

**Minutes of the West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership  
Policing Committee Meeting**

**1st Floor Conference Room, Cecil Ward Building  
Wednesday, 29th October, 2014**

**Political Members**

Councillor Tim Attwood (Acting-Chair)  
Councillor Matt Garrett

**Independent Members**

Breige Brownlee  
Ann-Marie Weir

**PSNI Representatives**

Chief Inspector Anthony McNally, PSNI  
Inspector Mike White

Inspector Alan Swann  
Sergeant Christopher Robinson

**Staff Present**

Alan Wardle, Safer City Coordinator  
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support  
Officer

**Apologies**

Councillor Frank McCoubrey (Chair)  
Harry Connolly (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Máire Hendron  
Bernie Reilly

**1. Welcome and Routine Matters**

- i. The Acting-Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

- i. Members were asked to declare any material interests which they may have in relation to any item of business to be considered during the meeting. No declarations of interest were declared.

**3. Minutes**

- i. The minutes of 28th August, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

**4. Policing Committee Grants**

- i. The Safer City Coordinator reminded Members that this item, which provided details of the approved Policing Committee Grants, had been discussed during the full DPCSP.
- ii. He added that the email approval that had been used to date was not ideal, however it was important to enable speedy delivery of services on the ground. Members were further advised that a process for the approval of Policing Committee Grants going forward would be brought to Members in November.
- iii. Members noted the contents of the report.

## 5. Area Commanders Update on Policing

### Violent Crime

- i. Inspector Swann delivered a presentation to Members on in the issue of Violent Crime within West Belfast, an issue which has become more prevalent across the City.
- ii. Members were advised that the highest number of incidents occurred in the Lower Falls area, and that these were not linked to licenced premises.
- iii. In response to a query about how many incidents were linked to alcohol, Members were advised that this was hard to determine or record accurately however Officers did seek to ascertain whether alcohol was a motivating factor.
- iv. While Chief Inspector McNally agreed that it was important to compare statistics with the previous year's performance, he advised that the increase in violent crime was now a 3 year crime trend across Northern Ireland.
- v. In response to a query about why figures for this type of crime had increased, Chief Inspector McNally advised that while it may seem easy to say that increased confidence in the PSNI had led to increased reporting, there was evidence of this, and no further evidence based trends had yet been identified.
- vi. Members were advised that threats issued via social media as well as neighbourhood disputes were included within the figures. Chief Inspector McNally advised that many of these crimes did not exist 10 years ago and that it was important that domestic violence and social media issues were included within the future DPCSP Action Plan.
- vii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that these issues were within the Northern Ireland Policing Plan and so would filter to the local areas. He also noted that the East Belfast DPCSP had supported projects focusing on social media education which the West Belfast DPCSP could learn from.
- viii. Members agreed that such issues were becoming prevalent for head teachers as social media was being used to arrange fights and to bully pupils.

### Confidence in Policing

- ix. A Member suggested that further information on the outcomes of cases would be useful within the statistical report, for instance the number of arrests, charges and the outcome at Court. It was agreed that this would go some way to alleviate community frustrations.
- x. Members discussed the role of the Courts Service and how the PSNI experienced the community frustrations at first hand given that they were the public face of the judiciary.
- xi. It was agreed that the issue should be looked at again for the anti-social behaviour conference in February, 2015. The Safer City Coordinator advised that he would make contact with a senior member of the judiciary for this purpose.

### Local Policing Plan

- xii. Chief Superintendent McNally advised that the Local Policing Plan for West Belfast would soon be going out for consultation. He reminded Members that the response last year had been limited and so an extra effort would be made this year to promote the Plan on external websites, via social media, through the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and through local community engagement.

- xiii. Members asked the Area Commander to circulate a list of venues, dates and times when police will be actively seeking responses to the survey in order for Members to accompany officers where possible.

## **6. Members Questions**

- i. In response to a request from Members, Chief Inspector McNally advised that the police investigation into the death of Eddy Gibson was ongoing. Members were advised that further information was needed and so the public were being encouraged to make statements as a conviction would be difficult otherwise. He added that he understood the community's reluctance, but for the sake of the family, cooperation with the police must be encouraged.
- ii. Members were also advised that patrols had been stepped up in the Divis area following increased car crime in recent weeks. Chief Inspector McNally confirmed that this seemed to have quelled the trouble and the PSNI had been thanked by residents for their efforts. Members were advised that additional resources had also been allocated for Halloween weekend.

## **7. Emerging Issues**

### Andersonstown / Riverdale Area

- i. A Member raised concerns regarding anti-social behaviour at the Halifax Estate Agents on the Andersonstown Road which had led to design out crime solutions being drawn up. He added that these were not popular with residents who had reported feeling caged in, and asked for assistance from the PSNI to resolve the issue alongside the Department of Social Development.
- ii. Chief Inspector McNally noted that this was a good example of partnership working and suggested that those effected including residents, shop keepers and the PSNI meet to discuss a way forward whilst noting the impact that the ongoing issues were having on all concerned.

### Falls Park

- iii. A Member highlighted to the PSNI the ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour at Falls Park and Maguire's Garage and suggested that this was nipped in the bud before the situation worsened.
- iv. The Safer City Coordinator advised that a meeting was scheduled between the Council's Community Safety Unit and Parks Department regarding possible Joint Enforcement in the Falls Park, City Cemetery and Ballymurphy areas.
- v. Chief Inspector McNally welcomed the move and suggested that the area could benefit from Design Out Crime initiatives.

### Questions from Members of the Public

- vi. Members were advised that questions had been submitted from St Mary's Community Group.
- vii. Chief Inspector McNally advised that 2 of the questions could be easily answered while a further 2 may require a formal Freedom on Information request.