

Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Private Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall
Thursday 14th January 2016

Political Members	Independent Members
Councillor Matt Garrett (Chair)	Debbie Hammill (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin	John Loughran
Councillor Declan Boyle	John MacVicar
Councillor Carole Howard	Susan Russam
Councillor John Hussey	Michael O'Hara
Councillor JJ Magee	
Councillor Stephen Magennis	
Alderman Jim Rodgers	
Designated Organisations	
Chief Superintendent Chris Noble, PSNI	T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton, PSNI
Eithne McIlroy, PBNI	Chris Fee, NIFRS
Patricia Muldoon, YJA	Cecil Worthington, H&SC Trust
Helen Russell, NIHE	Chris Robinson PSNI
Staff Present	Apology
Alison Allen, Safer City Manager	Carmel McKinney
Lorna Somers, Safer City Assistant Manager	Mary Lambe
Alyson Crompton, Partnership Support Officer	Anne-Louise Toal

1. Welcome and Apologies

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided. Stephen Herron, Senior Assistant Director PPS, Libby Kinney, PPS, Kieran McQuillan PPS, Denise Smith, Safer City Co-ordinator and Declan Mackin, McClure Watters attended the meeting to provide presentations to the Members.

2. Declarations of Interest

- i. The Chair advised Members that they were required to declare any material interests that they may have in relation to any items on the agenda.
- ii. No declarations of interest were declared.

3. Minutes

- i. The Vice Chair, Debbie Hammill asked for an amendment to the minutes, to show that she had declared an interest in Item 6, The RADAR Centre in Citywide Project proposals.
- ii. The minutes of the Belfast PCSP Meeting held on 7th December, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read notwithstanding the amendment noted above, the minutes were agreed as correct.

- iii. The Chair of the West Belfast DPCSP thanked the PCSP for the support provided following the Special Meeting on 21st December. He stated that an excellently co-ordinated plan utilising resources, partnership working and with good outcomes resulted in a quiet Christmas period.
- iv. He also thanked the Partnership for the support shown to him and his family over the threats made in the aftermath of the recent tension in West Belfast.

4. Presentation from the Public Prosecution Service

- i. A presentation on behalf of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) was given by the Senior Assistant Director, Stephen Herron. He introduced his PPS colleagues Libby Kinney, Press Officer and Kieran McQuillan, Fraud and Departmental Section.
- ii. Mr Herron outlined the vision and aims of the PPS and explained their role. He also explained how the PPS take the decision to prosecute using the evidential test and the public interest test.
- iii. He outlined the statistics and performance of the PPS in 2014-2015; including files from police, decisions, conviction rates, timeliness, victim satisfaction with the PPS service and public confidence.
- iv. The four strategic priorities of the PPS for 2015-2016 were explained;
 - a. Delivering an efficient and effective prosecution service – including the highest standard of decision-making and working with partners to improve service.
 - b. Building the confidence and trust of the community – including enhanced service to victims and witnesses and increased engagement with stakeholders and community.
 - c. Strengthening the capability to deliver – including effective management of budgets and restructuring to make the PPS more effective, three chambers, Belfast, Foyle and Newry and a satellite in Omagh.
 - d. Building the capability of our people – including developing staff and continuous improvement in the voluntary sector.
- v. Mr Herron explained the new shape and structure within the PPS; he asked Kieran McQuillan to explain the work of the Fraud and Departmental section.
- vi. Mr Herron finished his presentation by thanking the Partnership for the opportunity to address the meeting and looked forward to working closely with the PCSP, PSNI and Court Estate in the future.
- vii. The Chair thanked Mr Herron for his presentation and stated that it was good to have the PPS in to work with the PCSP. He then asked the Members if they had any questions for the PPS.
- viii. A Member asked how the PPS measure Public Confidence. Mr Herron informed the Members that a survey is completed by victims on the victim information portal, which is an open and transparent operation.
- ix. A Member asked what is the PPS total budget and staff level. Mr Herron advised the Members that the PPS budget is £35million; maximum staffing level of 483, presently 450 staff.

- x. The Member further asked would there be any voluntary redundancies and will the staff be replaced. Mr Herron said that most of the losses are either temporary jobs or administration posts and will be back filled from the Northern Ireland Civil Service.
- xi. A Member asked who holds the PPS to account for their actions. Mr Herron explained that the PPS are accountable under the Justice Act 2002. He said that a consultancy role with the Attorney General was currently being explored in the Northern Ireland Assembly, Superintendents may be introduced. There are also Independent Assessors for the PPS performance.
- xii. A Member asked Mr Herron if the PPS could provide a report to a future PCSP meeting on the following queries;
 - a. Where the PPS money is spent.
 - b. To confirm statistics e.g. the % of cases brought by PSNI to PPS how many have been pursued?
- xiii. The Member also asked what type of community engagement the PPS had over the previous year. Mr Herron stated that the Annual Report would address the queries over the budget and the statistics and this report would be provided.
- xiv. Mr Herron explained that the PPS are keen to engage with the community through the PCSP moving forward.
- xv. A Member stated that community confidence was extremely important; he gave an example of repeat offenders if they are not prosecuted and return to the area. The community blame the police for not taking action when in fact it is ultimately because there is not enough evidence to prosecute.
- xvi. Mr Herron explained that the Lord Chief Justice is very proactive with regard to community engagement; feedback is obtained from community impact statements and victim impact statements.
- xvii. A Member asked how the PPS proposed to improve the service provided as only 1 in 4 people are happy with the service. Some cases take 20-40 years to come to prosecution, why is this? Mr Herron advised the Members that an Indictable Cases pilot has been put in place and that cases can be reopened if further evidence becomes available.
- xviii. In response to a Member's query that Prosecution Service solicitors cannot make decisions in a Magistrates Court, Mr Herron replied that counsel cannot make decisions but PPS solicitors can.
- xix. A Member asked what the PPS can do about an incident that takes place in Northern Ireland which is not an offence under current legislation but is an offence in England and Wales. Mr Herron stated that if it is not an offence in Northern Ireland, PPS cannot prosecute.
- xx. In relation to a question regarding victims, particularly older people, Mr Herron stated that he would provide information on the Victim's Charter.
- xxi. In response to a Members query about case information having the name of the person on it when it is provided by the Police to the PPS, Mr Herron stated that yes the name would be visible.

- xxii. The Chair thanked Mr Herron and the PPS for their presentation and said the Partnership looked forward to working with the PPS in the future.

5. Chair's Report

- i. The Chair advised Members that homelessness and begging was having an impact on the City, the PCSP will provide leadership and raise public awareness with partners through a campaign involving developing a street management strategy to address these problems.
- ii. The Chair proposed that the meeting move forward to Item 10 PCSP ASB Evaluation Presentation by Declan Mackin, which would update Members on the report and the way forward. The Members agreed to this proposal.

10. PCSP ASB Evaluation

- i. Mr Mackin from the Public and Corporate Economic Consultants (PACEC) formerly RSM McClure Watters gave a presentation on the evaluation of ASB service provision and outlined the findings based on best practice models in London and Glasgow.
- ii. Mr Mackin outlined the three options;
 - a. Option 1: Maintain status quo.
 - b. Option 2: Address immediate and high priority issues using existing partnership arrangements.
 - c. Option3: Comprehensive funding and structure review.
- iii. His conclusions found that
 - a. Option 1 : No gain.
 - b. Option 2: Address issues, no structure change, little disruption, long term approach.
 - c. Option 3: Address all issues, structure change, resource implications.
- iv. He concluded that his recommendation would be Option 2 and asked if the Members had any questions.
- v. The Chair thanked Mr Mackin and Denise Smith the Safer City Co-ordinator for all their work. He added that the experience of using the community groups in West Belfast DPCSP has been worthwhile and option 2 is a good place to be.
- vi. After comprehensive discussion it was felt that tackling the ASB in the City was a huge project which would need further investigation and discussion. Option 2 was welcomed but it was also thought that Option 3 should be considered as a possible long term solution.
- vii. Following discussion it was agreed that a report would be taken to the next meeting of the People and Communities Committee proposing that all Members of Council are invited to a joint workshop with PCSP Members to discuss the report and its recommendations in greater detail.

6. Update from Designated Partners

- i. Eithne McIlroy from the Probation Board for Northern Ireland (PBNI) gave a comprehensive update on the work of the Board and distributed a leaflet to the

Members. The Board work in partnership with other organisations to challenge and change offenders behaviours to make communities safer. This is supported by evidence from the Reset programme that reoffending rates are lower when the offenders are supervised after leaving prison.

- ii. She outlined two initiatives currently ongoing, a Graffiti project with Belfast City Council (BCC) and a Hate Crime project with the Youth Justice Agency (YJA).
- iii. The Chair thanked Eithne for her update. He proposed that all future Designate Updates be sent to the PCSP to be forwarded with the Partnership papers and emailed to the Members. The Members agreed the Chair's proposal.
- iv. A Member proposed that at future meetings only one presentation should be tabled. The Members agreed this proposal.

7. (D)PCSP Financial Update/Action Plan Progress Reports

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager presented Members with Progress Reports for the PCSP and each of the DPCSPs providing progress to date against each project, as well as future actions. Members noted the contents of the report.
- ii. The Safer City Assistant Manager advised the Members of the projects currently being developed and the possibility of further emerging projects. She asked the Members to extend the current financial delegated authority to the end of the financial year to include all new project proposals and changes to current projects. She advised that as per the previous delegated authority any decisions would be taken by the Safer City Manager and the Safer City Assistant Manager in consultation with the PCSP Chair and Vice Chair. Accordingly the Members agreed this extended delegated authority request.
- iii. The Safer City Assistant Manager advised the Members that the DPCSPs have under spends and she would recommend a meeting to discuss budgets with all the Chairs and Vice Chairs. The Members agreed this proposal.

8. PSNI Youth Academy

- i. The Chair introduced the new District Commander for Belfast Chief Superintendent Chris Noble.
- ii. Chief Superintendent Noble briefed the Members on the PSNI Youth Academy which has been established in partnership with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service. He outlined the four objectives:
 - a. Encourage good citizenship.
 - b. Give young people a voice.
 - c. Give a practical understanding of how agencies work.
 - d. Build community relations by promoting positive engagement.
- iii. He explained that there are three pilot branches in Belfast, Newry and Ballymoney. He then invited Superintendent Singleton, who will lead in Belfast, to address the Members.
- iv. Superintendent Singleton explained the concept to the Members; it will be a citywide project, investing in young people, who will meet weekly in a central location. It is hoped that by engaging young people and giving them a voice, they will be encouraged to engage with their communities in a positive way.

- v. Overall there was a positive reaction from the Members however they wanted time to consider the proposal in more depth. They asked a number of questions.
- vi. In response to a query on how the young people will be selected, who will be included and how many can attend, Superintendent Singleton stated that the pilot scheme would be for 40-50 young people and it would be totally inclusive.
- vii. A Member asked about the funding for the project, would the young people attain any qualifications and is there a recruitment opportunity. Chief Superintendent Noble advised that the project was being funded externally and there would be an opportunity for gaining qualifications. He also stated that the aim was not to shape careers but it could be an outcome.
- viii. In reply to a query on the non-involvement of the Northern Ireland Fire Service (NIFRS), Chief Superintendent Noble advised that the NIFRS have their own scheme and they have been consulted with regard to the PSNI Youth Academy.
- ix. In response to a query about the use of youth workers on the ground in the community, Chief Superintendent Noble advised that existing youth workers are being utilised along with PSNI volunteers.
- x. The Chair thanked Chief Superintendent Noble and Superintendent Singleton for their update. He added that it was a worthwhile project with a partnership approach that had the safety of young people at its core however he recommended that the information be circulated to the DPCSPs for discussion and feedback. The Members agreed the recommendation.

9. 2016/2017 Strategic Objections for Policing

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager asked the Members to consider the report and the contents of the Strategic Objectives for Policing Document from the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and recommended they provide any feedback to Alyson Crompton cromptona@belfastcity.gov.uk no later than Wednesday 27th January 2016.

11. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members were reminded that the next Private Meeting of the PCSP would be held on Monday 8th February.