

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

## Policing Committee Meeting

Room 1c, Cecil Ward Building, Belfast

Tuesday 6th October, 2015

### Political Members

Councillor Guy Spence (Chair)  
Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell  
Councillor Mary Clarke  
Alderman Patrick Convery  
Councillor Nuala McAllister

### Independent Members

Michael Murray (Vice-Chair)  
Jennifer Cornell  
Gerard O'Reilly  
Gerald Solinas

### Police Service of Northern Ireland Representatives

T/Chief Inspector Gavin Kirkpatrick

### Staff Present

Lorna Somers, Safer City Assistant Manager  
Richard McLernon, Safer City Coordinator  
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

### Apologies

Alderman Gareth McKee  
Catherine Patrick

## 1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided.
- ii. The Chair advised Members that prior to the meeting, the Independent Members had met and elected Michael Murray as the Vice-Chair of the North Belfast DPCSP.

## 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 noted.

## 3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The Safer City Coordinator recapped on the actions which came from the last meeting of the previous North Belfast DPCSP Policing Committee.
- ii. It was noted that an update on the National Crime Agency had not previously been circulated and so T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick was asked to look into this ahead of the next meeting.
- iii. The Chair asked for letters of thanks to be sent to the previous Members of the North Belfast DPCSP and to those PSNI Officers who had been injured over the summer period.

#### **4. Area Commanders Update on Policing**

- i. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised Members that due to a technical fault resulting from the Local Government Reform boundary changes, he was not in a position to provide up to date crime figures.
- ii. He did however ask Members to consider how they wished reports to be presented at future meetings. He also asked that if Members had questions regarding specific incidents, they contact him directly as he was unlikely to be able to give a detailed response given the number of calls dealt with in the North Belfast area.
- iii. The Area Commander advised Members that the current Policing Priorities for the area were Drugs, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Burglary against Older Persons.
- iv. In response to a question regarding missing firearms, including police weapons, T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that 2 weapons were affected in North Belfast however these had both been recovered.
- v. Members discussed the length of Policing Committee meetings and what information could be provided. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that the change in systems was implemented on 1st October and problems had arisen in picking up the new areas of Belfast. He advised that this should be resolved in 2-3 weeks.
- vi. Members further discussed how best to ask for information on specific topics, to which T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that he was happy to answer questions via email or telephone throughout the month, not just 14 days in advance of Policing Committee meetings as was the process previously agreed upon.
- vii. To facilitate this, the Safer City Coordinator agreed to circulate contacts details for the PSNI to Members.
- viii. A Member questioned whether the PSNI would continue to be available to attend meetings with community groups as they had in the past, given the changes to the neighbourhood structure and shift patterns.
- ix. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised Members that Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) worked either an early or a late shift and meetings had been prioritised for attendance. He also advised that the Local Policing Team (LPT), if available, could also be tasked with attending community meetings.
- x. In response to queries regarding response rates and the number of Officers available to attend emergency calls, T/Chief Inspector advised that there were now more police in area teams than ever however if information on specific responses were required, this would need to be looked at on an individual basis.
- xi. With regards to a specific incident, the Area Commander commented that on occasion reports can be over exaggerated and CCTV had been reviewed alongside the community to show a more accurate account of events.
- xii. Questions were asked about the use of CCTV at night and what could be done to improve lighting to allow for better images to be captured.
- xiii. The Area Commander advised that images would be more difficult to see at night, and in strong sunlight however he was not aware of any specific problems with lighting and CCTV cameras. He noted that camera operators would need to zoom in on particular cars or incidents to obtain detailed images.

## **5. Update from Area Commander on new Structures**

- i. Members were advised that policing structures had been reviewed following cuts to the PSNI budget. The Area Commander explained that the number of Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) had been cut from 6 to 3 in North Belfast, each with a Sergeant and 8 Constables. The remaining Officers had been allocated to the Local Policing Team (LPT) which provides 24/7 response duties along with neighbourhood duties as tasked by the NPTs. Members were advised that this approach had been adopted in order to roll out the 'neighbourhood approach' to Officers across all teams.
- ii. A Member suggested that it would be helpful for each of the team Sergeants to meet with Members of the DPCSP, particularly the Independent Members.
- iii. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick agreed to look at how this could be arranged.

## **6. Date of Next Meeting**

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that the next meeting of the Policing Committee would be on Tuesday, 27th October. Members agreed to hold meetings between 5.30pm - 6pm and approved the current format of the report from the PSNI.