

**Minutes of East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety  
Partnership  
Conor Room, City Hall, Wednesday, 29th August, 2012**

**Political Members**

Cllr Claire Hanna (Chair)  
Cllr Deidre Hargey  
Cllr Mervyn Jones  
Cllr Adam Newton  
Cllr Niall Ó Donnghaile  
Ald Gavin Robinson

**Independent Members**

Lynda Gibson  
Mark Houston (Vice Chair)  
Olwen Lyner  
Andrew Moorhead

**Police Service of Northern Ireland  
Representative**

Chief Inspector Mark McEwan

**Staff Present**

Suzanne Gowling CSP Coordinator  
Sean McCormick DPP Officer

**Apologies**

Gareth Beacom

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- i. The Chair, Councillor Hanna, welcomed Members and the representative of the Police Service of Northern Ireland to the meeting of the East Belfast DPCSP and asked that each person present to briefly introduce themselves to the Partnership.

**2. Apologies and Declarations of Interest**

- i. An apology for inability to attend was received from Gareth Beacom.
- ii. The Chair read out the Declarations of Interest statement to the Members as per Council policy.

**3. Minutes of the East Belfast DPCSP Private Meeting of 11th June.**

- i. Minutes of the Private Meeting of the East Belfast DPCSP of 11th June, copies of which had previously been circulated to Members, were taken as read and signed correct.

**4. Area Commander's Report**

- i. Chief Inspector McEwan, PSNI Area Commander of East Belfast, welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Members of the East Belfast DPCSP. The Area Commander then gave an overview of the events that had occurred during the summer months, an update on the current targets set within the

East Belfast Local Policing Plan and on-going police action in relation to the burning of a Polish flag on 11th July.

- ii. The Area Commander informed the Members that management of events relating to parades and interface issues during the summer months had been better than in previous years. While acknowledging that there had been increased police personnel deployed, he also recognised the community engagement that had taken place on the ground. While the summer period had been a lot quieter than in previous years, the Area Commander stated that some issues still needed addressed and this was a 'work in progress'.
- iii. In relation to police targets contained within the East Belfast Local Policing Plan, the Area Commander gave the following statistics for the period 1st April to 25th August, compared to the same period in 2011:-
  - o Reduction in burglary of 36%
  - o Reduction of antisocial behaviour incidents by 8.8%
  - o Reduction of non-domestic violence crime involving injury by 20.1%
  - o The level of overall crime in East Belfast reduced by 13.4%

The Area Commander also outlined police protocols when responding to incidents of domestic violence and subsequent follow up action.

- iv. Chief Inspector McEwan briefed Members on the incident where a Polish flag had been burnt on a bonfire in East Belfast on the night of 11th July.

Having established the circumstances surrounding the incident, the Area Commander outlined the action taken by police. This included community engagement and the establishment of a Tension Monitoring Group to deal with specific issues involving the Polish community and that of the wider East Belfast community.

The Area Commander informed the Members that several meetings of the Tension Monitoring Group had taken place which resulted in positive dialogue. However, he also stated that there was a need for expanding education programmes throughout the community in respect of diversity issues.

- v. In conclusion, the Area Commander highlighted the contribution of various activities that had contributed to positive outcomes of policing in East Belfast, including the roles played by the 'Street by Street', drugs awareness programmes delivered to schools, cross community activities and engagement with young people.

## **5. Questions from Members**

- i. Several Members questioned the Area Commander on the extent of illegal drug issues in East Belfast.
- ii. The Area Commander commented that there had been 32 arrests for various drug offences this year to date, compared to 43 for the whole of 2011. He further explained that sizeable drug seizures had taken place and that police had implemented 'Operation Torus' to combat drug dealing at a local street level. He also outlined the support police had received from local communities and community groups.
- iii. A Member suggested to the Area Commander that the rationale behind the management of how and when police respond to incidents, including response times, must be clarified to both the Members and the general public. The Member expressed the opinion that this would greatly enhance the understanding of why and how police grade calls they receive from the community.
- iv. The Area Commander agreed with the Member's comments and suggested that this may be a topic for a future public meeting of the East Belfast DPCSP.
- v. A Member asked the Area Commander if police had any figures that indicated how many cases of burglary in the community that were not being reported to the police.
- vi. The Area Commander stated that he had no figures that reflected this issue and stated that burglary, domestic or commercial, was a crime that tended not to go unreported.

On behalf of the East Belfast DPCSP the Chair, Councillor Hanna, thanked Chief Inspector McEwan for his report and added that the Members looked forward to working with him in the future. Chief Inspector McEwan thanked the Chair for her comments and left the meeting.

## **6. Development of a Delivery Plan for East Belfast DPCSP**

- i. Members were reminded that following the Private Meeting of East Belfast DPCSP held on 3rd July, they had agreed to have further discussions in relation to the development of a Delivery Plan. A Planning Day held on 20th August of the full East Belfast DPCSP produced identified priorities for East Belfast.
- ii. At the conclusion of the Planning Day held on 20th August, Members agreed that support staff would prepare a draft Delivery Plan based on the discussions that had taken place. The draft Delivery Plan would then be submitted to Members for their consideration at the next Private Meeting of the East Belfast DPCSP.

- iii. Subsequently, Members were furnished with a draft Delivery Plan for East Belfast DPCSP, copies of which had previously been circulated.
- iv. Several Members raised concerns that the draft Delivery Plan that had been circulated did not reflect the planning day discussions or the agreed priorities identified at the discussions.
- v. After further discussion Members agreed that a separate meeting of the East Belfast DPCSP should take place in order to discuss the formulation of the Delivery Plan. It was further agreed that this meeting should take place on Friday, 7th September at 2.00pm.

## **7. East Belfast DPCSP Policing Committee Procedures**

- i. Members were reminded that the functions of the Policing Committee of the DPCSP are known as '**restricted functions**', namely:
  - Provide views to the relevant District Commander and the Principal PCSP on any matter concerning policing of East Belfast.
  - Monitor police performance in relation to the Policing Plan of East Belfast and Local Policing Plan applying to East Belfast.
  - Obtain the cooperation of the public with the police in preventing crime and enhancing community safety in East Belfast.
- ii. Members were also reminded that in order to carry out the functions and responsibilities of the East Belfast DPCSP, Members had agreed that the Policing Committee of the East Belfast DPCSP would meet prior to each Private Meeting of the DPCSP.
- iii. In order for the Policing Committee to undertake its business during scheduled meetings, Members were asked to consider the following-
  - The format such meetings should take.
  - What information the Area Commander of the Police Service of Northern Ireland should submit for inclusion in Members papers.
  - Procedures around asking questions of the Area Commander.
- iv. Following discussion Members agreed the following format and agenda items for future meetings of the East Belfast DPCSP Policing Committee:-
  - Separate papers and agenda to Members of the Policing Committee.
  - Separate minutes of the Policing Committee to be taken and furnished to the Policing Committee Members.
  - Where possible, Members to email support staff with any questions to be answered by the Area Commander 10 working days in advance of the Policing Committee meeting for inclusion in the Policing Committee Members papers.

- During the meeting the opportunity to ask the Area Commander supplementary or further questions.
  - An update from the Area Commander on past and future events involving police resources.
  - Policing Committee meetings to be themed around an agreed topic and the Area Commander to present this report.
  - With respect to funding initiatives or schemes under the budget heading 'Obtaining the Co-operation of the Public with the Police in Preventing Crime', that this item is on all future agendas of the Policing Committee meeting.
- v. Members agreed that at the meeting of the Policing Committee of the East Belfast DPCSP to be held on Tuesday, 25 September, a draft agenda for the conduct of Policing Committee meetings would be included in the Members papers for discussion.
- vi. Members requested that the pro forma application form and guidelines for accessing funding under the 'Obtaining the Co-operation of the Public with the Police in Preventing Crime' budget heading, should be expedited as quickly as possible from the Belfast PCSP. Members also expressed the opinion that there should be time frames and processes established for information sharing between the Belfast PCSP and the four DPCSPs.

## **8. Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2013-2016**

- i. Members were advised that the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) is currently holding a consultation process in relation to the Northern Ireland Policing Plan for the period 2013-2016. As part of the consultation process, Members were informed that the NIPB was seeking the views of PCSPs and DPCSPs on any additional areas of concern or priorities that are not already contained in the 'measures of success' contained in the 2012-2015 Policing Plan which could be used to update the 2013-2016 Policing Plan.
- ii. Accordingly, Members were asked to consider the information provided and agree if they wish to include any additional 'measures of success' for the 2013-2016 Policing Plan.
- iii. After discussion, Members agreed that they would forward any suggestions to support staff and that a collated response on behalf of East Belfast DPCSP and would be submitted to the NIPB.

## **9. Future of Policing and Community Safety Small Grants.**

- i. Members were informed that following the inclusion of small grants in the Transitional Plan of Belfast PCSP and its four DPCSPs, East Belfast DPCSP nominated three Members to sit on a Working Group to review the process and criteria for future small grants schemes.

- ii. Following the initial meeting of the working group, Members were asked to consider the following recommendations:-
  - The recommended allocation of funding towards small grants in 2012/2013 (£15,000) and 2013/14 (£35,000).
  - Financial processes shall be in line with Belfast City Council Corporate guidelines and in the longer term administration should be moved to the Council's Central Grants Unit with a review in 2014.
  - Only groups which support the rule of law and the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be funded and every applicant will have to evidence their willingness to work with the police.
  - A portion of funding should be ring fenced to support work that improves cooperation with the police and in so doing support work with groups that have not historically worked alongside the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In this instance groups will be required to demonstrate how specifically the grant has and will contribute to improved cooperation.
  - The community safety team will make every effort to ensure that all groups are aware of the Policing and Community Safety Small Grants; that the application form and guidance notes are easily accessible; and that groups are supported to complete the application when necessary.
  - Communities of interest and areas that were previously undersubscribed are to be proactively encouraged to apply for small grants as well as geographical communities.
- iii. Following discussion, Members agreed funding of £15,000 during the financial year up to 31st March, 2013. However, Members deferred a decision on Small Grant funding for the 2013/14 financial period until the Planning Day meeting scheduled for 7th September.
- iv. All other recommendations were agreed.