

Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee Meeting

Conor Room, City Hall
Monday, 23rd March, 2015

Political Members

Councillor Colin Keenan (Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin
Councillor Mary Ellen Campbell
Councillor Matt Garrett
Councillor John Hussey
Councillor Mervyn Jones
Alderman Frank McCoubrey
Alderman Jim Rodgers

Independent Members

Frank Mulhern (Vice Chair)
Valerie Allen
Claire Canavan
Liz Groves
John MacVicar
Harry Maguire
John Topping

PSNI Representatives

Chief Superintendent Nigel Grimshaw
T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton

Staff Present

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

Apologies

Councillor Kate Mullan
Carmel McKinney

1. Welcome and Apologies

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

2. Declarations of Interest

- i. No declarations of interest were recorded.

3. Minutes

- i. The minutes of the Belfast PCSP Policing Committee held on 16th February, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.
- ii. T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton provided Members with updates regarding 2 specific incidents in the City Centre and Peters Hill areas following queries raised at the last meeting of the Policing Committee.
- iii. Members thanked T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton for his comprehensive update.

4. Update from the PSNI

Statistical Report

- i. T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton drew Member's attention to the statistical report provided by the PSNI on performance against the 2014/2015 Policing Plan.

- ii. Whilst the report showed many areas were not hitting the targets set, T/Superintendent Singleton advised Members that there had been a significant reduction in reports of incivility and that robbery against the person was also down by 13%.
- iii. Members were advised that incidents of drug possession were up by 20% which could be seen as a positive when considering successful stop and search operations and the increase of community confidence in reporting drug dealing following Operation Torus. In relation to Operation Torus, T/Superintendent Bobby Singleton advised that 403 searches had taken place resulting in 110 finds, 66 arrests and 61 charges.
- iv. Members were also provided with an overview of operations on St Patricks Day.
- v. Members noted the contents of the report.

Neighbourhood Policing Presentation

- vi. T/Superintendent Singleton delivered a presentation to Members on the changes to local policing that would be phased in from April to October, 2015. Members were advised that this was necessary due to budget cuts, reducing numbers of police, and to operationally realign the service in line with Local Government Reform, with the exception of the Court District Electoral Area (DEA) which is to be split between North and West Belfast.
- vii. Members were advised that Belfast would soon have 4 Local Policing Teams (LPTs) based in Lisburn Road, Tennent Street, Strandtown and Woodbourne. Their role will be to respond to emergency and priority calls as well as scheduled appointments.
- viii. There will be 10 Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) based in Antrim Road, Grosvenor Road, Lisburn Road, Musgrave, Strandtown, Tennent Street and Woodbourne stations. These teams will be focussed on engagement and taking a proactive look at tackling the most difficult crime and safety issues faced by communities. They will be committed to building long term relationships, addressing complex anti-social behaviour problems and helping communities resolve conflicts in the areas most affected by high levels of crime.
- ix. With regards to the selection of Officers for these posts, Members were advised that a selection process would be undertaken to utilise existing skills and community relationships in order to maintain and enhance the existing service.

5. Members Questions and Input

Neighbourhood Policing Presentation

- i. In response to T/Superintendent Singleton's presentation, a Member raised concerns that East Belfast would be moving forward with just one NPT in comparison to the other areas which each had three.
- ii. T/Superintendent Singleton advised that the LPTs could be subdivided in the future, and that while there would be just one NPT, the existing officers working in Neighbourhood Teams within East Belfast would be moved to the Local Policing Team.
- iii. In response to a query regarding the division of the Court DEA, Chief Superintendent Grimshaw advised that the split made sense with regards to PSNI resources and that there would be no difference in service delivered.

- iv. A Member questioned how policing numbers would be affected given the changes described.
- v. Chief Superintendent Grimshaw advised that it was unlikely that numbers would be maintained however the new plans had been devised in order to maintain a sustainable level of service going forward.
- vi. Members were advised that on 1st April, 2015, the PSNI would be operating as 11 Districts and by October, 2015 all aspects of the new teams would be in place including the back office functions.

Tax Disks

- vii. In response to a query regarding the online system for renewing car tax and how this was being policed, Chief Superintendent Grimshaw advised that the enforcement of car tax was dealt with by Tax Officers, unless a PSNI Officer dealt with the issue when stopping a vehicle. The Member noted that the transfer to the electronic system had not been smooth and disks paid for online were not necessarily being 'seen' by Officers on the ground.

6. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members were advised that there would be no further meetings of the Policing Committee given that the PCSP was due to be reconstituted in April, 2015.