

Minutes of the Belfast Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Private Meeting

Conor Room, City Hall
Monday, 17th February, 2014

Political Members

Councillor John Hussey (Chair)
Councillor Janice Austin
Councillor Patrick Convery
Councillor Matt Garrett
Councillor Deirdre Hargey
Councillor Máire Hendron
Councillor Colin Keenan
Councillor Adam Newton
Alderman Jim Rodgers
Alderman Christopher Stalford

Independent Members

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

Designated Organisations

Superintendent Barbara Gray, PSNI
Alan Hamill, NIFRS
Patricia Muldoon, YJA

Eithne McIlroy, PBNI
Trevor Murphy, BELB
Cecil Worthington, H&SCT

Staff Present

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

Apologies

Chief Superintendent George Clarke
Chief Superintendent Alan McCrum
Ian McCrickard, NIHE

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 meeting held on 20th January, copies of which had previously been circulated, were taken as read and agreed as correct.

4. Good Relations Bonfire Engagement Programme

- i. David Robinson, Senior Good Relations Officer, provided Members with background information on Belfast City Council's Bonfire Engagement Programme which was initiated in 2005 in response to a range of public concerns.
- ii. Members were advised that the Programme, which aims to develop better bonfire management in relation to 11th July bonfires and to develop alternatives to the increase

in internment bonfires on 8th August, had been funded through PEACE III funding however that funding stream had now come to an end. Mr Robinson advised that Council and NIHE had agreed to fund the Programme for a further year however there was still a shortfall in funding of £46,400.

- iii. Mr Robinson suggested that the Programme had a clear fit with the objectives of the PCSP given its role in improving community safety by tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, and as such requested that the PCSP approve funding of £15,000 towards the 2014 Programme.
- iv. Several Members voiced their support for the work and provided some examples of where the environmental impact of the Programme had made a great difference to communities.
- v. Other Members felt that the £15,000 requested represented too large a proportion of the PCSP budget and suggested that the Programme had a clearer link with Community Relations than Community Safety and could be scaled back.
- vi. A Member suggested that the improvement in July bonfires was clear and was supportive of the funding however he added that the approach to August bonfires was not working and should be tackled in an alternative way.
- vii. Mr Robinson advised that the Programme would be scaled back if the funding could not be secured however he reiterated the community safety outcomes that would be delivered through the bonfire work.
- viii. In response to queries regarding an evaluation of the Bonfire Programme, Mr Robinson advised that an independent evaluation by the Institute for Conflict Research had shown a 50% reduction in clear ups from the Roads Service and a saving of £103,000 by the Council and NIHE on cleanups.
- ix. Mr Hamill added that while the NI Fire and Rescue Service have not saved money through the scheme, it had helped with community engagement and resulted in less call outs and attacks on officers.
- x. Members agreed that the work was of benefit to residents as well as statutory agencies and resolved to approve funding of £15,000 from the PCSP 2014-2015 Action Plan towards the Bonfire Engagement Programme

5. (D)PCSP Audit and Governance Arrangements

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager reminded Members of the governance and audit arrangements in place for the PCSP and DPCSPs and outlined the reporting structures to the Joint Committee given that each Partnership is independent from Council.
- ii. She advised Members that independent assurance was also provided through audits from the NI Policing Board, Belfast City Council's Internal Audit and the NI Audit Office.
- iii. Members were introduced to Mr. Andy Harrison from the Council's Audit team who advised that the Belfast PCSP would be reviewed as part of Internal Audit's Annual Plan for 2014/2015.
- iv. Members noted the contents of the report.

6. Matters Arising/Chair's Business

(D)PCSP HMP Maghaberry Prison Visit

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager reminded Members that a site visit to Maghaberry Prison had taken place on Thursday, 30th January and advised that it had demonstrated a need for a follow through of services for those leaving prison and suggested that thought was given to supporting a resettlement project.

Older People's Parliament

- ii. Members were advised that an Older People's Parliament would be held on 21st February between 10.30am and 2pm, and were asked for a nominee to sit on a panel discussion.
- iii. Alderman Stalford volunteered and the Safer City Manager agreed to circulate the invitation via email also.

PCSP Citywide Drugs Campaign

- iv. The Safer City Manager reminded Members that the Citywide Drugs Campaign Launch would be held on Monday, 24th February, and asked Members to note the date in their diaries.

NIFRS Statistics

- v. Following a request at the previous meeting of the PCSP, Mr Hamill, NIFRS, provided Members with an update on statistics relating to deliberate fires in the Eastern Command. He advised that 197 were recorded in 2013, a reduction from 261 in 2011, however it was noted that calls are logged in the location which they are received, rather than the location of the fire.

PCSP Small Grants

- vi. The Safer City Assistant Manager advised Members that the PCSP Small Grants Panel had agreed to fund 2 of the 4 applications received, the remaining 2 being deemed outside the remit of the Belfast PCSP.
- vii. Queries were raised in relation to one of the approved grants and it was suggested that further information should be sought on the methods of referral; however some Members felt that if the appropriate checks had been done, it was not for the PCSP to impose further conditions.
- viii. The Safer City Manager advised that no funds would be distributed to groups before initial visits were carried out adding that both successful applicants would be invited to make a presentation to the PCSP.
- ix. Members endorsed that recommendations of the Small Grants Members' Panel and agreed that in future, agencies mentioned within applications should be contacted as part of the initial scoring procedure.

7. PCSP Consultation Exercise

- i. Dr Topping declared an interest in this item as the questionnaire in question had been developed by the University of Ulster.
- ii. The Safer City Assistant Manager circulated the questionnaire and advised Members that the results would be used to inform the 2014-2015 PCSP Action Plan. She added that the survey would be sent electronically and in hard copy to Members, community groups, section 75 groups and posted online and advertised using Facebook and Twitter.
- iii. In response to queries regarding one-to-one consultation and alternative formats for those with sensory impairments, the Safer City Manager advised that if requests were received this would be possible, and asked Members to contact the PCSP with any existing consultation opportunities, given the short period available to conduct such face to face sessions.
- iv. Members approved the questionnaire and the methods of circulation.

8. Members' Meeting Expense Payments

- i. The Safer City Assistant Manager reminded Members that the Joint Committee had issued a communiqué regarding Members' Meeting Expense Payments which has stipulated with immediate effect that Chairs and Vice-Chairs will now be able to claim £60 per meeting up to a maximum of 30 times per year, rather than 20 meetings which had been the case, and will remain the case for all other Members.
- ii. Ms. Somers added that while it was unlikely that Chairs and Vice-Chairs would exceed 20 PCSP Meetings, a criteria would be required in order to pay for an additional 10 meetings retrospectively.
- iii. Members agreed that the additional 10 expense payments should relate the meetings that were attended on behalf of the Partnership in their role as a Chair or Vice-Chair, and not where other Members would have attended without receiving payment.
- iv. The Safer City Manager advised that the PCSP would send additional payment forms to Chairs and Vice-Chairs in order for these payments to be made.

9. Local Government Election Protocol

- i. Members noted the report which advised that the PCSP should adopt Belfast City Council's Election protocol, agreeing the Purdah period will be from 14th April through to 22nd May and resolving to have no meetings of the PCSP during that period.

10. Strategic Issues

Age Friendly Belfast

- i. The Safer City Manager advised Members that moving forward, the PCSP would be asked to support Age Friendly Belfast initiatives in conjunction with Belfast City Council's 2014/2015 Age Friendly Plan.

Consultations

- ii. The Safer City Manager advised that focus groups would be established in order to provide responses on behalf of the PCSP to the following consultations:
 - 'Stopping Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence and Abuse' Strategy Consultation
 - 'Human Trafficking and Slavery: Strengthening NI's Response' Consultation
- iii. Alderman Stalford and Ms. McKinney volunteered to sit on the focus group looking at the response to the Human Trafficking consultation.

11. Date of Next Meeting

- i. Members were advised that a Planning Session of the PCSP would be held on Wednesday, 4th March in the Ulster Hall at 5.45pm and that the next Private Meeting would be held on Monday, 24th March at 6pm in the Conor Room, City Hall.