

# Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

## Policing Committee Meeting

Lavery Room, City Hall  
Tuesday, 27th August, 2013

### Political Members

Councillor John Hussey (Chair)  
Councillor Patrick Convery  
Councillor Deirdre Hargey  
Councillor Matt Garrett  
Councillor Colin Keenan  
Alderman Jim Rodgers

### Independent Members

Frank Mulhern (Vice Chair)  
Valerie Allen  
Claire Canavan  
Liz Groves  
Harry Maguire  
John MacVicar  
Mark Vinton  
Alan Wardle

### PSNI Representatives

Chief Superintendent Alan McCrum

T/Superintendent Emma Bond

### Staff Present

Alison Allen, Safer City Manager  
Katharine McCrum, Partnership Support Officer

### Apologies

Councillor Janice Austin  
Councillor Adam Newton  
Chief Superintendent George Clarke, PSNI

## 1. Welcome and Apologies

- i. The Chair welcomed Members and the new Safer City Manager, Alison Allen, to the meeting and noted the apologies provided.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

- i. No declarations of interest were recorded.

## 3. Minutes and Matters Arising

- i. The minutes of the Belfast PCSP Policing Committee Meeting held on 22nd May, copies of which had been previously circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

## 4. Update from PSNI Representatives on Summer Events

### B District

- i. Chief Superintendent McCrum provided Members with an update on policing operations with regards to parades and protests that took place over the summer months in B District, noting that 38 parades had taken place since 1st June, 15 of which were subject to Parades Commission determinations. He stated that there had been a regrettable number of injuries during the period and community tensions were running high, particularly at interfaces. He added that managing the resulting disorder had

impacted upon normal policing which was particularly unfortunate given the positive talks that had taken place in Cardiff earlier in the year.

- ii. Members were advised that 106 arrests had been made in relation to public disorder, 77 people had been charged with 10 moving forward for prosecution.
- iii. Chief Superintendent McCrum also made comment on the positive G8 Summit which had been both the least disruptive and least expensive, and the World Police and Fire Games.

#### A District

- iv. T/Superintendent Bond advised Members that within A District 47 parades had taken place, 17 with Parades Commission determinations. She added that 90 officers had been injured during the summer period, half of which were as a result of public disorder. At the request of a Member, T/Superintendent Bond agreed to provide a further breakdown in relation to these 90 injuries.
- v. Members were advised that 8 arrests had been made in relation to internment events, 7 of which resulted in charges.
- vi. T/Superintendent Bond added that the World Police and Fire Games had passed off without incident and that the West Belfast Festival had been well attended.

### **5. Members Questions and Input**

#### 9th August Disorder

- i. The Chair asked T/Superintendent Bond to provide an overview of the policing operation which took place on 9th August in Royal Avenue.
- ii. T/Superintendent Bond stated notification had been received that the parade would be moving from the North to the West of the City via the City Centre with 6 protest sites and was subject to a Parades Commission restrictions. She added that the operation had been complex and that prior to the parade through Royal Avenue, significant disturbance occurred between 5.30pm and 7.30pm.
- iii. She added that the police had worked to reopen Royal Avenue for the purposes of the parade however it became necessary to stop and the parade was then re-routed by the organisers. Members were advised that 56 officers reported injuries on the night in question, rising to 70 in the following days.
- iv. A Member questioned the decision to lock protesters away from the protest sites to which T/Superintendent Bond advised that this was not a conscious decision however may have been an unintentional result of the policing operation.

#### Confidence in Policing

- v. A Member condemned the violence that had taken place but noted that the police operations during the summer period left a lot to be desired, for instance having UK officers on the front line on 12th July, which the Chief Constable had previously made clear would not happen. He also advised that the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community was turning away from the PSNI and asked how this was being addressed. Issues with regards to the non-emergency number, difficulty in reaching senior police

officers and the suggestion that a complaints procedure using senior officers could be utilised was also raised.

- vi. Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that operations were continuously reviewed and that recent months had proven to be difficult for policing. He added that attacks on officers were unacceptable and that disorder could be traced back to December, 2012, and was therefore not solely an issue for the police.
- vii. The District Commander stated that engagement was needed to rebuild relationships, that community buy in was needed to make such an engagement work and that the DPCSPs may help to facilitate this.
- viii. With regards to contact with senior officers, he underlined that his mobile number was available to all Members.
- ix. A Member agreed that rebuilding relationships was not solely a job for the police and that the PCSP Members had a role to play. He suggested that the Richard Haass process should be looked at and commended the good work of the police and the community in the Oldpark area on 11th July.
- x. In response to a query regarding the Cardiff talks, Chief Superintendent McCrum advised Members that discussion was held in relation to better relationships and contentious issues which included discussions on parading.

#### G8 Summit

- xi. In response to questions regarding to cost of the G8 Summit and the number of arrests, Chief Superintendent McCrum advised Members that the cost was in the region of £70million which was half that of the 2005 Summit. He confirmed that two arrests had been made however the uncertainty of the event had required the level of planning and resources delivered.
- xii. The Member commented that more thought should have been given to the cost of policing the event when considering the issues involved in UK protesters travelling to the island.

#### Police Statistics and Teams

- xiii. Members discussed the role of the PCSP in monitoring police performance and agreed that a report of citywide policing trends and strategic issues would be useful. The police representatives confirmed that they would provide such a report to future meetings.
- xiv. In response to a Member's query regarding Neighbourhood Policing Teams and continuity, Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that teams would not be scaled back as they played a key role within communities and that there had been little movement within B District in recent years. He agreed that continuity was critical in maintaining confidence and trust and stated that he sought a minimum time commitment of 5 years.
- xv. T/Superintendent Bond added that while there had been more movement within A District, Officers had often remained in their area whilst in a different role and echoed the need for a time commitment from officers in order for relationships to be built.

- xvi. In response to a Members query, Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that officers may be moved voluntarily, due to retirement and other gaps in provision or because of a critical area in need.

#### Drug Misuse

- xvii. In response to Members concerns regarding drugs, Chief Superintendent McCrum agreed that drugs were a critical issue given that over 100 people had died in Northern Ireland in the past year as a result of drug use. He stated that the changing nature of 'legal highs' made enforcement more difficult and called for a more cohesive and strategic response.
- xviii. Members discussed the mis-information regarding bad batches which circulated following drug deaths, to which Chief Superintendent McCrum advised that accurate details would only be available once a post mortem had been carried out.
- xix. Members also discussed the causes of drug use, the issue of prescription drugs, the large number of pharmacies, mental health issues, and agreed that a multi-agency approach was needed.
- xx. Chief Superintendent McCrum agreed to provide Members with a brief on the re-launch of Operation Torus at the next meeting of the Policing Committee.

#### **6. Date of Next Meeting**

- i. The Safer City Manager advised Members that the next meeting of the Policing Committee would be held on Monday, 7th October.