

Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall
Monday, 9th June, 2014

Political Members

Councillor Colin Keenan (Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin
Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell
Councillor Matt Garrett
Councillor Mervyn Jones
Councillor John Hussey
Councillor Kate Mullan
Alderman Jim Rodgers
Alderman Christopher Stalford

Independent Members

Frank Mulhern (Vice Chair)
Valerie Allen
Claire Canavan
Liz Groves
Harry Maguire
John MacVicar
Carmel McKinney
Mark Vinton

PSNI Representatives

Chief Superintendent Nigel Grimshaw

Staff Present

Alison Allen, Safer City Manager
Lorna Somers, Safer City Assistant Manager
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

Apologies

Chief Superintendent Alan McCrum
John Topping

1. Welcome and Apologies

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting, in particular the new District Commander for A District, Chief Superintendent Grimshaw, and noted the apologies provided.

2. Declarations of Interest

- i. No declarations of interest were recorded.

3. Minutes

- i. The minutes of the Belfast PCSP Policing Committee Meeting held on 17th February, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

4. Update from the PSNI

- i. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw advised Members that the level of overall crime had increased slightly when compared to last year however it was too early in the year for meaningful analysis of the figures. He added that crime levels had been at an all time low and so small increases were inevitable however the PSNI aimed to limit any increase.

- ii. In response to the media reports of deaths associated with legal highs, Chief Superintendent Grimshaw advised that Detective Superintendent Andrea McMullan would be leading the investigation into Coroner's report.
- iii. A Member queried what the PSNI were doing in relation to the sale of legal highs. Chief Superintendent advised that, while they were supporting the multi-agency approach to tackling the problem, as the substances were not illegal they were unable to act against the shops. He added that as the makeup of substances changed so quickly, it was difficult to regulate against them. Members were advised that concentrating on the health risks was the mostly likely way of bringing about legislative change.
- iv. Members commented upon the use of Drugs Bins to which the District Commander advised that while they most often were used to dispose of prescription drugs, they were still beneficial.
- v. A Member advised the District Commander that there had been ongoing concern regarding the lack of PSNI attendance at PCSP Meetings.
- vi. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw acknowledged the point and assured Members that going forward there would be a consistent presence from A District personnel and that he was keen to engage with the Partnership.
- vii. With regards to a change in police boundaries to reflect the Council changes, the District Commander advised that Chief Superintendent Nobel would be looking at a review of the current structures and that a briefing to Members would follow.
- viii. In response to query regarding the reduction in the number of police officers, the District Commander advised that numbers would be reducing and that the Service First model had restructured the Service to do more with fewer resources.
- ix. A Member suggested that a City Centre Command should be considered as its inclusion in the South Belfast area had implications on normal policing within other areas of the command such as Balmoral.

5. Incidents of Hate Crime

- i. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw commented upon the incidents of racial hate crime that had been heavily reported in the media. He advised that there were traditionally few reports of such attacks and so while the rise in reporting was to be welcomed, the number of incidents was alarming. Members were told that ACC Kerr was driving the response centrally and that a partnership approach was being adopted. The relaunch of the Unite Against Hate Campaign would be forming part of this response.
- ii. The District Commander also informed Members that Operation Rainer had resulted in 64 arrests since January relating to racial, sectarian or religious incidents. A specific team were also in place to deal with reports through the 101 number.

6. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Following discussion about room availability and the recent break in meetings due to the Purdah period, it was resolved that the next meeting of the PCSP would be held in August with details to be circulated to Members in due course.