

Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Private Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall
Monday 16th May, 2016

Political Members

Councillor Matt Garrett (Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin
Councillor Declan Boyle
Councillor Carole Howard
Councillor JJ Magee
Councillor Stephen Magennis
Alderman Jim Rodgers

Independent Members

Debbie Hammill (Vice-Chair)
Mary Lambe
John Loughran
John MacVicar
Michael O'Hara
Anne-Louise Toal

Designated Organisations

AGC Chris Fee, NIFRS
Superintendent Paula Hilman, PSNI
John McLaughlin, EA

Eithne McIlroy, PBNI
Patricia Muldoon, YJA
Helen Russell, NIHE

Staff Present

Alison Allen, Safer City Manager
Lorna Somers, Safer City Assistant Manager
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

Apologies

Councillor John Hussey
Alderman Guy Spence
Carmel McKinney
Susan Russam
Chief Superintendent Chris Noble, PSNI
Cecil Worthington, H&SCT

1. Welcome and Apologies

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided. He reminded Members that a Joint (D)PCSP Briefing would be held at 6.30pm in the Reception Room following the conclusion of the meeting.

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 18th April, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

4. Chair's Update

- i. The Chair provided Members with an update on the 2016/2017 Assets Recovery Community Scheme (ARCS) Funding that was allocated across Northern Ireland. He advised that 140 applications totalling to approximately £3.5million were received, and

24 successful projects received awards totalling approximately £400,000. Members were further advised that a full list of successful projects would be published by the Department of Justice in due course and that this was likely to coincide with a launch event involving the new Justice Minister.

- ii. The 3 successful applications from Belfast that received funding were;
 - Extern - Moving Forward, Moving On Justice Model - £27,298
 - SOS Bus – Response Teams - £7,200
 - Welcome Centre – Reduce the Use Programme - £10,588
- iii. The Safer City Assistant Manager advised that a DVD focusing on the impact of burglary which had been funded as part of the 2015/2016 Action Plan had been completed and was being edited to 58 seconds in preparation for a launch in mid June alongside Victim Support.
- iv. The Chair pointed out that several Members had not received papers in advance of the meeting to which the Safer City Assistant Manager advised that papers had been posted 1 week prior and so there appeared to have been an issue with internal post delivery. She advised that she would look into the issue to ensure that this did not occur again.
- v. The Chair also commented upon recent shootings in the City and suggested that an emerging issues item on the agenda would allow time for such prevalent issues to be discussed. The Safer City Assistant Manager advised that ordinarily the agenda included a ‘Statutory Designated Partner Updates’ item for such updates however as this was a short meeting before the Joint (D)PCSP Briefing, it had not been included on this occasion.

5. 2016/2017 PCSP Action Plan

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager drew Members attention to an updated Belfast PCSP 2016/2017 Action Plan which included additional spend in line with the budget agreed at the meeting on 18th April.
- ii. Following a query about the Small Grant which had been returned for rescoring, the Safer City Assistant Manager advised that the Safer City Manager had agreed with the previously awarded marks and so no funding was allocated to the project. She also confirmed that Small Grants were marked by an officer, then moderated by a second officer panel before being brought to a Member panel for approval.
- iii. In response to a query regarding the number of applicants for the Bonfire Management Programme, the Safer City Manager confirmed that 35 groups had applied.
- iv. Members noted and approved the updated 2016/2017 PCSP Action Plan.

6. Begging for Change Campaign

(Kerry Anthony, Depaul, and Sandra Moore, Welcome Centre, attended in relation to this item)

- i. Kerry Anthony, Depaul, provided Members with background information on the proposed ‘Begging for Change’ Campaign.

- ii. Members were advised that this Campaign was being developed following an increase in street begging with the aim of encouraging members of the public to think about the potential damage they could be causing to vulnerable people, for example those with drug and alcohol issues, by providing them with money.
- iii. She added that meetings had taken place with the PSNI, migrant groups, the outgoing Justice, Health and Regional Development Ministers, the Lord Mayor and other charities and voluntary groups due to the sensitivities and complexities attached to running such a campaign. Members were advised that the outcome of these meetings had been overwhelming supportive of the Campaign and its message.
- iv. The viral video clip element of the Campaign was played for Members who were advised that in addition to this, adhsel advertising, posters, a City Matters article and online and printed 'frequently asked questions' would be produced.
- v. In response to a query regarding the City Matters article, Ms. Anthony confirmed that, pending support from the PCSP, the Council's Corporate Communications Department had approved the message.
- vi. Following queries regarding a street survey carried out by Depaul, Ms. Anthony confirmed that the findings were the perceptions of the 139 members of the public who took part. She added that they hoped to replicate the survey at a later date to ascertain if any attitudinal changes had occurred as a result of the Campaign. She also advised that as the Campaign developed, they hoped to provide a voice for the attitudes of service users.
- vii. Sandra Moore, Welcome Centre, added that the Belfast Street Needs Audit carried out in 2015 had shown a big difference between actual numbers and the public perception of those involved in street activities. She added that different categories had emerged; those who were homeless, those who were begging, and those who were involved in street activity.
- viii. With regards to how the message would reach those without sight, or who were unable to read, Ms. Moore advised that the expectation was that the media would give the Campaign a voice via TV and radio given that this was an important issue for the City and a new type of message.
- ix. A Member welcomed the Campaign, particularly the information regarding common myths surrounding homelessness and begging, however he questioned whether the topic of organised begging could isolate ethnic minority groups.
- x. The presenters advised that they did not wish to further isolate any groups and had spoken to associated groups regarding their thoughts on the Campaign. Ms. Anthony advised that having spoken with the PSNI they had proceeded with a general approach rather than focusing on any particular groups.
- xi. Whilst acknowledging a conflict of interest, John MacVicar cautioned against ignoring the impact that local papers can have in disseminating key messages.
- xii. Ms. Anthony advised that a full media briefing would be scheduled as part of the Campaign. She added that the Campaign was not a fundraising exercise but the first step in raising awareness and educating the public, reducing begging and ensuring that the people in need have access to appropriate services. Ms. Moore added that Belfast was well equipped with facilities and so it was important that people were

moved into services, away from the streets and that the public were advised to stop maintaining their lifestyle.

- xiii. The Chair thanked the speakers for their presentation and they subsequently left the room.
- xiv. Following further discussion, Members agreed to provide £15,000 from the PCSP 2016/2017 Action Plan for the delivery of the Begging for Change Campaign.

7. PSNI Update on Begging

- i. Superintendent Hilman provided an update on homelessness and begging from a PSNI point of view.
- ii. Members were advised that between October and December, 2015, 126 foreign nationals and 20 local persons were arrested/reported or cautioned for begging. Of those processed, 71 were offered a warning/discretionary disposal, 49 were cautioned and 19 were reported to the Public Prosecution Service with a view to prosecution. With regards to 7 people who were charged, 1 was fined, 5 were given conditional discharges and a warrant was issued for 1 person who failed to appear.
- iii. In response to a query regarding why some were charged and others were not, Superintendent Hilman advised that a combination of factors were taken into consideration with first time offenders usually being given a warning. She also advised that people not having an address was an issue.
- iv. Members discussed the need for appropriate legislation to deal with busking and wider on-street drinking issues and the multi-agency approach needed to educate and enforce.
- v. The Chair advised that a range of organisations were involved in the begging and homelessness issues, including at a Mayoral level.
- vi. At the request of a Member, Superintendent Hilman agreed to obtain information on the areas in which most arrests for begging took place.

8. Any Other Business

- i. Superintendent Hilman advised Members that a funding application had recently been received requesting assistance with academic research relating to human rights in public order policing. She advised that the request was for between £350-£500 to support the delivery of joint interventions based on collaboration between the PSNI, Policing Board and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland by way of workshops in North and East Belfast. It was noted that such conversations would be useful in the run up to the parading season.
- ii. The Chair advised Superintendent Hilman that the Safer City Manager had delegated authority for spend up to the value of £1,000 and advised her to speak to the Safer City Manager in more detail. The Safer City Manager added that given the sensitivities involved, she would appreciate a steer from Members.
- iii. Members discussed the proposal and suggested that rather than fund room hire, the PCSP could facilitate the sessions in City Hall. Members also advised that

consideration needed to be given to how the research would fit with the PCSP Action Plan and long term practice in this area.

- iv. Members were advised that Intercomm had been involved in similar research and the Safer City Manager undertook to circulate this to Members.
- v. It was agreed that information on the proposal would be circulated to Members for comment with a 3 day deadline set for responses. The Safer City Manager advised that if no objections were received she would proceed with funding but on the basis that only venue costs, tea and coffee would be funded.
- vi. Members agreed to this course of action.

9. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members were reminded that the next Private Meeting of the PCSP would be held on Monday, 13th June at 5.30pm.