

# Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

## Policing Committee Meeting

Conor Room, City Hall  
Monday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2014

<b>Political Members</b>	<b>Independent Members</b>
Councillor John Hussey (Chair)	Frank Mulhern (Vice Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin	Valerie Allen
Councillor Patrick Convery	Claire Canavan
Councillor Matt Garrett	Liz Groves
Councillor Deirdre Hargey	Harry Maguire
Councillor Máire Hendron	John MacVicar
Councillor Adam Newton	Carmel McKinney
Alderman Jim Rodgers	John Topping
	Mark Vinton

  

<b>PSNI Representatives</b>
Superintendent Barbara Gray
Superintendent John McCaughan

  

<b>Staff Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Alison Allen, Safer City Manager	Chief Superintendent George Clarke
Lorna Somers, Safer City Assistant Manager	Chief Superintendent Alan McCrum
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer	

### 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 December, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

### 4. Matters Arising/Chair's Business

- i. The Safer City Manager advised Members that the Working Group tasked with reviewing the request to hold a public meeting on Parades and Protests had met during February. The Working Group had extensive discussions and there was agreement that the underpinning issue was confidence in policing. Members were advised that as the specific issues relating to confidence in policing may be different for each Member, an email had been circulated in order to determine what these were. It was also

agreed that letters would be written to relevant statutory organisations to advise them that a Working Group had begun to meet to discuss these issues.

- ii. A Working Group Member added that discussions had been positive and encouraged Members to respond to the email that had been circulated.
- iii. A Member raised concerns that the e-mail sent to Members regarding confidence in policing had moved away from the initial talks that were held with the Northern Ireland Policing Board which suggested holding small meetings with selected attendees, and suggested that the representatives on the Group should be bringing issues from their respective areas.
- iv. The Safer City Manager assured Members that the email was not designed to act as a survey or a formal piece of work, but was simply being used to get a flavour of the issues in order to inform further discussions.
- v. Following further discussions, Members agreed that the name of the Working Group should be changed to 'Confidence in Policing' in order to reflect the wider issues now being discussed.

## **5. PSNI Resourcing – Service First**

- i. Superintendent Gray provided Members with an update on policing figures in A District, noting that the figures showed an overall reduction in crime, particularly for burglary where the outcome rate was the highest in the Service.
- ii. Superintendent McCaughan provided an update on the figures for B District where crime had risen by 9%, largely due to miscellaneous theft including mobile phone theft. Members were advised that the PSNI would be working with representatives from the night time economy to tackle this.
- iii. Members were further advised that B District was experiencing a significant increase in domestic burglary however this was beginning to decrease from the 50% increase in levels seen in the first quarter.
- iv. With regards to discretionary disposals, Superintendent McCaughan advised that Officer abstraction had impacted on the use of discretionary disposals in B District, however, it was inappropriate to set this as a high target and that its use would be further managed during the Service First review.
- v. In response to a Member's query regarding incivility, Superintendent McCaughan advised that referrals to the Ombudsman did not prevent the PSNI from addressing behaviour internally and that work was ongoing with regards to training on interpersonal skills and first impressions to the public. He added that 44,000 service calls were received within B District during the period in question resulting in just 51 complaints, 25% of which were attributed to Officers outside of the District. He added that incivility was 23% below the 5 year average.
- vi. Superintendent Gray advised that there were no trends regarding the age of Officers accused of incivility however they were generally Response Officers due to the fractured nature of their call outs.

- vii. A Member advised that he would welcome conversations between complainants and Officers and would also welcome expansion of the use of discretionary disposals and suggested the police contact him to look at how this could be developed.
- viii. A Member added that the public's reaction to police was often highly aggressive and that the public should take some responsibility for this. Superintendent McCaughan commented that Officers were expected to work in difficult circumstances however there would be a level at which contact was deemed disorderly.
- ix. In response to a query regarding drug seizures ahead of the City Wide Drugs Campaign, Superintendent McCaughan advised that Operation Torus would relaunch on 24th February to support the campaign and that figures could be provided at a future meeting. He also suggested that a presentation could be made on the use of discretionary disposals.
- x. At the Members request, the PSNI representatives agreed to review the type of information within the report, including more qualitative information, which would enable Members to carry out their monitoring role more effectively.

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

- i. Members were advised that the next scheduled meeting of the Policing Committee was on Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> April, however this fell within the Purdah period due to Local Government Elections. Members therefore resolved to hold the next Policing Committee Meeting prior to the Private Meeting of the PCSP on Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> March.