

East Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee Meeting

Monday, 24th June 2019

East Belfast Network Centre

Political Members	Independent Members
Alderman Tommy Sandford (Chair)	Lisa McMaster (Vice-Chair)
Alderman Tom Haire	Michele Bryans
Councillor Carole Howard	Jonathan Currie
Councillor John Kyle	David Geddis
Councillor Geraldine McAteer	
Statutory Designated Bodies	
Chief Inspector Christian Bradley, PSNI	John O'Hare, NIFRS
Inspector Keith Hutchinson, PSNI	
Alan Wilson, EA	
Gary Ballantyne, NIHE	
Belfast City Council Staff	Apologies
Glenn Thomas, Safer City Coordinator (SCC)	Alderman Sonia Copeland
Alyson Crompton, Safer City Project Officer	

1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Vice Chair welcomed Members to the Policing Committee Meeting and noted the apologies provided.

2. Declarations of Interest

- i. No declarations of interest noted.

3. Minutes/Matters Arising

- i. Minutes of the East Belfast DPCSP Policing Committee Meeting held on 19th February 2019, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.
Proposed: Davy Geddis
Seconded: Lisa McMaster

4. Area Commanders Update

- i. Inspector Hutchinson provided Members with an update on crime statistics between April and June noting that overall crime was up approximately 2% when compared with the previous year. He continued that this could be down to an increase in reporting of shoplifting and drug offences.

- ii. Inspector Hutchinson reported that ASB had decreased by 15% recorded in East Belfast. He outlined that additional police resources are available on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings over the summer months to be deployed in hot spot areas.
- iii. Members were informed that burglaries had decreased by 14% and that residential burglary is down by 13% when compared with the previous year. These figures follow good work across the City on information around creeper burglaries and walk ins. He reminded Members to advise residents about precautions to take before going on holiday to secure properties.
- iv. Reports of Hate Crime in East Belfast have decreased by 76% it should be noted that it is unclear if Brexit will have an effect on these figures in October 2019. A Member asked how there has been such a dramatic drop in hate crime incidents, Inspector Hutchinson advised that the number of perpetrators involved is small and ongoing work with these offenders has stopped them reoffending. He also commented that possible underreporting may affect the figures.
- v. Members informed of 9% decrease in crimes against older people, crimes involving domestic motivation up 4%.
- vi. Inspector Hutchinson reported a 64% increase in drug offences in East Belfast, which was representative of a general increase citywide. This is in part due to an increase in reporting and the success of stop and search.
- vii. Chief Inspector Bradley introduced himself to the Members he hoped to maintain police levels in East Belfast with the possibility of an increase NPT to 2 teams in East. Priorities remain ASB and drug offences and the additional Police resources both NPT and LPT available over the summer on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings working in partnership with the NIFRS, Belfast City Council Safer Neighbourhood Officers (SNO), and Alcohol Enforcement Officers (AEO). These resources will be deployed citywide as required.
- viii. A Member asked if extra police officers would be available after Brexit. Chief Inspector Bradley replied that an extra 50/60 officers will be available however as Brexit is an unknown a contingency is in place. It is envisaged that this uplift will be long-term to maintain confidence in policing resulting in 2 x NPT.
- ix. A Member asked how Belsonic has operated as there was apprehension in the community prior to the event. Inspector Hutchinson advised that the delivery model is tried and tested, with a review after each concert, giving a slick operation. Any issues for residents should be reported to allow concerns to be relayed to the organisers to allow for alterations. In reply to a query over the policing cost for Belsonic, Inspector Hutchinson advised that the Event organiser cover police costs.
- x. Chief Inspector Bradley advised Members that successful partnership working at the event was key, and included ARC, Medical Centre, Community Rescue, SOS Bus, Eventsec and BCC SNO/AEO. Policing resource is small due to this partnership working. A member commended the police on the professional police operation especially around the train station.
- xi. EA advised that they would be keen for their Youth Workers to be on the ground on concert nights to offer assistance. The Safer City Coordinator advised EA to flag this up to planners for future events.

5. Policing Committee Applications

- i. The Safer City Coordinator provided Members with an update on the Policing Committee Applications. Up to £2,000 is available per project and 2 grants can be provided per group, per year however the projects must be different from each other. Projects must actively involve the PSNI in delivery and the Neighbourhood Inspector for the area must sign the application.
- ii. The Safer City Coordinator advised the Members that East Belfast DPCSP has allocated £13,511 towards the Policing Committee Grants during 2019/2020. To date four applications have been received with one pending.
- iii. Members were asked to:
 - a. Promote Policing Committee Grants within their communities and wider networks.
 - b. Agree to extend delegated authority to a Members Panel for awarding Policing Committee Grants for time-bound projects to a working group of 5 Members, to include a PSNI representative, with a quorum of 3 voting Members (Political and Independent) required to approve decisions. Approved funding reported retrospectively at subsequent Policing Committee Meetings.
 - c. Review the level of funding allocated towards Policing Committee Grants in November 2019, and reconsider as appropriate.
- iv. Members agreed to the recommendations as listed above

6. Emerging Issues

- i. A Member asked about the issue of paramilitary flags and parachute regiment flags and banners, and asked if the police received calls to any incidents in contentious areas.
- ii. Inspector Hutchinson replied that the flying of flags in some areas might be distasteful but not necessarily a criminal offence. Police will not remove flags however they may intervene if there is a serious risk of someone getting injured (public order offence).
- iii. The Member commended the police for the great work under difficult circumstances.

7. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members were advised that the next meeting of the Policing Committee has yet to be confirmed.