

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

## Policing Committee Meeting

Room 1c, Cecil Ward Building, Belfast  
Tuesday 27th October, 2015

### Political Members

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

### Independent Members

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

### Police Service of Northern Ireland Representatives

T/Chief Inspector Gavin Kirkpatrick  
Inspector Kelly Moore  
Kathy Latcham, Crime Prevention Officer

Sergeant John Russell  
Sergeant Craig McDowell

### Staff Present

Richard McLernon, Safer City Coordinator  
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

### Apologies

Councillor Nuala McAllister  
Alderman Gareth McKee

## 1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The 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 noted.

## 3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The Safer City Coordinator recapped on the actions which came from the last Policing Committee Meeting, noting that:
  - An update on the National Crime Agency would be provided following a meeting of that group during November,
  - Letters of appreciation had been drafted for the Chair to sign following the meeting, and,
  - Staff from the PSNI Neighbourhood Teams were present at the meeting.

## 4. Area Commanders Update on Policing

- i. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick introduced Members to Inspector Moore, Sergeants McDowell (Oldpark DEA) and Russell (Castle DEA), and Kathy Latcham, the Crime Prevention Officer for North Belfast.

- ii. The Area Commander drew Members attention to statistics on performance against the Local Policing Plan, noting that targets for domestic burglaries and violent crime were not being met. Members were advised that between 30-50% of domestic burglaries continued to be perpetrated through open doors and windows.
- iii. Members were advised that a surge incident had taken place on Monday 26th October which involved 15 crews being involved in various incidents at a time what would be considered a quiet time of the week.
- iv. With regards to drug activity, Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised Members that while cannabis remained the most common drug in North Belfast, heroin supply and use was on the increase, with a recent incident in Cavehill Country Park resulting in 6 arrests.
- v. Members were provided with details on several incidents that had been in the news recently, including burglaries against older persons, robberies, drug finds, a high profile hate crime incident, 2 paramilitary shootings and 2 suspect devices.
- vi. With regards to forthcoming events, Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that the operation for Halloween weekend was in place and that planning was underway for the Christmas lights switch on in November.
- vii. Members were advised that some 'good news' stories had been included in the update for Members to read at their leisure.

## **5. Questions from Members**

### Burglary

- i. In response to a query regarding what methods were being out in place to tackle the rise in burglaries, the Crime Prevention Officer (CPO) advised that a new campaign had recently been launched encouraging the public to take a few simple steps to protect their home, their family, and their belongings from opportunistic crime. She advised that the campaign was targeted specifically at the over 60's and that there was now a tiered response to victims with the elderly receiving the most prompt call outs. Members were also advised that a number of presentations had been scheduled with community groups and leisure centers to promote the campaign.
- ii. A Member asked what evidence there was that such campaigns worked in terms of reducing burglaries. The CPO advised that it was clear that they increased people's feelings of safety.
- iii. The CPO agreed to provide the Safer City Coordinator with the details of where each of the presentations would be held for circulation to Members.
- iv. A Member questioned what else could be done to reinforce the message of securing windows and doors. He also warned of the possibility that fake reports were being made for insurance claim purposes.
- v. Members were advised that police were also working with Neighbourhood Watch groups and community groups to try to promote the security message.
- vi. A Member noted that bad news regarding burglaries travelled fast throughout communities and suggested using local community publications to notify residents of the true level of crime, what is being done to tackle it, and what steps people can take to protect their homes.

### Arrest Queries

- vii. A Member queried whether the 2 recent arrests for rape were connected to the spate of attacks by strangers which had occurred in the previous year.
- viii. Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that the 2 arrests were unconnected but added that a specialist team took over the investigations of such incidents and so he did not have any further details on the arrests.
- ix. In response to a query regarding a Post Office robbery on Donegal Park Road, Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that CID were dealing with the case however he would seek to provide an update to the Member raising the question.

### Hate Crime

- x. The Area Commander agreed to provide a breakdown of hate crime incidents by type at the request of a Member. He also advised that the figures presented were based on the targets within the Local Policing Plan as agreed by the previous DPCSP.

## **6. Policing Committee Application for Funding**

- i. Members were advised that a Policing Committee application had been received from the Ardoyne Association requesting £1,000 towards the production of their Community Safety magazine, 'Horizon', which would include a regular column from the PSNI.
- ii. Members were advised that the application had been scored by Officers and received a score of 64, above the threshold for funding.
- iii. A Member suggested that information on the recent PSNI Burglary Campaign should be included as this was a topical issue.
- iv. The Safer City Coordinator agreed, adding that he hoped to include information about the North Belfast DPCSP and other community safety work.
- v. Following discussion, Members agreed to provide funding of £1,000 to the Ardoyne Association for adverts, articles and safety leaflets relating to the Horizon Magazine.