

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

## Public Meeting

Park Avenue Hotel, Belfast  
Tuesday, 3rd November, 2015

### Political Members

Councillor Carole Howard (Chair)  
Councillor Sonia Copeland  
Councillor Aileen Graham  
Councillor Niall O Donngaile  
Councillor Tommy Sandford

### Independent Members

David Geddis (Vice-Chair)  
Michelle Bryans  
Lisa McMaster  
Steven McMillen

### Designated Organisations

Gary Ballantyne, NIHE  
Alan Cunningham, NIFRS

Chief Inspector David Moore, PSNI  
Pauline Smart, EA

### Staff Present

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

### Apologies

Yvonne Cowan, H&SCT

## 1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. As the Chair was not available to open the meeting, the Vice-Chair welcomed members of the public and DPCSP Members to the meeting.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that 4 presenters would be providing information on a range of topics including counterfeit notes, shoplifting, Retailers Against Crime and crime prevention advice, after which the audience would be invited to ask questions on the theme of retail crime, and about any other policing or community safety issue.

## 2. Presentations on Retail Crime

### Presentation 1 – Counterfeit Notes

- i. Colin Davidson, Ulster Bank, advised Members that Northern Ireland was particularly susceptible to counterfeit notes given the range of bank notes that are accepted here. He added that around 18 in every 1000 notes were forgeries, most of which were Ulster Bank or Bank of Ireland notes.
- ii. The audience were advised that Ulster Bank would be able to provide people with the serial numbers of the most regularly forged notes and that leaflets were available to advise people what to look for in counterfeit currency.
- iii. Mr Davidson asked retailers to do their best to remove any counterfeits from circulation, if safe to do so, and to report notes with dye stains around the outer edges as these were likely to be from cash in transit robberies and therefore the proceeds of crime.

- iv. In terms of avoiding taking in counterfeit notes, Mr Davidson advised shopkeepers to obtain a detection machine and advertise its use. He suggested that if regular checks are seen to be being carried out, counterfeiters were less likely to target that shop in the future. He also warned that as new Bank of England notes come into circulation in the coming years, an increase in counterfeit £10 notes may be experienced as people try to get rid of the previous versions.

#### Presentation 2 – Safe Shop/Shoplifting

- v. Constable Pete Cunningham provided the group with a presentation advising of the indicators that would suggest that a shopper was intending to steal from a store, the tools and techniques that they use to carry out the theft, and the powers that can be used in tackling offenders.
- vi. Constable Cunningham also provided information on the Shop Safe Scheme, an educational training scheme delivered by the PSNI to stores and their staff to help them reduce the likelihood of thefts and to offer advice on what to do when one occurs.
- vii. The audience were advised to contact Crime Prevention Officers through the PSNI's non-emergency number, 101, in order to organise a time for this training.

#### Presentation 3 – Retailers Against Crime

- viii. Jacqueline Crocket provided the group with information on Retailers Against Crime, a not for profit retail crime partnership that has been operating in Northern Ireland since 2007 with the aim of detecting and deterring crime.
- ix. She advised that the organisation has 300 large and small member stores, including hotels and off-licenses, who receive information through briefings, training and website updates on local and travelling suspects who commit crime across the UK.
- x. Ms Crocket informed the group that it is estimated that retail crime cost the UK economy £603mil in 2013/14 and that organised crime gangs were on the increase. She advised that RAC intelligence had been used in 'Proceeds of Crime' cases and that this money was then reallocated to worthy causes.
- xi. She advised that in addition to being aware of prolific offenders, customer service was key in the fight against opportunistic theft.

#### Presentation 4 – Crime Prevention Advice

- xii. Robert McMurrin, PSNI Crime Prevention Officer, delivered a presentation which provided security tips for small businesses, advice on how to deal with incendiary devices, and information on fraud and cyber crime.
- xiii. He advised people to contact the PSNI on their non-emergency number, 101, for further advice or to arrange a call out. He also advised that incidents could be reported to Crimestoppers, an independent charity that crime can be reported to anonymously, and that advice was also available on the PSNI's website.

- xiv. The group was also encouraged to take away a Retail Crime Reduction Leaflet, more of which could be made available on request.

### **3. Questions and Comments**

- i. No questions were forthcoming from the audience.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that each of the speakers would be available to answer specific queries after the meeting, and information leaflets on all the topics covered were available. He also advised that Ulster Bank representatives had brought examples of counterfeit bank notes with them for retailers to review the key features.
- iii. The Vice-Chair thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.