I thank you for your call for views on the new national arrangements for policing.

This request was recently considered by Midlothian Safer Communities Board, which has the statutory scrutiny and challenge role for the Police and Fire & Rescue services in the local authority area, and also includes Community Planning Partners for the wider agenda in safeguarding communities in Midlothian.

The Safer Communities Board considered the local authority’s recent experience with partner agencies and recommended the undernoted submission to you.

Kevin Anderson
Head of Housing and Community Safety
20 December 2013

Midlothian Safer Communities Board welcomed the opportunity for direct scrutiny by elected members in the scrutiny of local policing and fire services.

The Partnership notes that reported crime is at its lowest level for years and re-offending rates are also reducing. Local authorities have worked closely with Police on intelligence sharing and joint tasking, and on projects to reduce crime such as diversionary work with young people.

They also play a key role in ensuring that both Police and Fire services remain responsive to local needs after their reform by having in place arrangements for local scrutiny and engagement with these services. Local authorities are also paying for additional services provided by Police to increase community safety within their local areas.

The Community Safety Partnership is under pressure to deliver on the Community Safety priorities for 2013/2014 within the context of changing priorities from national organisations, a reduction in key resources, changes to the number of staff with a remit for community safety and a move away by some partners from prevention activity; whilst meeting an increasing demand to service new individual case management groups. However Midlothian Council and Police Scotland are working together to strengthen integrated working where possible and work towards involving communities more in the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

1. Challenges:
   - future information sharing and sharing protocols
   - the change that took place limited access to certain data for the analysts to access – the process of information gathering for assessments takes longer then before
• partnership analyst’s posts are under a review (duties and grading), Community Planning Partnership and Community Safety Partnership would like to be involved in the selection process of the analysts so they are not solely appointed by the Police – since they are working for a wide partnerships

• there might be changes to the existing Service Level Agreement between councils and Police and allocation of resources might follow – Midlothian Community Policing Team, Analyst, LALO, ASB LO

• road safety officers duties / responsibilities will have to be taken over by other partners

2. Benefits:

• Robust approach to domestic abuse – positive domino effect (child protection, criminal justice, alcohol overconsumption, noise issues, feeling of safety etc)

• Processes such as MARAC and MATAC – commitment to partnership working is clear in these multi agency forums tackling domestic violence

• Involvement into the delivery of projects within the Delivery Group (the Challenge project, Online Safety projects, road shows)

• Contribution towards Anti-Social Behaviour & Violent Offenders monitoring group, Monthly Delivery Group and Tasking & Coordinating (TAC) weekly meetings

• While Community Planning does not feature as a topic, it has been suggested in terms of the locality planning and joint resourcing evidently necessary in the future planning and delivery of outcomes for communities.