

# Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

## Private Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall  
Monday 7th March, 2016

<b>Political Members</b>	<b>Independent Members</b>
Councillor Matt Garrett (Chair)	Debbie Hammill (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin	Mary Lambe
Councillor Declan Boyle	John Loughran
Councillor John Hussey	John MacVicar
Councillor JJ Magee	Carmel McKinney
Alderman Jim Rodgers	Michael O'Hara
	Anne-Louise Toal

  

<b>Designated Organisations</b>	
AGC Chris Fee, NIFRS	Chief Superintendent Chris Noble
Eithne McIlroy, PBNI	Helen Russell, NIHE
Patricia Muldoon, YJA	Cecil Worthington, H&SCT

  

<b>Staff Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Alison Allen, Safer City Manager	Councillor Carole Howard
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer	Councillor Stephen Magennis
	Susan Russam

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

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

### 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.

### 3. Minutes

- i. The minutes of the Belfast PCSP Meeting held on 8th February, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

### 4. Presentation from the Good Relations Department

(Margaret Higgins, Senior Good Relations Officer, attended in relation to this item)

- i. Margaret Higgins, Senior Good Relations Officer, provided Members with information on the Council's Bonfire Programme for 2016, including a review of its delivery in 2015.
- ii. A Member noted that the collection of bonfire material was already underway, and advised that questions were being asked as to why the PSNI could not prevent the theft of pallets from businesses. The burning of tyres, election posters and flags atop of

bonfires was also condemned and the Programme commended for reducing the number of bonfires and moving them away from roads.

- iii. Chief Superintendent Noble advised that if an offence was committed and there was a complainant, the PSNI could step in, however he noted that an enforcement approach was not always the most suitable solution. He advised that the PSNI supported a partnership approach to the issue, working with communities and other agencies to come to a mutually agreed solution. He also noted that the PSNI could not become involved in the removal of flags and other materials without the supporting legislation.
- iv. Members noted the issues that had taken place at the Walkway bonfire site during 2015 and agreed that this could not be allowed to happen again. Several Members also felt that the financial penalties imposed on groups during 2015 punished Community Groups who had no links with paramilitaries but fell foul of the rules when flags and other items were placed on bonfires at the last minute. It was suggested that neither the PSNI, Councillors nor Council Staff would be expected to remove such items and so this aspect of the Bonfire Programme would need to be reconsidered as there had become a certain level of expectation for groups to police these issues.
- v. The Senior Good Relations Officer accepted the comments made and advised that there was an appeals process regarding financial penalties which specifically looked at issues which arose after 9pm on the 11th July night. She added that operational plans were currently being developed for each area of Belfast and that meetings had begun regarding key sites.
- vi. With regards to unwanted bonfires, a Member commended the work of Belfast City Council staff during 2015 who, it was noted, worked with the PSNI and communities to go above and beyond to fill the gaps left by contractors who had let the Council down with regards to the removal of bonfire materials. It was noted that a suitable contractor was key, as was education and enforcement regarding fly-tipping.
- vii. A Member asked the PSNI to provide statistics on the number of arrests at bonfire sites, and the NIFRS for statistics on their involvement with bonfires on 11th July. It was noted that while the cost of the Bonfire Programme was listed as £135,000, once staff time from various agencies was considered, this would be much more. She also questioned whether the number of calls received in relation to bonfires was recorded.
- viii. Chief Superintendent Noble advised that some calls may not relate to crimes and would most likely be classed as anti-social behaviour, however there was no sub-set for bonfires. He advised that the issue could be raised with the PSNI statisticians.
- ix. A Member asked whether it was possible to organise a workshop to look at the issues of cultural identity, and suggested that communication regarding bonfires needed to be changed. He also called for wider education about the distribution of wooden pallets.
- x. Mrs Higgins advised that the Good Relation Unit hoped to include more cultural expression and were encouraged by the update in the use of beacons as a substitute to a bonfire. She added that better communications were being developed, particularly between statutory agencies and community groups.

## **5. Chair's Update**

### 'Drug Dealers Don't Care' Campaign

- i. On behalf of the Chair, the Safer City Manager advised Members that the 'Drug Dealers Don't Care' Campaign had been launched on 24th February. Details on the 'reach' of the campaign were circulated to Members along with a card providing a QR code linked to the PCSP Facebook page.
- ii. A Member questioned why Black Taxis were used when advertising the 'Drug Dealers Don't Care' Campaign, as opposed to other taxi firms. The Safer City Manager agreed to seek clarity on this query.

### Small Grants

- iii. Members were advised that the PCSP Small Grants Member Panel had endorsed the decision of the Staff Moderation Panel to fund 1 PCSP Small Grant during Tranche 1 of the 2016/2017 Action Plan. Members were further advised that the Member Panel had requested that a second application be re-scored by the Safer City Manager and funding granted to this group should the new score reach the threshold for funding.
- iv. Members were asked to approve the decisions of the Member Panel, including the possibility of funding a second group should they reach the threshold for funding.
- v. Members noted the update provided and approved the allocation of Small Grants funding.

## **6. Update regarding Statutory Designated Partners**

- i. The Chair advised Members that written update reports from each of the Statutory Designated partners had been provided at the last PCSP and so oral updates were invited as necessary.
- ii. Eithne McIlroy, PBNI, advised that as part of their Business Planning for 2016/2017, the Probation Board would be focusing on attacks against vulnerable and elderly people whilst working alongside the Older Peoples Commissioner. She advised that PBNI would be making contact with various groups regarding the development of effective interventions with offenders and asked Members to contact PBNI if they would be interested in getting involved with this piece of work.
- iii. The Chair advised that the Council had recently re-established its Older Peoples Reference Group and would be holding the Pensioners Parliament the following day.

## **7. (D)PCSP Action Plan Progress Report**

- i. The Safer City Manager drew Members attention to the PCSP Progress Report for the 2015/2016 Action Plan.
- ii. She noted that it was possible that £10,500 would be returned to the Joint Committee, however several projects had recently been proposed which, if approved, would reduce this underspend. She reminded Members of the process for project approval via the Chair and Vice-Chair.

- iii. Members noted the contents of the report.

#### **8. Draft 2016/2017 PCSP Action Plan**

- i. The Safer City Manager advised Members that the Draft 2016/2017 PCSP Action Plan had been developed using an indicative budget of £125,000. She noted that while staff were hopeful that additional funds would be made available, the Partnership should remain cautious given the funding position that arose during the current financial year. Members were advised that the Plan focused on tackling anti-social behaviour, supporting vulnerable people and building community confidence in the justice system, all of which had measureable outputs.
- ii. Members approved the request to allocate any additional funds above the current £125,000 budget to the theme of 'Multi-agency responses to emerging issues'.
- iii. Members approved the PCSP Action Plan for 2016/2017.

#### **9. (D)PCSP Development Plan Progress Update**

- i. The Safer City Manager reminded Members that they had agreed to receive regular updates on the PCSP Development Plan which had been developed following the Criminal Justice Inspection Report which was published in 2014.
- ii. Members noted the Plan and its progress to date, and agreed to submit the report to the Joint Committee.

#### **10. Date of Next Meeting**

- i. Members were reminded that a Joint (D)PCSP Briefing was scheduled to take place on Monday, 14th March at 6.30pm in the Clayton Hotel.
- ii. Members were further reminded that the next Private Meeting of the PCSP would be held on Monday, 18th April at 5.30pm.