

# Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

## Policing Committee Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall  
Tuesday, 12th August, 2014

### Political Members

Councillor Colin Keenan (Chair)  
Councillor Janice Austin  
Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell  
Councillor Matt Garrett  
Councillor Mervyn Jones  
Councillor John Hussey  
Alderman Frank McCoubrey  
Alderman Jim Rodgers

### 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  
Chief Superintendent Alan McCrum

Superintendent Paula Hilman

### Staff Present

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

### Apologies

Councillor Kate Mullan  
John Topping

#### 1. Welcome and Apologies

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting 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 9th June, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

#### 4. Consultation on the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2015-2016

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager asked Members to consider the outcomes and targets within the 2014/2017 Northern Ireland Policing Plan and to provide feedback regarding the refresh of the current year to the PCSP Office before 25th September.

#### 5. Update from the PSNI

- i. Chief Superintendent's Grimshaw and McCrum provided Members with statistics covering the first quarter of 2014/2015 noting that crime was marginally up across

the City when compared to last year, adding that it was relatively early to draw conclusions from this.

- ii. Members commended the operations that had taken place over the summer months and asked that this was passed on through the organisation, including to the Tactical Support Group (TSG) Officers.

#### Incivility

- iii. In response to a query regarding incivility and training of TSG Officers, Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that all Officers were given the same training and that the importance of tone and avoidance on conflict was regularly emphasised. He asked that any issues that Members experienced were fed back to senior officers in order for the problems to be solved. He added that public order policing was done in difficult and challenging circumstances and Officers trained in this field were often stereotyped.
- iv. The policing operations of the summer were again commended however a Member noted that incidents of incivility undermined the confidence that these policing and community efforts were building.
- v. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw acknowledged this point and agreed that the leadership shown in both communities alongside the effective partnership working with the PSNI had been a success. He added that behaviour was revisited through training and that briefings were held to clearly outline the purpose of operations and what was to be achieved. Members were also advised that despite perception, TSG Officers often had very low levels of complaints.
- vi. A Member noted their surprise at the low level of complaints and as such Chief Superintendent Grimshaw agreed to look at the figures again in order to clarify the point.

#### Burglary

- vii. In response to a Member's query, the District Commanders advised that Neighbourhood and Response Officers should have business cards in order to provide contact details to residents and that crime prevention work was ongoing with regards to burglary. Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that while burglary was down in East Belfast, burglaries in the Holylands area of South Belfast had risen. He added that focused crime prevention work was being done with students about the importance of locking doors and securing valuables.

#### Hate Crime

- viii. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw introduced Members to Superintendent Paula Hilman, the PSNI's lead on tackling incidents of Hate Crime.
- ix. Superintendent Hilman advised that Hate Crime was an often unreported crime and so the PSNI were encouraging reports through a dedicated line on the non-emergency 101 number. She added that reports had mainly come from North and East Belfast with causes linked to a lack of social housing, displaced sectarianism and some orchestrated attacks.
- x. In response to a query regarding an example of hate crime charges being reduced to grievous bodily harm and its impact on the victim, Superintendent Hilman advised

that a crime was categorised as a hate crime if it was perceived in this way however proving this in court was more difficult. Members were advised that victims were kept up to date with case progressions and that 'victim personal statements' were now being used more and more and so the impact of a crime on the victim would now be heard by the court.

#### City Centre Speed Limit

- xi. In response to a Member's query regarding the PSNI's opinion of the proposed 20mph speed limit for the city centre, Chief Superintendent McCrum commented that excess speed was often to blame for road deaths, and that this was not just a rural problem. He advised that while enforcing the speed limit would be challenging, if the new limit was adopted, it would be done. He also noted that education was key and that every driver had a responsibility to drive with care.
- xii. A Member noted that few incidents were ever in the centre of Belfast and that congestion would be made worse if the change went ahead. Chief Superintendent McCrum added that 48 people had been killed so far during 2014, the majority of which were in country areas however isolated incidents did take place in Belfast.

#### **6. Date of Next Meeting**

- i. The Chair advised that due to the increasing number of Council meetings, the availability of Committee Rooms for PCSP Meetings was beginning to become an issue. He therefore asked Members to suggest alternative venues outside of City Hall for future meetings.
- ii. Members were reminded that the next meeting of the Policing Committee would be held on Monday, 13th October.