

Minutes of the East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Private Meeting

Room 1c, Cecil Ward Building, Belfast
Monday 5th October, 2015

Political Members

Councillor Carole Howard (Chair)
Councillor Sonia Copeland
Councillor Aileen Graham
Councillor Deirdre Hargey
Councillor Niall O Donnghaile
Councillor Tommy Sandford

Independent Members

Mr Jonathan Currie
Ms Lisa McMaster
Mr Steven McMillan
Mrs Michelle Bryans
Mr David Geddis

Designated Organisations

Gary Ballantyne, NIHE
Yvonne Cowan, H&SCT
Alan Cunningham, NIFRS
Jane Lappin, PBNI

Dermot Magorrian, YJA
Chief Inspector David Moore, PSNI
Pauline Smart, EA

Staff Present

Glenn Thomas, Safer City Coordinator
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Chair welcomed Members, and Lesley McCombe, DOJ, to the inaugural meeting of the newly reconstituted East Belfast DPCSP and asked each Member to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Declaration of Interests

- 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 noted.

3. Election of Vice-Chair

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that prior to the meeting, the Independent Members had met and unanimously elected Mr David Geddis as the Vice-Chair of the East Belfast DPCSP.
- ii. The Chair congratulated Mr Geddis on his appointment to the role.

4. (D)PCSP Roles and Responsibilities

- i. The Safer City Coordinator drew Members' attention to recommendations regarding the role of the PCSP and DPCSPs in Belfast based upon the Joint Committee's vision for the Partnerships and the Criminal Justice Inspection NI (CJI) review.

- ii. Members were advised that the Belfast PCSP at their meeting on 14th September had agreed to keep the functions and workings of the Policing Committee separate from the PCSP so as not to dilute its functions, and to include an update from the PSNI and other Statutory Partners at the beginning of each Private Meeting in order to share information on relevant issues.
- iii. In response to questions regarding what information would be required from the Statutory Partners, the Safer City Coordinator advised that the purpose of the updates was to provide information on emerging issues that were relevant to the Partnership. He agreed to request a brief from the PCSP on what updates they would be receiving and use this to inform East Belfast DPCSP partners ahead of the next meeting.
- iv. Members agreed that this would be a useful step, not to monitor the other Statutory Partners, but as an opportunity for Members to work together to tackle issues affecting community safety and the DPCSP.
- v. Following discussion, Members approved the 5 recommendations as detailed within the report.

5. PCSP and DPCSP Funding

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that PCSP and DPCSP funding for 2015/16 had been cut by 50% as the result of austerity measures. Members were further advised that in the absence of a Letter of Offer, DPCSPs had been asked by the Joint Committee to cease work not already contracted and justify all spend to date, details of which were contained within the report.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator asked Members to approve the progress made to date, noting that while future projects may be impacted by the cuts, there was still a considerable budget remaining to be allocated during the rest of the financial year.
- iii. Members noted the report.

6. PCSP Small Grants

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that a process for approving PCSP Small Grants in the absence of a PCSP Members Panel had been approved by the previous Partnership. This involved a panel of senior Council Officers providing independent scrutiny of the Small Grants process. Members were further advised that the budget for Small Grants had been reduced from £30,000 to £27,500 as a result of the budget cuts, with a maximum award of £5,000 per grant.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that 4 applications has received funding in Tranche 1 of the PCSP Small Grants and a further 3 had met the threshold for funding in Tranche 2, bringing the total spend to £26,590.
- iii. A Member queried when applications for these grants had been submitted and how groups in the new areas of Belfast, such as Castlereagh, would have known to apply.
- iv. The Safer City Coordinator advised that applications had closed earlier in the year however advertising and Small Grants Workshops had been held in the new areas of Belfast and staff had linked with the PCSP Manager in Castlereagh in order to make contact with groups in the area.

- v. A Member added that grants from across the Council had been centralised and were now administered by a Central Grants Unit (CGU). She suggested that it may be useful to circulate a list of groups that received information on the grants in order to ensure that no one was being missed.
- vi. Another Member queried whether a needs assessment for East Belfast had been carried out in order to best determine where money should be allocated, and suggested that PSNI statistics could assist with this.
- vii. There was also a query regarding the level of detail provided for each of the approved grants in terms of needs analysis and outcomes.
- viii. The Safer City Coordinator confirmed that money allocated to PCSP Small Grants was administered by the Central Grants Unit (CGU) however all other project money would be administered by the PCSP team using Project Briefs which clearly outlined the need, beneficiaries, outcomes and outputs of each activity. He suggested inviting a member of staff from the CGU to explain their process which would help to reassure Members of the system and the links with East Belfast DPCSP priorities.
- ix. A Member suggested that money could be set aside for focused area working which had been seen in other DPCSP areas to offer a more flexible and strategic approach to delivery than Small Grants.
- x. The Chair welcomed the points raised and noted that the transitional period had been difficult for new areas but the steps outlined above should ensure that all groups were kept informed of possible funding opportunities.
- xi. The Safer City Coordinator noted that £910 remained within the Small Grants budget and asked Members to consider setting this money aside to help with the possible establishment of a PACT in the new areas of East Belfast.
- xii. Members approved this suggestion and noted the Small Grants that had been awarded. Proposer – Councillor Sonia Copeland, Seconded - Councillor Tommy Sandford.

7. Planning Process

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that Action Plans for 2016/17 were due to be submitted to the Joint Committee in February, 2016 and so the planning process must begin in October in order to meet this deadline.
- ii. Members were advised that a citywide consultation had been undertaken by the PCSP during 2014/15 and that this, along with current East Belfast specific discussions with retailers and communities, would be used to assist in identifying priorities.
- iii. Members were asked to agree the following 3 recommendations:
 - that Officers would initiate the planning process incorporating consultation and Members workshops, with Members supplying any relevant plans, statistics and information to Officers,
 - a Citywide planning discussion would be held incorporating PCSP and DPCSP Members focusing on strategic priorities, followed by District workshops, and
 - that a thematic working group would be established to represent the DPCSP in strategic planning issues.

- iv. A Member welcomed the suggestion of holding citywide discussions given that issues often boarder more than one District, and this would allow Members to learn of good practice developed by other DPCSPs. It was also noted that issues can change and evolve throughout the year and so it was important that Action Plans are flexible enough to deal with this.
- v. The Safer City Coordinator advised that the Plan could be amended by following a Change Control Process which required approval from the Joint Committee. He noted that this could be a lengthy process, but it was available should it be required.
- vi. Members agreed that it was important to keep in regular communication with those on the ground to ensure that the DPCSP was making a difference, tackling real issues and empowering local communities. It was also noted that the DPCSP had a role in supporting existing groups and initiatives.
- vii. The Safer City Coordinator encouraged Members to contact staff with any examples of good practice which could then be explored and fed back to the Partnership through the approved project planning processes.
- viii. Members approved the recommendations and the following Members agreed to take part in the thematic working group as per recommendation 3; Councillors Howard, Copeland, Graham (as available), Councillor O Donnghaile, Steven McMillen, Michelle Bryans, Yvonne Cowan and Dermot Magorrian.

8. Financial Update

- i. The Safer City Coordinator drew Members attention to details of the East Belfast DPCSP expenditure to date and advised that £54,950 remained to be allocated through the delivery of the Transitional Action Plan.
- ii. Members noted the information provided.

9. Partners and Communities Together (PACT) Funding

- i. The Safer City Coordinator provided Members with relevant background information on the two Partners and Communities Together (PACT) groups currently operating in East Belfast. Members were advised that these groups, made up of constituted members including DPCSP partners and Community Safety staff, represented an excellent mechanism for dealing with local issues in a timely fashion through partnership working and the delegation of tasks.
- ii. Members were asked to consider granting £2,000 towards to the operation of the two PACTs which had been seen to promote community confidence in terms of the reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour. The Safer City Coordinator added that PACTs are outcome based in nature and so a clear link can be seen between the issues raised and the actions put in place to resolve them.
- iii. A Member voiced their support for the positive work undertaken by the Pottinger PACT and commended the work of PCSP staff in driving the momentum of the group.
- iv. Yvonne Cowan, H&SCT, added that PACTs also presented the opportunity to confirm priorities with communities and so they were useful for consultation purposes.

- v. Members noted the report and agreed to the allocation of £2,000 towards the two PACTs as requested.

10. Emerging Issues

Halloween

- i. In response to a query regarding Halloween, Chief Inspector Moore informed Members that planning for the Halloween period was ongoing across Belfast. With regards to fireworks, Chief Inspector Moore advised that to assist the PSNI in dealing with the sale of illegal fireworks, reports from the community were helpful.

Drug Misuse

- ii. A Member suggested that a PSNI report on the issue of drugs would be useful for Members following a concerning episode of Spotlight which made mention of East Belfast. It was also noted that following arrests, drug dealers appeared to be released back onto the street very quickly, and while this was a matter for the Judiciary rather than the PSNI, it had an impact on community confidence.
- iii. A Member added that the issue of drugs was an important one that could be discussed further at another meeting. She advised that the Belfast PCSP were working on an initiative regarding discarded needles and that further information on this could be useful for the East Belfast DPCSP.
- iv. The Safer City Coordinator also provided some information on the East Belfast Drug and Alcohol Stakeholder Forum that was doing good work with many of the partners around the table.

Neighbourhood Policing Teams

- v. In response to a query regarding why East Belfast had just one Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) whilst the other Districts had three, Chief Inspector Moore advised NPTs had been allocated based on need and due to increased threat levels in other areas of the City. He added that he was not concerned about the numbers of police in East Belfast and that the NPT was tasked with focused work in a small area. He noted that the Local Policing Teams (LPT) covered the entire District and, alongside response calls, were tasked with work that would previously been carried out by Neighbourhood Officers.
- vi. The Safer City Coordinator suggested that a brief on the new policing structures would be useful at the future meeting, and Members asked for statistics on police numbers and patrols to be provided.
- vii. The Chair asked Members to contact PCSP staff regarding any other specific issues that they wished to be raised at a future meeting of the Policing Committee; the Chief Inspector Moore advised that he was happy to take part in discussions in the mean time.

11. Dates of Next Meetings

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that a Public Meeting had been provisionally booked on Tuesday 3rd November between 5.30pm-7pm in the Park Avenue Hotel, with a focus on Retail Crime.

- ii. A Member welcomed the topic but suggested that a later start time of 6pm may be more suitable for the target audience.
- iii. The Safer City Coordinator agreed to make this change to the booking and reminded Members that the next DPCSP meeting would be held on Monday, 26th October with a meeting of the Policing Committee held prior to the Private Meeting.