
Mr J Laing	Mr B J Murphy

Representing Western Isles Council

Mr D MacLean	Mr N M Macleod
Mr R Morrison	Mr M Macleod

Representing Orkney Islands Council

Mr R C Sclater	Mr A A Drever
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Representing Shetland Islands Council

Mr W Tait	Mr J P Nicolson
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Officials in attendance:

Chief Constable
Deputy Chief Constable
Chief Superintendent L Stewart
Chief Superintendent B Duncan
Ms E Ward, Force Accountant
Mr A Macleod, Force Estates Manager
Ms A Sillars, Force Head of Human Resources
Mr P Lamont, Force Head of Administration
Mr D Robertson, Treasurer's Office
Ms R Pieroni, Clerk
Mrs R Moir, Assistant Clerk
Mrs C Nicoll, Clerk's Office

Mrs J N Home in the Chair

Preliminaries

Prior the commencement of the meeting, the Convener welcomed Members to the last meeting of the current Board and advised of the official opening of the new Police Station at Kilmallie, which had taken place on 23 March 2007. The local Member, on behalf of the communities of Caol and Kilmallie, expressed grateful thanks to the Force and the Board for their support in achieving this new and necessary community facility.

1. Minutes – Previous Meeting

There had been circulated and **APPROVED** Minutes of Board Meeting of 19 January 2007.

2. Minutes – Finance and Policy Working Group/Complaints Study Group

There had been circulated Minutes of Meeting of the Finance and Policy Working Group/Complaints Study Group held on 5 March 2007, together with Report No. POL12/07 seeking approval of the final draft of the Board's pre-election Briefing Paper on the future delivery of policing services in the Highlands and Islands.

The Board **APPROVED**:

- i.** the Minutes of the Finance and Policy Working Group/Complaints Study Group held on 5 March 2007; and
- ii.** the final draft of the Board's pre-election Briefing Paper.

3. Force Review Project

There had been circulated Report No. POL21/07 dated 23 March 2007 by the Chief Constable updating Members on the outcomes and future implementation of the Force Review Project.

In speaking to the report, the Chief Constable reminded Members that, on his arrival in September 2001, the operational strength of the Force had been approximately 650 officers and that, since that time, the Force and the Board had worked hard to increase and maintain the operational strength to between 700 and 720 officers. It was hoped in the future to increase the operational strength further to 750 officers. With the support of the Board there had been continuous change in the Force since 2001, including £6 million of investment in digital communications, new state of the art operations centres and continual investment in the operational estate of the Force. However, there were operational capacity issues still to be addressed. There was a need to increase the availability and visibility of police officers as well as a need for investigative resilience.

The Force Review would essentially be an operational review which would aim to take the Force forward operationally over the course of the following two to three years. There would be significant tightening of budgets in the future to accommodate rising costs: for example, increases in costs for utilities and pensions and GAE increases in relation to energy management. The Chief Constable outlined the strategy for dealing with these rising costs and explained that cash savings of approximately £1.8 million required to be made during the course of the current financial year to achieve a standstill budget. The Chief Constable outlined the key objectives of the review and reported that, during the consultation process, all Area Commands and service departments had made written submissions to the Review Team outlining their thoughts on what direction the Force should take in the future. Both operational and support staff had also been invited to submit their views to the Review Team and

approximately 500 police and support staff has attended 'question and answer' seminars throughout the Force area. Work had also been undertaken in identifying areas where improvements in best practice could be made.

The Deputy Chief Constable presented the review recommendations, which included improvements to streamline information management within the Force; improvements in the use of technology throughout the Force, i.e. mobile data and voice bank technology; the enhancement of organisational capacity and capability; and a review of the functional structure of the Force. Members were advised that it was proposed to provide future policing through 11 local Area Commands which would be grouped into 3 Superintendent-led Divisions (North, Central and East Divisions). It was envisaged that these Divisions and Area Commands would provide a more flexible use of resources and also opportunities for collaborative working throughout the Force area.

In conclusion, the Chief Constable advised the Members that there were challenges to be faced in implementing this programme of change throughout the Force over the following few years. He intended to keep the Board fully informed of progress made in the implementation of these changes and would fully brief Members of the new Board on the programme for change.

The Convener thanked the Chief Constable and his senior officers for their full briefing on the outcome of the Force Review.

During discussion, having been assured that the review was not intended to centralise management control to the detriment of local accountability and influence, Members welcomed its recommendations and highlighted the current high standard of policing throughout the Highlands and Islands. Members were of the view that the proposed devolving of responsibility from Headquarters to Divisions and Areas should provide local policing services more suited to the unique geography and remoteness of the Highlands and Islands. To achieve this it would be essential for the Divisional Superintendents to recognise the uniqueness of their own areas and have a full understanding of the needs of the communities and how these needs could be met. It would also be important for the general public as well as the Board to be fully informed of the proposed changes and the improvements these changes would make to frontline policing.

The Board recognised that support staff would be affected by some of the changes proposed in the review and Members were anxious to acknowledge the important role support staff played throughout the Force.

Thereafter, the Board **NOTED** the position.

4. Revenue Budget Monitoring Statement 2006/07

There had been circulated Report No. POL13/07 dated 20 March 2007 comprising a statement and commentary by the Chief Constable on Revenue Expenditure and Income for the period to 28 February 2007.

The gross revenue expenditure shown was £54,011,000 against an anticipated budget of £53,989,000. Total income received to 28 February 2007 was £5,089,000 against an anticipated budget of £4,662,000.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

5. Capital Expenditure Monitoring Statement 2006/07

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL14/07 dated 20 March 2007 comprising a statement and commentary by the Chief Constable on Capital Expenditure for the period to 28 February 2007.

6. Capital Plan

There had been circulated and was **APPROVED** Report No. POL15/07 dated 15 March 2007 by the Chief Constable outlining proposals for the 2007/08 Capital Plan.

7. Estate Management

There had been circulated Report No. POL16/07 dated 16 March 2007 by the Chief Constable on progress made on planned projects.

Concern was raised in relation to the difficulties being experienced in obtaining planning consent for the new Police Station and House at Rhiconich. The local Member informed the Board that the matter had been carefully considered and, although the application for planning consent had been refused, all parties concerned were keen to find a solution to move forward with this project as early as possible.

The Board **NOTED** the position and **APPROVED** the Headquarters Reception and Access Control project from inception through all stages to award of contract.

8. Procurement of ICT Services

There had been circulated Report No. POL22/07 by the Chief Constable on the intended establishment of a national Centre of Expertise for Police Procurement for the Scottish Police Service, co-ordinated by Strathclyde Police, but with each force having equal responsibility for and control of same.

The Board **NOTED** the establishment of a national Centre of Expertise for Police Procurement, co-ordinated by Strathclyde Police, and **APPROVED** the development through the proposed Centre of a framework agreement between the Scottish police forces, police authorities and the Scottish Police Services Authority to enable the effective procurement of ICT associated with the national business change programme .

9. Chief Constable's Periodic Report

There had been circulated Report No. POL17/07 by the Chief Constable comprising his Periodic Report and covering the following issues:-

- i.** Crime and Road Accident Statistics;
- ii.** Crime Situation; and
- iii.** Update from Operational Support Service Unit.

In speaking to the report, the Deputy Chief Constable informed the Board that there had been a 9.7% increase in crime when compared to the same period in the previous year, largely due to 816 proactively detected drugs crimes. The Force detection rate had increased by 1.3% and currently stood at 65.4%. There had been a decrease of 3.4% in crimes of dishonesty and also a decrease of 7.8% in Road Traffic Offences. In relation to road accidents, although there had

been an increase in fatal casualties, there had been a marked decrease in the number of serious casualties.

Referring to the detection of drugs crimes, the Deputy Chief Constable was pleased to report that in Ross, Cromarty and Skye three drug dealers had been convicted and sentenced for a total of 15 years as a result of a recent operation by the Force. In Inverness, officers had recovered £50,000 of Class A drugs. £400,000 of Class A drugs had been recovered in the Western Isles. It was also reported that, in December 2006, officers had apprehended a drug dealer in the Badenoch, Strathspey and Nairn Area, with £120,000 of Class A drugs being recovered, and, in February 2007, two drug dealers had also been apprehended in that area.

The Board **NOTED** the position.

10. Letters of Appreciation

There had been tabled and was **NOTED** 36 letters of appreciation received by the Chief Constable for the period 1 January to 28 February 2007. There had also been circulated and **NOTED** Report No. POL18/07 dated 5 March 2007 by the Chief Constable illustrating letters of appreciation.

11. Complaints Against the Police

There had been circulated and was **NOTED** Report No. POL19/07 dated 5 March 2007 by the Chief Constable regarding complaints against Police Officers from 1 January to 28 February 2007.

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

12. Execution of Deeds

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

13. Recess Powers

Members were advised that the legislation establishing the Board had provided that, if re-elected to their respective authorities, the Convener and Vice-Convener would each continue in post until the first meeting of their respective authorities following the local government elections, at which meeting each authority would appoint its new Board members. However, the Convener and Vice-Convener had intimated that neither would be standing for re-election. There would therefore be a period from the elections on 3 May 2007 until the new Board would meet on 15 June 2007, and would appoint its office-bearers, when each office would necessarily be vacant.

The Board **AGREED** that:

- i. between the Election and the first meeting of the Board, powers to deal with urgent business requiring Board approval, or consultation with the Convener and/or Vice-Convener, be exercised by the Clerk in consultation with the Chief Constable; and

- ii. any use of such recess powers be reported to the first meeting of the new Board following the elections.

14. Exclusion Of The Public

The Board resolved that, under Section 50A(4) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following item on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

15. Removal Allowance

There had been circulated Report No. POL20/07 dated 16 March 2007 by the Chief Constable on an application relating to removal allowance.

The Board **APPROVED** the application as outlined in the report.

16. Valedictory

The Convener expressed her thanks to Members, Officers and officials for the support and assistance she had received from them during her term in office. She expressed her satisfaction with the notable achievements during the past four years of her term, including the opening of 10 new or refurbished Police Stations, representing expenditure of some £10 million. She also expressed her pleasure in having witnessed the improvements made in the standard of policing services throughout the Highlands and Islands and regarded the Force as second to none. The re-introduction of Board meetings in Islands locations had strengthened the bond between Constituent Authorities in their campaign to maintain the current high standard of policing. She concluded by thanking everyone for their support and wished both Members and the Force every success for the future.

The Chief Constable responded by thanking the Convener, Vice-Convener and Board Members for their valued support of the Force during the term of this Board and wished everyone well for the future.

The meeting ended at 12 noon.