

# Minutes of the West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

## Policing Committee

Highfield Community Centre  
Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> November, 2012

<b>Political Members</b>	<b>Independent Members</b>
Councillor Matt Garrett (Chair)	Mr Harry Connolly (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Tim Attwood	Ms Breige Brownlee
Councillor Maire Hendron	Mrs Carol Larkin
Councillor Brian Kingston	
<b>PSNI Representatives</b>	
Chief Inspector Emma Bond	
Inspector Michelle Boyd	
Inspector Jocelyn Wise	
<b>Staff Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Glenn Thomas, DPP Officer	Alderman Hugh Smyth
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer	Bernie Reilly
Michael Burns, Project Officer	
Paul Cleary, Anti-Social Behaviour Officer	

### 1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

- i. No declarations of interest were recorded.

### 3. Minutes

- i. The minutes of 26<sup>th</sup> September, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and approved.
- ii. Chief Inspector Bond stated that the timescales stated for the PSNI to respond to questions was too tight and asked that this be revised to give officers 14 days notice of a question prior to a meeting to allow a response to be given two days in advance.
- iii. Members agreed to this amendment.
- iv. **ACTION**: Questions to be answered at Policing Committee meetings are to be submitted 14 days in advance of the meeting and responses to be supplied by the PSNI two days prior to the meeting, where available.

#### **4. Update on Policing within West Belfast**

##### Crime Statistics

- i. The Area Commander provided Members with an update on policing statistics in West Belfast for November, 2012. She drew Members attention to a 7% drop in overall crime and a 30% increase in drug seizures.
- ii. Chief Inspector Bond also stated that the area was experiencing a 60% increase in Violent Crime with Injury (Domestic) and while this could be as a result of increased reporting or the seasonal impact on domestic violence figures, the cause was unknown. Chief Inspector Bond noted her concern at detection rates not rising alongside incident rates and suggested that Members may wish to focus on the issue at a future meeting.

##### Operation Echinus

- iii. The Area Commander advised Members that in the first two weeks of Operation Echinus, 30 arrests had been made and passed to the Public Prosecution Service, 70 fixed penalty notices had been issued, 70 stop and searches had been carried out and 65 letters had been sent to owners of cars with valuable items on display through Operation Habit.

#### **5. Questions in relation to the Area Commanders Report**

- i. In response to a Members query regarding crime statistics in comparison to North Belfast, the Area Commander stated that the positive District performance was largely due to West Belfast figures however incidents of the domestic violence were lower and the detection rate higher.
- ii. A Member queried the level of communication between the interface area of Springfield Road and the Grosvenor Road Station as opposed to Tennent Street Station. The Area Commander stated that she was not aware of an increase in incidents in the area and stated that Sergeant Wilson attended Greater Shankill meetings on behalf of West Belfast.
- iii. In relation to this item, the Area Commander reminded Members that all incidents should be reported to the police and that response times to reports was measured.

#### **6. Victim, Witness Care Unit**

- i. The Area Commander updated Members on the establishment of a new unit within the PSNI designed to improve victim and witness care and suggested that the unit be invited to a future meeting on the DPCSP, whether in private or public.
- ii. Members agreed to this suggestion and requested that those with experience, good and bad, of victim and witness care also be invited to speak.

#### **7. Other Matters relating to Policing**

##### Police Ombudsman's Report

- i. Members discussed the Police Ombudsman's review of Seamus Fox's death outside Woodburn Station and asked what lessons the PSNI had learnt from the incident.

- ii. The Area Commander stated that, while some aspects of staffing levels could not be discussed for security reasons, a review of conditions was underway and that improvements to the design of the area had begun before the report's publication.

#### Estates Strategy

- iii. A Member requested that the PSNI Estates Strategy and use of associated apparatus be considered as a theme for a future meeting.
- iv. The Area Commander confirmed that PSNI estates were a corporate issue but agreed to investigate who the appropriate officer would be to provide such an update.

#### Additional Items

- v. In response to a query from a Member regarding cash seizures, the Area Commander confirmed that if an officer believes that money found during a search is from the proceeds of crime, £1,000 or more can be seized and a legitimate purpose requested. She also agreed to investigate the circumstances of the Member's query.
- vi. With regards to the current terrorist threat and resource levels, Chief Inspector Bond confirmed that while officers were mindful of the threat, resourcing was adequate and delivering good policing remained the key priority.
- vii. A Member queried the use of shadow vehicles for cash in transit vans following the recent robbery on the Andersonstown Road. The Area Commander stated that the allocation of vans was based on availability and that work was ongoing with shops owners, particularly in the run up to Christmas.
- viii. A Member questioned the possibility of inviting the statutory partners to future Policing Committee meetings to assist in continuity. It was however agreed that to maintain the level of confidentiality around sensitive issues, the current procedures should continue.

### **8. Date and Time of Next Meeting**

- i. Members agreed to meet at 12noon on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> January to receive an update on Operation Echinus and on Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 4.45pm for a full debrief of the operation.