

Minutes of the North Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee Meeting

Room 1c, Cecil Ward Building, Belfast

Wednesday, 27th April, 2016

Political Members

Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell
Councillor Mary Clarke

Independent Members

Michael Murray (Vice-Chair)
Jennifer Cornell
Gerald Solinas

Police Service of Northern Ireland Representatives

Superintendent Paula Hilman
T/Chief Inspector Gavin Kirkpatrick

Inspector Kelly Moore

Staff Present

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

Apologies

Alderman Guy Spence (Chair)
Alderman Patrick Convery
Councillor Nuala McAllister
Alderman Gareth McKee
Catherine Patrick

1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided.
- ii. The Partnership welcomed the Local Policing Team (LPT) Superintendent for Belfast, Paula Hilman to the meeting. She advised Members that as part of the senior leadership team, she would support each of the 4 LPT Chief Inspectors, attend the Belfast PCSP Meetings, lead on engagement and ensure consistency. She also advised that she was the PSNI lead on Hate Crime and welcomed the innovative projects developed by the North Belfast DPCSP.

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. A Member expressed annoyance regarding the 2 previous meetings of the Policing Committee as the date of one had been changed at the last moment, while the venue of the other had been moved to East Belfast. It was noted that attendance at both meetings had been poorly attended as a result.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator advised that he too had been frustrated by the poor turnout, and that the date had been changed in good faith to enable Members to attend an NIPB training session while the external venue had been used at the request of the Chair. He advised that he would avoid such changes in the future.

4. Local Policing Chief Inspector's Update on Policing

- i. Members were provided with an update report on policing in North Belfast including a breakdown of call types received by Tennent Street Police Station over a 24 hour period and some 'good news' stories.
- ii. With regards to performance against the Local Policing Plan, Members were advised that burglary continued to be a major issue across the City with an 11.3% increase in incidents in North Belfast, a large percentage of which were committed through unlocked doors and windows.
- iii. Members were also advised that the level of violent crime had risen by 10.5%. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick noted that this was across all areas of violent crime and at present no particular reason for the increase had been identified. He also noted that anti-social behaviour incidents had reduced by 2% and that outcome rates for sectarian hate crime and drugs were both up by over 3.5%.
- iv. Superintendent Hilman pointed out the large number of calls relating to missing persons and vulnerability and the time allocated to resolving these issues. She advised that it was important for the PSNI to work closely with the health services given the volume of this work.

5. Questions from Members

Resource Queries

- i. In response to a query about the prosecution of hoax callers, T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that incidents were followed up however often calls came from phone boxes and so the perpetrators were untraceable.

Cyber Crime and Internet Safety

- ii. A Member advised the Local Policing Inspector of 2 incidents of online harassment where the victim had been advised by the PSNI that to investigate would be too costly and that there were no laws preventing the activity in question.
- iii. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that he was not aware of the issues in question and asked Members to inform him in advance if they wished to discuss specific incidents to enable him to provide suitable answers. He added that reports of online harassment were progressed when possible and that the PSNI had had success in the past, however there were often long delays with certain social media sites who were based in other countries. He asked the Member to speak to him in person following the meeting to discuss further.

Violent Crime

- iv. With regards to the increase in violent crime, a Member asked if incidents could be plotted across North Belfast in order for Members to see more clearly.
- v. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that incidents were rising across all communities and that it was difficult to police given that no patterns could be seen. He also advised that analysts were looking into the issue and that he would ask them about how incidents could be plotted for the DPCSP to view.

6. North Belfast Local Policing Plan

- i. Members reviewed the Local Policing Plan for North Belfast, copies of which had been circulated to Members.
- ii. T/Chief Inspector Kirkpatrick advised that the 4 Plans for Belfast were similar with a focus on accountability, fairness, courtesy and respect, and collaborative decision making. He added that the outcomes were based on police analysis and community concerns.
- iii. A Member welcomed the clear layout of the Plan and suggested that a summary of the North Belfast DPCSP Action Plan could be produced in a similar format for the public.

7. Members Written Questions

- i. No written questions were submitted however a Member advised that residents had queried with him when the use of body worn cameras would be rolled out across the PSNI.
- ii. PSNI representatives advised that pilot schemes were underway and that a budget had been set aside for continued roll out. They undertook to find out when cameras would be in place across Belfast.
- iii. Members discussed the utilisation of body worn cameras by bar staff and door supervisors. A Member advised that it was for employers to decide to put this in place, and due to costs, it was unlikely to be used widely. Members also discussed the Council's role in pushing for body worn cameras to be used by licensed premises, and the licences required for door supervisors.

8. Policing Committee Application(s) for Funding

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that no Policing Committee applications were tabled; however one had recently been received and would be scored by Officers before being brought to the Partnership for approval.
- ii. He also noted that the next meeting of the DPCSP was in June, and so asked if Members were content for delegated authority to remain with the Chair and Vice-Chair for the approval of projects up to the value of £1,000, with a retrospective report being brought to the next available meeting.
- iii. Members approved the use of delegated authority to the value of £1,000 from this point forward.