

**Minutes of the West Belfast District Policing and Community Safety Partnership
Meeting in Public**

**Highfield Community Centre
Tuesday, 25th June, 2013**

Political Members	Independent Members
Councillor Máire Hendron (Chair)	Ms. Breige Brownlee
Councillor Matt Garrett	Ms. Carol McCourt
Alderman Frank McCoubrey	Mrs. Bernie Reilly
Alderman Hugh Smyth	
Statutory Designated Organisations	
Sharon Beattie, NIHE	John McLaughlin, BELB
Carol Carville, PBNI	Inspector Christopher Robinson, PSNI
David Harbinson, NIFRS	Inspector Alan Swann, PSNI
Angela McKeown, BELB	T/Chief Inspector Mike White, PSNI
Aideen McLaughlin, YJA	Inspector Jocelyn Wise, PSNI
Attendee	
Ross Mullan, Blackmountain Action Group	
Malachy Turley, West Belfast 50+ Forum	
Staff Present	Apologies
Glenn Thomas, Safer City Co-ordinator	Councillor Tim Attwood
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer	Councillor Steven Corr
	Harry Connolly (Vice-Chair)

1. Welcome and Routine Matters

- i. The Chair welcomed Members to the meeting and noted the apologies provided. Those present were advised that during the event, a BBC would be filming the PSNI speaker for a documentary however members of the public and DPCSP would not be shown. No objections were raised in relation to this.

2. Introduction by T/Chief Inspector White

- i. T/Chief Inspector White provided Members with an introduction to the theme of drug misuse and its destructive influence on society.
- ii. Those present were advised that within 'A' District in the previous 12 months there had been 543 drug seizures with an estimated street value of £863,000 and 268 drug related arrests, most of which was in relation to Cannabis.

3. Presentation on Drug Misuse

(Detective Inspector Andy Dunlop attended in connection with this item)

- i. Detective Inspector Andy Dunlop provided those present with a briefing on the types of drugs found in Northern Ireland, the sentences that could be expected for the supply and use of certain drugs, the areas of focus for the Organised Crime Branch of the PSNI and the use of financial investigation and assets seizures.

- ii. DI Dunlop also spoke about 'legal highs' and the issues with regards to convictions when dealing with emerging drugs which are not subject to controls.
- iii. In response to a Members question regarding paramilitary involvement in drug dealing, Detective Inspector Dunlop stated that there was no evidence to suggest it was led by paramilitaries however elements would be involved for financial gain.
- iv. A Member recalled the recent discovery of cocaine in a West Belfast park and stated that reports were not being made to police as community confidence was low as local dealers were not being arrested.
- v. Detective Inspector Dunlop stated that he recognised the frustration with the number of people being convicted and the speed of the courts but reiterated the need for community support and reporting at a street level.
- vi. In response to questions regarding partnership working, DI Dunlop stated that Officers were working with the Prison Service to tackle drug use in prisons and were meeting with letting agents and electricity providers to warn them of the tell tale signs that properties were being used to cultivate drugs.
- vii. Discussion ensued regarding legislation in America and the Republic of Ireland which allows emerging psychoactive substances to be immediately prohibited with the onus on the producer to prove its legality. DI Dunlop stated that political support would be needed to enable the required legislative change in Northern Ireland as producers change the makeup of a drug to by-pass the 'temporary class drug orders' which are currently in place.
- viii. When asked about the resources available to the unit, DI Dunlop stated that the team was both well structured and resourced but information from the public was key in allowing issues to be investigated.
- ix. In response to a question regarding the money that has been seized from drug dealers, DI Dunlop stated that the use of assets seized using the Proceeds of Crime Act were directed by the presiding judge which often included distribution to charities and the Assets Recovery Fund to which applications could be made.
- x. The Safer City Coordinator undertook to speak to an interested member of the public about the Assets Recovery Fund following the meeting.
- xi. The Chair thanked DI Dunlop for his presentation and offered the West Belfast DPCSP's assistance in tackling the issues raised which were of community concern across Belfast.

4. Date of Next Meeting

- i. The Safer City Coordinator advised those present that the next public event would be held on Thursday, 26th September and that the venue and theme would be publically advertised.