

Minutes of South Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee

Tuesday 23rd September 2014, 5.00pm
1st Floor HR Conference Room, City Hall, Belfast

Political Members

Cllr. Kate Mullan (Chair)
Cllr. Máirtín Ó Muilleoir
Ald. Ruth Patterson

Independent Members

Paula Bradshaw
Trevor Greer
Debbie Hammill
Nuala Toman

Statutory Designated Bodies

Inspector Ray Shaw
Inspector Rosie Thompson

Inspector Gordon Wilkinson

Belfast City Council Staff Present

Denise Smith, Safer City Coordinator
Saranne Gallagher, Partnership Support Officer

Apologies

Ald. Tom Ekin
Niall Kelly (Vice Chair)

Chief Inspector Robert Murdie

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, Niall Kelly and Chief Inspector Murdie.

2. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The Minutes of the South Belfast Policing Committee Meeting held on 16th June, of which copies were previously circulated, were taken as read and correct.

3. Area Commander Update

- i. Inspector Rosie Thompson provided Members with an overview of crime statistics to date.
- ii. Inspector Thompson advised Members that during the reporting period there had been 163 searches in the Gresham Street area and 384 property searches conducted.
- iii. She further provided Members with an update on policing performance during the last six months. She informed Members that:
 - Burglary had increased by 7.5% and domestic burglary had increased by 7.8%;
 - Robbery had decreased by 53.4%;

- Vehicle theft had decreased by 16.3%;
 - ASB had decreased by 4.8%;
 - Domestic violence with injury had increased to 36%; and,
 - An increase in clearance rates of 4.4% with regards to hate crime (racial) and 5.5% with regards to sectarian.
- iv. She advised Members that there had been 2 arrests made in relation to sectarian crime and a further 14 arrests for hate crime.
- v. She informed Members that due to the increase in the number of burglaries in South Belfast, the PSNI had implemented a proactive anti burglary project. She advised Members that this project had resulted in 32 arrests.
- vi. Inspector Thompson asked Members to note that these had been operational figures and had still to be verified.
- vii. The Chair thanked the PSNI for their continued work and for their update.

4. Written Questions Submitted

- i. The following questions were submitted to the South Belfast DPCSP by Mr. Niall Kelly for response.

Question 1: *To ask the PSNI how many motorists in South Belfast have been issued with Fixed Penalty Notices for speeding offences, driving without a seatbelt, or using a mobile phone whilst driving, since 4th September 2014?*

Response: Figures for September are not yet available. The table below refers to Quarter 1 of FY 2014/15 (Apr to Jun).

Fixed Penalty Notices (FYTD : 1 Apr 2014 - End Of Jun 14)				
FPNs	FYTD			PFYTD
	Endorsable	Non Endorsable	Total	
Seatbelt	7		7	8
Speeding	33		33	27
Using a hand-held mobile phone	40		40	27
Total - All Offences	99	338	437	374

Note: These figures include only FPNs issued by police officers and not detections by the Safety Camera Scheme or drivers who have opted for the driver's awareness course.

Question 2: *To ask the PSNI what impact has there been in the Finaghy area since officers resulting from the decision to deploy Finaghy NPT officers to patrol the city centre on weekend evenings?*

Response: Every 6th weekend, on Friday and Saturday evenings, Finaghy NPT officers carry out Get Home Safe duties in the City Centre. Prior to commencing Get Home Safe at 10pm the officers carry out neighbourhood duties in the Finaghy area.

Question 3: *To ask the PSNI what was the cost of policing the anti-internment parade, and associated protests, in Belfast City Centre on 10th August 2014?*

Response: The estimated cost of policing the anti-internment parade in Belfast on 10th August 2014 is £316,941

Question 4: *To ask the PSNI what criteria is used when deploying mobile speed traps in South Belfast?*

Response: Excessive speed is a significant factor in collisions and has a huge impact on the severity of injuries sustained. PSNI and the Northern Ireland Road Safety Partnership use speed detection devices to detect speed offences.

Mobile Safety Cameras are installed in sites/routes which evidence suggests that there is an injury collision and speeding problem.

Methods are as follows:

- Road traffic collisions with injuries over the past 3 years are mapped on a computer using a geographic information system.
- Clusters of collisions either at specific sites or along routes are identified using specific criteria established by the Partnership Board in line with national standards.
- The Partnership conducts assessments to establish the most appropriate solution such as signage, engineering works or speed enforcement.
- Speed surveys are undertaken at sites to ascertain if a speeding problem exists.
- Statistics from camera sites are monitored to ensure camera enforcement is working.

In support of this aim PSNI officers also carry out speed detection operations in areas where complaints have been received from local residents etc.

Question 5: *To ask the PSNI how many road traffic accidents there have been in South Belfast this year and how that figure compares to the previous two years?*

Response:

TIME PERIOD	Q1 12/13	Q1 13/14	Q1 14/15
Number of Road Traffic Collisions' reported	94	90	108
Number of 'Fatal and Serious'	11	6	8

Question 6: *What impact have budget cutbacks had on PSNI operations and service in South Belfast?*

Response: The Police Service of Northern Ireland has been working to deliver efficiencies and in the current year alone we have made cuts to our budget of £62.9m. However, pressures still exist around finances and the Police Service of Northern Ireland is actively working to cut budgets by over £20 million.

Keeping people safe now and building upon our ethos of Policing with the Community remain as priorities. The Chief Constable has also outlined that he wishes to maintain the current recruitment to deliver the target strength of 6,963 police officers and 2,601 support staff.

Almost 80% of current PSNI spending is on salaries and fixed costs which leaves very limited scope to deliver sustainable savings without impacting heavily on core policing functions. Savings are being sought on a wide variety of aspects from stationary, to travel, furniture, building maintenance, non-safety related repairs to vehicles, hospitality, catering, equipment etc. All officers and staff have been asked to identify areas where budget could be saved, so that the District can achieve savings.

It is clear that efficiencies will remain an ongoing consideration, and the target of £20m cuts for 2013/14 may increase.

ii. The following question was submitted by Councillor Craig

Question 1: *I was wondering if you could table a couple of questions for me over robberies/crime associated with small businesses - primarily retail through the DPCSP. I am looking crime figures on the issue. There was an attempted robbery on a Winemark there over the weekend which you may have seen on the news. I suspect that it is more frequent than is known. I want to know what the PSNI are doing about it and how they are seeking to protect small businesses based within the local community.*

Response: Robbery figures to the end of July show that the numbers of robberies have decreased compared to the same period last year. There

has also been a decrease in the number of robberies at businesses and the number of detections has increased. (Table below refers)

A and B District PSNI are having a joint event for retailers on Monday the 3rd November 2014 at Cityside Retail Park, York Street, Belfast. The event will run between 10am and 3pm and will cover a variety of topics such as Shop Theft, Robbery, Incendiary Devices and Tiger Kidnap.

Offence group	Recorded crime				Crime outcomes (rate, %)			Crime outcomes (number)	
	Apr-Jul 12/13	Apr-Jul 13/14	change	% change	Apr-Jul 12/13	Apr-Jul 13/14	% point change	Apr-Jul 12/13	Apr-Jul 13/14
ROBBERY	89	37	-52	-58	10	30	20	9	11
<i>Robbery of business property</i>	11	7	-4	-	18	43	25	2	3
Burglary	393	425	32	8	9	10	1	35	42
<i>Non-domestic burglary</i>	118	140	22	19	14	15	1	17	21
Shoplifting	394	414	20	5	56	52	-4	222	215

- iii. The Chair asked if the road traffic figures included bicycle accidents? Inspector Thompson commented that the figures had not been broken down to show car and bicycle accidents. She advised Members that she would provide a breakdown of this information at the next DPCSP Meeting.
- iv. A Member asked that if an incident is reported to the PSNI as a hate crime but following investigations the incident proves not to be a hate crime, are the figures amended accordingly to reflect this change?
- v. Following a discussion regarding the reporting and recording of hate crime incidents, Inspector Thompson commented that if an incident is reported and is perceived as a hate crime by the victim then it is recorded as a hate crime incident.
- vi. A Member commented that she had attended a hate crime meeting and advised Members that there had been a number of hate crime incidents in North Belfast. She commented that the hate crime incidents had left the community feeling very frustrated. She suggested that there should be a Code of Conduct developed and disseminated to all ethnic minorities who come to live in Northern Ireland.
- vii. Inspector Ray Shaw commented that all information regarding hate crime should be forwarded to the PSNI. However, he commented that people do not report hate crime incidents and therefore the PSNI face difficulties in eradicating this crime.

- viii. The Chair commented that the Roma Tension Monitoring template had been a structure used in the past to deal with managing incidents. She further commented that if people fail to report incidents, structures that had been in place are ineffective.
- ix. A Member commented that hate crime had been a difficult crime to stop and he offered his support to the PSNI in attempting to remove this crime from our society.
- x. Following a conversation regarding hate crime, the Chair suggested to invite South Belfast Roundtable to attend a future DPCSP to give an overview of their work, role and the issues they are facing. Members welcomed this suggestion.

5. Stay Safe, Stay Secure Project Proposal

- i. The Safer City Coordinator provided Members with an update regarding the Safer Homes Scheme proposal submitted by the PSNI Crime Prevention Officer.
- ii. She advised Members that part of the PSNI Crime Prevention Officer's role had been to carry out home safety and security assessments for victims of crime and vulnerable people within the South Belfast community. She commented that following an assessment the PSNI would provide a written recommendation of what security measures had been required by the victim.
- iii. She informed Members that currently due to the lack of finance, PSNI could only provide a minimal level of security products which had been recommended and the PSNI had no funding for installation. The responsibility to pay for further products and installation lies with the victims.
- iv. She commented that the PSNI had requested support from the DPCSP to help provide an enhanced service and for a partnership approach to be developed.
- v. She informed Members that a contribution of £5,000 had been requested to support the implementation of the aforementioned project.
- vi. Following a discussion on the project proposal, Members agreed to funding the project in principle. However, Members requested for further information regarding how the project will be measured and for the information to be circulated to Members accordingly.

6. Policing Committee Applications

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that five policing committee applications had been submitted from the following organisations:
 - African Caribbean Support Organisation Northern Ireland (ACSONI);
 - Old Stranmillis Residents' Association (OSRA);

- Greater Village Regeneration Trust (GVRT);
 - Belfast City Centre Management (BCCM); and,
 - Queens University Belfast.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator provided Members with an overview of each application and detailed the total amount of funding requested for each application.
 - iii. Members noted the report and agreed to fund the five policing applications submitted.

7. Emerging Issues

- i. The Chair asked what measures could be put in place following the recent attacks on cars in South Belfast.
- ii. Inspector Ray Shaw commented that the Freshers Operation had been in place and there had been 8 officers policing the area each night. He commented that he had been very surprised by the recent attacks and that the PSNI had been investigating the attacks.
- iii. The Chair asked had the attacks not been caught on CCTV? Inspector Shaw commented that he had not seen the footage captured on CCTV and would review the footage and provide Members with an update at the next DPCSP Meeting.
- iv. A Member advised that there had been an increase in needle finds in both Ormeau and Botanic Parks. She advised Members that there had been a meeting held with Belfast City Council Parks Department and Public Health Agency. She requested the issue to remain on the DPCSP agenda for monitoring purposes.
- v. A Member commented that there had been claims of increased heroine dealing in Dublin Road and Donegall Pass.
- vi. The Chair commented that there had been a need for a temporary mechanism to be identified to encourage the reporting of all criminal activity to the PSNI.
- vii. Following a conversation regarding reporting mechanisms, the Safer City Coordinator advised Members of a Campaign implemented by Antrim Borough Council 'Speak Up and Speak Out'. She suggested for information in relation to this Campaign to be reported at the next DPCSP. Members welcomed this suggestion.
- viii. A Member advised the Partnership of a recent incident involving a student being in taxi and then assaulted. She further commented that students had felt vulnerable in City Centre bars and asked if the DPCSP could do anything to address the students fears.
- ix. The Chair suggested for taxi companies and licensed premises to attend at future DPCSP to discuss this issue.

- x. The Safer City Coordinator suggested for the issue regarding students safety and welfare to be put on to the agenda of the next meeting of the Safer Belfast Coordination Team. Members agreed to this suggestion.
- xi. The Chair asked if the number of female taxi drivers in Belfast had been known? The Safer City Coordinator commented that this information had not been known but would confirm this information when discussions are held with taxi companies.

8. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members noted that the next South Belfast DPCSP Policing Meeting will be held on Wednesday 26th November, 5.30pm , 1st Floor, HR Conference Room, Cecil Ward.