

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

## Private Meeting

Conor Room, City Hall  
Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2017

<b>Political Members</b>	<b>Independent Members</b>
Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell	Jennifer Cornell (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Mary Clarke	Michael Murray
Alderman Patrick Convery	Catherine Patrick
Alderman Guy Spence	
<b>Designated Organisations</b>	
Harry Bradley, YJA	David McComiskey, NIFRS
Chief Inspector Steven Burns, PSNI	Malachy McKinney, NIHE
Inspector Laura Kelly, PSNI	Gabi Mornhinweg, H&SCT
Mark McBride, EA	D/Superintendent Gary Reid, PSNI
<b>Staff Present</b>	<b>Apologies</b>
Alison Allen, Safer City Manager	Councillor Nuala McAllister (Chair)
Richard McLernon, Safer City Coordinator	Gerald Solinas
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer	Gerard O'Reilly

### 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.

### 2. Declaration of Interests

- 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 were provided at the outset of the meeting.

### 3. Minutes/Matters Arising

- i. The Safer City Coordinator recapped on the actions from three previous meetings of the North Belfast DPCSP noting that:

#### 15<sup>th</sup> December, Workshop

- Detective Superintendent Gary Reid had been invited to the meeting to discuss underreporting,
- Requests for further information on projects had been provided within the papers,
- The public meeting scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> February would be postponed until March due to the election.

#### 23<sup>rd</sup> November, Public Meeting

- Further information on the Radio Link Project was provided within the papers.

#### 26<sup>th</sup> October, Private Meeting

- Further information on the Education Authority Youth Conference would be circulated via email (not by Youth Justice Agency as stated within the previous minutes),
  - A letter had been sent to Mark Nicholson to thank him for his support to the DPCSP,
  - A workshop to discuss underreporting and anti-social behaviour had been held in December as requested,
  - An email would be circulated to all Members regarding how services were commissioned by Council,
  - All budgets would be considered under the Action Plan agenda item, and
  - A Working Group to discuss additional spend allocation had met.
- ii. Minutes of the North Belfast DPCSP Private held on 26<sup>th</sup> October, Public Meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, and Workshop held on 15<sup>th</sup> December, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.
- iii. A Member referred to the One Pill Can Kill project which was mentioned within the minutes and noted that a more strategic look at drug related issues was needed. He suggested that the 2017/2018 Action Plan should include a focus on the issue and advised Members about a Committee established in the Lower Castle area offering practical, joined up support. Specific areas of concern within North Belfast were also raised.
- iv. The Safer City Coordinator agreed to schedule a meeting between this Committee and DPCSP staff during early March, 2017. He also advised that Ascertainment had been appointed following the DPCSPs Drug and Alcohol Quotation exercise and that part of their work would include coordination. He therefore suggested that a link between the Committee and this organisation would also be helpful.

#### **4. Chair's Update on the Belfast PCSP**

- i. The Vice-Chair provided information on a recent meeting of the (D)PCSP Chairs and Vice-Chairs at which underspends across the Partnerships were discussed. She advised that much of the previously unallocated funds had now been committed to projects, however some spend remained at risk.
- ii. Members were further advised that delays in spend were down to a range of issues including the management of budgets by staff, oversight by DPCSP Members and underspends and/or problems with project delivery.

- iii. The Vice-Chair reassured Members that these issues were being addressed and staff were working to reduce delays in future.
- iv. A Member suggested that the DPCSP begin to review spend on a quarterly basis to allow projects to be up-scaled if underspends are identified at an early stage.
- v. The Safer City Coordinator advised that RAG rated Action Plans would be presented at each meeting to allow Members to clearly see what was spent, committed and planned. He added that much time had been spent on engagement with groups over recent years and so in future delivery would be expedited.

## **5. Members North Belfast Priorities and Emerging Issues**

### Education Authority

- i. Mark McBride advised that there were currently no spikes in anti-social behaviour with large numbers of young people actively engaged in services.
- ii. He also advised that reports in the media regarding budget issues were causing concern amongst staff.
- iii. A Member questioned when a decision would be made regarding funding as he understood letters had been issued to staff putting them on protective notice.
- iv. Mr McBride advised that these letters were standard practice within the Education Authority for those on short term contracts but that media reports had heightened concerns, as had the current political situation.
- v. At the request of a Member, Mr McBride agreed to obtain and circulate via email figures on the number of detached youth workers in North Belfast and their location.

### DPCSP Members

- vi. A Member raised concerns regarding heroin, prescription drugs and poly-drug use. The lack of rehabilitation centre in the City was noted and additional drug searches at airports, bars and clubs were suggested.
- vii. The criminalisation of young people using drugs was raised as a concern, as was the inappropriate use of Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre given that no suitable facility was available to deal with the after effects of drug taking.
- viii. D/Superintendent Reid noted that enforcement should be the last stage in the process with education and health initiatives needed at an early stage. He also advised that the sale and delivery of drugs was becoming more prevalent online. He encouraged the public to report incidents to the PSNI as they needed to build up a picture of evidence in order to obtain permission to carry out searches.

- ix. Members discussed problems treating those with drug, alcohol and mental health issues given the lack of people trained in dual issues. Gabi Mornhinweg advised that services were overloaded and that there was a recognised disconnect in services, however work was being done to address this.
- x. The Safer City Manager advised that the Lord Mayor had met with the H&SCT Director of Mental Health Services to discuss those with complex needs spending time in custody. At the meeting assurances had been given that additional training would be provided to staff to help deal with such clients. She added that the PCSP were funding Extern to develop a dual diagnosis model and that an update on the project could be brought to Members in April time.

#### Youth Justice Agency

- xi. Harry Bradley advised that an invitation to a play tackling domestic violence issues had been circulated to (D)PCSP Members. He advised that Mind Games would be shown to both young people and parents/carers.
- xii. Members were also advised that staff were being invited into schools to provide education and awareness about drugs and that this could be made widely available on request.

#### NIHE

- xiii. Malachy McKinney advised that drug issues were causing problems in some NIHE estates however some users did not want to access support. He also added that often when someone secured a tenancy, the support they were receiving disappeared.
- xiv. Members were advised that the NIHE owned over 20 peace walls and that the work involved in removing the wall on the Crumlin Road had won an award. Mr McKinney advised that discussions were underway regarding the wall at Woodvale, and while this may not include removal, Members may wish to hear more about the work at a future meeting.

#### NIFRS

- xv. David McComiskey advised that service calls to the Fire and Rescue Service were at a steady level. He added that with regards to drugs, crews had been advised of the increase in needle use and what personal safety measures to take.

#### PSNI

- xvi. Detective Superintendent Gary Reid provided Members with information on underreporting of crime.

- xvii. Members were advised that approximately 1.8million phone calls were made to the PSNI per year with 580,000 calls for service, of which 16% were crimes and the rest classified as 'incidents'.
- xviii. The biggest reason provided within the Experience of Crime: Findings from the 2014/15 Northern Ireland Crime Survey for not reporting crime was the belief that it was 'too trivial' (77%) followed by 'it was a private matter' (13%). Fear, dislike or a bad experience with the police or criminal justice system was the least rated response with 1%.
- xix. D/Superintendent Reid discussed the problems that had been encountered when trying to increase reports of hate crime, and the steps taken to raise awareness about the crime and the establishment of Hate Crime Advocates.
- xx. He also noted the need to manage public expectation with regards to warrants, evidence gathering and the wider criminal justice system. He added that the PSNI welcomed 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting as evidence was needed in order to take action. Members were reminded that information provided to the police and to Crimestoppers was confidential and so people should not fear reprisals.
- xxi. In response to a query regarding the future of the Hate Crime Advocates, Mr Reid advised that they were a key resource demonstrating good value therefore it was unlikely that funding would be cut.
- xxii. A Member questioned what training was provided to officers to assist with taking statements from members of the transgender community. Mr Reid advised that training was provided to Officers on dealing with a range of people from different community backgrounds however given the number of issues, this had been summarised as:
  - Take all issues and complaints seriously
  - Ask victims or witnesses how they wish to proceed
  - If unsure about anything, ask
  - Keep victims and witnesses up to date on developments
- xxiii. Mr Reid suggested that if there was learning to be had, this could be passed on, but as everyone was different it was seen as best to ask how people wished to be treated or addressed so as to avoid confusion.
- xxiv. The Vice-Chair thanked D/Superintendent Reid for attending and he subsequently left the meeting.

## **6. 2016/2017 North Belfast DPCSP Action Plan and Progress Report**

### **(D)PCSP Underspends**

- i. The Safer City Manager advised Members that the PCSP had been closely monitoring Partnership spend since October whilst requesting proactive declarations of underspends. She advised that Coordinators had made great

steps in developing projects associated with 'at risk' spend however there were still some areas of concern.

- ii. Given the late stage in the financial year and the pressures on staff to deliver existing projects, the Safer City Manager advised that no further development of projects would be undertaken and that the PCSP had agreed that underspends would be reinvested into the following projects:
  - Beat the Burglar
  - Drug Dealers Don't Care, and
  - Lenadoon Park Youth Project
- iii. She advised that monitoring of budget spends was ongoing but that delivery of the citywide projects listed above would ensure benefits in the local areas.
- iv. In response to a query regarding when delivery would move down the list of priorities, the Safer City Manager advised that each project would be maximised within procurement guidelines.
- v. At the request of a Member the Safer City Manager outlined the budgets associated with each project. Following a query regarding how the Lenadoon Project would benefit other areas of the City, she advised that 2 of the 3 projects would benefit every area and that DPCSPs had previously been asked to provide suggestions of projects that could be developed if underspends were identified.
- vi. Whilst she was aware of concern regarding spends being reallocated to other projects, it was noted that this situation was based on the reality of time remaining and to ensure that the full grant was utilised on projects that would benefit communities.
- vii. The Vice-Chair reminded Members of the discussions had earlier in the meeting and the importance of monitoring budgets more closely in the future. She also suggested that bigger themes should be considered in future as the administrative burden of managing countless small projects was one of the reasons delays occurred.
- viii. The Safer City Manager advised the Partnership to begin the planning process for 2017/2018 at an early stage, and to consider developing longer term projects that could be delivered over a number of years, subject to budgets and adequate delivery.
- ix. Members discussed how groups would become aware of funding opportunities but also noted that small pots of money were invaluable to some groups.

#### North Belfast DPCSP Action Plan 2016/2017

- x. The Safer City Coordinator advised that no issues were arising in relation to the Plan and that 3 quotations had recently been approved:
  - Drug and Alcohol Initiative – Ascertain - £9,500

- Suicide Awareness and Emotional Resilience - Lighthouse - £16,644
  - Detached Youth Work – NI Youth Forum - £13,980
- xi. Members agreed that planning early for 2017/2018 would ensure effective and early delivery of projects. Members resolved to hold the first planning session over lunch during mid-February in Belfast Castle.

## **7. Additional Information on 2016/2017 Projects**

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised Members that additional information on 5 projects previously discussed was provided within the papers for consideration.
- ii. Following discussion Members agreed to approve funding towards the 5 projects as listed below:
  - Skegoneill Bonfire Initiative - £1,700;
  - Radiolink Scheme - £2,900;
  - Schools Project - £3,500;
  - WRAP Project - £2,950;
  - Beat the Burglar - £6,500.

## **8. Date of Next Meetings**

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised that a Member had requested for consideration to be given to moving the DPCSP Meetings from a Wednesday as he was no longer able to attend on this day.
- ii. The Partnership Support Officer outlined the options available however it was noted that moving to a Tuesday or Thursday may interfere with existing meetings of the Planning Committee and would be subject to room availability.
- iii. Several Members noted conflicts on other days and asked if the Member would consider making alternative arrangements as the meetings took place every other month rather than monthly.
- iv. It was agreed that the Safer City Coordinator would speak to the Member in question and possible dates would be circulated via email at which point Members could advise of their availability.
- v. Members were reminded that the next meeting would be the planning session in mid-February, followed by a Policing Committee and Private Meeting, currently scheduled for 22<sup>nd</sup> March. The Public Meeting previously planned for 22<sup>nd</sup> February would also be moved to a suitable date in March.