

Minutes of South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee

Monday 16th June 2014, 5.00pm
1st Floor HR Conference Room, City Hall, Belfast

Political Members

Cllr. Kate Mullan (Chair)
Cllr. Deirdre Hargey

Independent Members

Mr. Niall Kelly (Vice Chair)
Ms. Paula Bradshaw
Mr. Trevor Greer
Ms. Debbie Hammill
Ms. Nuala Toman

Statutory Designated Bodies

Chief Inspector Gaby Moran

Inspector Rosie Thompson

Belfast City Council Staff Present

Alison Allen, Safer City Manager
Denise Smith, Safer City Coordinator

Apologies

Ald. Tom Ekin
Cllr. Máirtín Ó Muilleoir

Saranne Gallagher, Partnership Support Officer

Chief Inspector Robert Murdie
Ald. Ruth Patterson

1. Welcome & Routine Matters

- i. The Chair, welcomed all Members to the Policing Committee Meeting of the South Belfast DPCSP.
- ii. Apologies were noted for Ald. Tom Ekin, Ald. Ruth Patterson, Cllr. Máirtín Ó Muilleoir and Chief Inspector Murdie.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The Minutes of the South Belfast Policing Committee Meeting held on 4th February, of which copies were previously circulated, were taken as read and correct.

3. Area Commander Update

- i. Chief Inspector Moran introduced Inspector Thompson to Members of the South Belfast DPCSP.
- ii. The Chief Inspector provided Members with an overview of the PSNI Performance against the Local Policing Plan 12 month report.
- iii. The Chief Inspector commented that during the last 12 months, the PSNI did not achieve to decrease the number of burglaries, as there had been a 23% increase in burglaries.
- iv. The Chief Inspector informed Members that the number of drug seizures within the last 12 months had increased by 21. He further commented that

there had been 29 fewer arrests in the last 12 months in comparison to the year before.

- v. The Chief Inspector commented that there had been a slight increase in the number of non-domestic violence with injury claims. He advised Members that there had been an additional 19 reports during the last 12 months in comparison to the year before.
- vi. The Chief Inspector commented that the PSNI's aim to reduce the proportion of violent crimes where alcohol had been a contributory factor, had not been achieved as there has been an additional 263 incidents this year.
- vii. The Chief Inspector further commented that non domestic burglaries had remained the same as the previous year but shoplifting had decreased by 8.7%.
- viii. The Chief Inspector also advised Members during the last 12 months, violence with injury had increased by 1.2% and violence without injury had significantly increased.
- ix. The Chief Inspector commented however, at the end of the first month of this year, overall crime had decreased.
- x. He also advised Members that to date this year drugs offences had increased by 23%.
- xi. The Chief Inspector commented that it had been encouraging to note that the number of detection rate is up to 96% in comparison to 64% last year.
- xii. The Chief Inspector highlighted that there had been an increase in the number of hate crime reports. He advised Members there had been an additional 14 incidents reported. He also informed Members that there had also been an increase in sectarian hate crime. He further commented that from 1st April, there had been a total of 20 arrests across Belfast in relation to race hate crime and an additional 9 arrests for sectarian hate crime.
- xiii. The Chief Inspector informed Members that there had been a total of 519 calls logged via the police 101, to which 23 of the calls related to hate crime.
- xiv. The Chief Inspector advised Members of his new role within the Belfast Case Progression Team.
- xv. A Member asked in relation to the increase in sectarian hate crime, if this increase had related to any particular area within South Belfast. The Chief Inspector commented that it did not relate to any one area. However, he commented that towards the end of the financial year, that a directive had been given by Assistant Chief Constable Kerr that any incident of stone throwing at interface areas should be customised as sectarian hate crime which had subsequently lead to an increase in the number of hate crime incidents.
- xvi. Inspector Thompson provided Members with an update on activities within Gresham Street. She advised Members there had been the continuing partnership work regarding enforcement and work with FASA/Rathbone regarding the deployment of Outreach Workers within the area had been continuing.

- xvii. A Member asked how many stop and searches had been conducted within the area? Inspector Thompson commented that she had been unsure of the exact numbers, but would provide and update for Members at the next DPCSP Meeting.
- xviii. A Member asked if there had been any feedback from traders received? Inspector Thompson commented that the traders had been very concerned still regarding ongoing activities within the local area.
- xix. A Member commented that it had been suggested that illegal substances had been sold from cars and that memory sticks had been used for the exchange of drugs. Inspector Thompson commented that she had not been aware of any reports stating this, but would review and provide and update for Members at the next DPCSP Meeting.
- xx. The Chair thanked the PSNI for their continued work and also for their update.

4. Emerging Issues

- i. A Member commented that there had been concerns highlighted regarding the gathering of a large group of young people within the Markets area at the weekend. She commented that the young people had gathered due to an arranged fight and that knives had been used. She suggested the possibility of convening an emergency meeting in partnership with the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service to review the situation.
- ii. Chief Inspector Moran commented that the PSNIs experience had been that young people came from various areas throughout Belfast to participate in arranged fights. He commented that some of these situations could be policed but many situations need to be managed and resolved through community interventions.
- iii. A Member suggested that the model used by the Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG) could be reviewed to see how they engaged with local young people.
- iv. A Member asked the Chief Inspector if the recent activities in Ormeau Park had been arranged fights? The Chief Inspector commented that there had been a couple of incidents in Ormeau Park that involved young people. He advised Members that this situation had been managed by East Belfast PSNI and the number of young people gathering in Ormeau Park had decreased.
- v. The Chair asked if the recent assaults on Polish youths had been additional to the incidents in the parks. The Chief Inspector commented that he did not know the specifics of the incident, and would provide Members with an update at the next DPCSP Meeting.
- vi. Following a discussion, Members agreed to convene an emergency meeting to review the ongoing situation on the walkway.

- vii. A Member commented that there had been issues with young people and illegal drug taking in Blythefield. She asked if this situation warranted a roundtable discussion.
- viii. Following a discussion, Members agreed to review the current situation in Blythefield and to liaise with the Parks Department to see if any incidents have been reported.
- ix. A Member asked following the number of robberies within South Belfast had there been any interventions implemented to reduce the number of robberies occurring. The Chief Inspector commented that there had been an increase in the number of police patrols in the areas to try to deter burglaries in the area.
- x. A Member commented that following the recent statement made by the PSNI regarding flags had the policy been amended to cover all areas. The Chief Inspector updated Members in relation to the PSNI's role managing flags. He further commented that the PSNI could only act to remove flags if it is for public safety. He also advised Members that if there had been a breach of the peace, the PSNI would take appropriate action.
- xi. Following a discussion regarding flags and the PSNI's role, the Chief Inspector advised Members that they will be notified of any future statements released by the PSNI.
- xii. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members of the process associated with Policing Committee funding. Members noted and agreed the process.

5. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Date, time and venue for the next Policing Committee of South Belfast DPCSP to be confirmed.