

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE
HELD ON 22 NOVEMBER 2007 AT 5PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Mr Alex Maskey (Chair)
Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chair)
Mr Tom Buchanan
Mr Leslie Cree
(1) Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson
Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
Mr David Rose
Mr Suneil Sharma

PSNI IN ATTENDANCE

(2) Mr Drew Harris (ACC Criminal Justice
Department)
(2) 2 PSNI Representatives

**SOCIAL & MARKET
RESEARCH (SMB)**

(2) 3 Representatives

**COMMUNITY SAFETY
UNIT**

(2) 3 Representatives

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Dr Debbie Donnelly, Deputy Chief
Executive
Mr David Jackson, Director of Community
Engagement
6 Board Officials

(1) Item numbers 1, 2, 3 and 5

(2) Item number 5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Mrs Mary McKee NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2007

It was:-

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Engagement Committee held on 25 October 2007 be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 OCTOBER 2007

3.1 District Policing Partnership (DPP) Attendance (Item 5 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee was advised that the DPP Members referred to in the paper at Item 5 of 25 October 2007 meeting had been notified that their attendance will be monitored over the next 6 months. NOTED

3.2 Briefing – Policing With The Community – Monitoring Framework (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee was advised:-

- that a copy of the discussion paper 'Identifying Neighbourhoods' had been distributed to Members;
- arrangements for a round table discussion with the Deputy Chief Constable and ACC Criminal Justice Department are still ongoing;
- 'Seeing is Believing' visits will be taken forward.

NOTED

3.3 Reconstitution Of DPPs And Appointment Of Political Members (Item 15.2 Of Minutes Refers)

An Official advised Members on the current position with reconstitution and the appointment of political members to DPPs. To date the Board has been informed by 19 councils of their political appointment date. Meetings to determine the political appointment dates for the remaining 4 councils have still to take place. Of the 19 councils 10 have made their DPP political appointments to date. NOTED.

3.4 Hate Crime (Item 3.4 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee received a letter from ACC Criminal Justice Department regarding the Hate Crime policy. This was requested following Members' concerns in relation to two specific cases of hate crime. Following discussion, a Member requested that further details should be obtained to establish if the perceived failure in service had resulted in any disciplinary or remedial action being taken.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that the matter be brought to the attention of the Human Rights & Professional Standards Committee;
- that officials would write to PSNI for further information on the two specific incidents referred to.

3.5 Community Engagement – Equality Commission Advice

The Committee was referred to a copy of a letter received from the Equality Commission in response to their request for advice. NOTED.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Details Of Conferences Which Members Are invited To Attend:

- Neighbourhood Policing and Community Safety Conference
- Tackling Anti Social Behaviour in the Community
- Police Partnerships and Collaborative Working Conference

The Committee was advised to contact Secretariat Branch if Members were interested in attending any of the conferences. NOTED.

4.2 Invitation From PSNI To Participate In And Support The Annual Policing With The Community Awards Scheme

The Director of Community Engagement advised Members about the Policing with the Community Awards Scheme. Members were advised that this was an annual event which has been supported by the Board over the last few years. Members were advised that the PSNI were seeking £17k by way of financial support and also for Members to participate in the judging process.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that this be referred to the Board recommending that it support the Policing with the Community Awards Scheme and gives approval to incur the expenditure;
- that Members should participate in the judging process for this Scheme.

4.3 DPP Chairs And Vice Chairs Forum Meeting

The Committee was advised of the Chair's attendance at the DPP Chair and Vice-Chair's Forum meeting at the Hilton Hotel on Monday 19 November 2007. NOTED

It was:-

AGREED

That the format of these meetings would be revisited.

4.4 DPP Political Members Information Evenings

The Committee was advised of 2 DPP Political Members' Information evenings which Members are requested to attend:-

- Monday, 26 November 2007 at 18.00hrs – Hilton Hotel, Belfast;
- Thursday, 29 November 2007 at 18.00hrs – Glenavon Hotel, Cookstown.

NOTED.

5. INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH (NHW) IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Chairman welcomed representatives from Social Market Research (SMR), NIO Community Safety Unit and PSNI to the meeting.

SMR presented the findings from their research into the effectiveness of NHW.

With the aid of slides, the presenters spoke on:-

- the rationale;
- the method;
- residents views – statistics were provided on the following:-
 - reported crime levels;
 - reporting of crime in NHW areas;
 - perceived change in crime over the last 2 years;
 - awareness and contact with NHW;

- recent involvement with NHE;
- effectiveness.
- impact of NHW;
- views of stakeholders;
- focus groups with residents;
- conclusions.

Following the presentation, there was a discussion between Members and the presenters.

PSNI and Community Safety Unit (CSU) inputted to the meeting on their support to the scheme and in partnership with the Board plans for its development.

Members acknowledged a useful presentation of the issues they raised and discussed:

- how far the NHW scheme covers, i.e. Urban, Rural, etc;
- clear differential between NHW schemes and DPPs roles;
- methodology for the research conducted;
- whether there was a gap in the uptake of NHW with the delay in the introduction of PCSOs and reduction of Full-time Reserve;
- clarification of the boundaries, i.e. limits as to what NHW can get involved in.

Following the presentation, the Chairman thanked the presenters for a helpful presentation and discussion.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that this is referred to the Board, with the recommendation that it be published on the Board's Website;
- that officials would draw up an action plan in respect of the recommendations and bring this back to the Committee for discussion.

6. APPOINTMENT BY THE POLICING BOARD OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIPS (DPPs) AND TO THE SUB-GROUPS TO BELFAST DPP

The Committee considered a paper which set out the policy which the Board follows in appointing Independent Members to DPPs.

The Director of Community Engagement updated Members on the current position with regard to the selection and appointment of independent members. To date 476 requests for applications had been received and 60 returned.

It was:-

AGREED:

To refer the matter to the Board recommending that the Board accepts the policy. Following this the Board will seek nominations from Members to serve on Appointment Panels.

7. ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIPS DURING THE YEAR 2006/07

The Committee considered a paper outlining an assessment of DPP effectiveness undertaken against the DPP Monitoring Framework for the year 2006/2007. Members were advised that DPPs completed a self assessment against the Monitoring Framework.

Although the overall performance of DPPs suggests they generally fulfilled their statutory responsibilities the NISRA survey targets that are used to assess DPP effectiveness are a concern. Members discussed the overall performance of DPPs and the process for monitoring effectiveness. Members noted that self assessment was not an acceptable method. Survey questions that are used to assess DPP effectiveness did not fully reflect the role and work of the DPPs and should be revised. Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

- that the survey questions used would be revisited;
- that in future Members would have sight of the survey questions relating to the DPPS before they go to CPPC.

8. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE WORK OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT BRANCH

The Director of Community Engagement updated Members on the work of the Community Engagement Branch. He advised Members that the Branch had met with the following Reference Groups. Business Community, Women's groups and LGBT groups. He advised Members that after Christmas there would be an opportunity for Members to take a more active role in community engagement. Members were advised that the initial consultation period for the Draft Community Engagement Strategy ended on 23 November 2007. The Draft Strategy would then be released for general consultation.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Chair and Vice-Chair would liaise with the Director of Community Engagement regarding the best way in which to launch the consultation on the Draft Community Engagement Strategy.

9. ENGAGING WITH YOUTH

The Committee considered a paper which provided Members with information relating to the Consultation Process undertaken by the Northern Ireland Youth Forum (NIYF). Members were asked to note the summary of the report on the Consultation Process.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the NIYF are invited to the Community Engagement Committee in January 2008 to present the findings of their report to Members.

10. INFORMATION PAPERS

10.1 Report On The 'Youth in Europe Through Town Twinning' Conference 26 October 2007, Downpatrick

The Committee noted the paper about the Youth in Europe Conference and in particular the input by PSNI and Down District DPP. NOTED.

10.2 Belfast DPP Members Allowances

The Committee noted the details of Belfast DPP and Sub Groups allowances. NOTED.

11. SCHEDULE OF BRIEFINGS / REPORTS 2008

The Committee noted the Schedule of Briefings. NOTED.

12. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

There were no questions for the Chief Constable.

13. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES

The Committee noted the following communication issues:-

- launch of Community Engagement Strategy
- research on Neighbourhood Watch

It was:-

AGREED:

That Members would consider communication issues at future meetings with regard to priorities.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

14.1 Ballymena DPP Independent Member Vacancy

The Committee considered a paper which asked Members to resolve to use the reserve list to fill vacancies in the three DPPs, Ballymena, Banbridge and Coleraine that are not being reconstituted. Following a discussion, a proposal was made and seconded.

It was:-

AGREED:

That an open competition would be arranged to recruit for this vacancy in Ballymena DPP and that officials would bring proposals to the Committee on an approach to fill future vacancies in the three DPPs not currently subject to reconstitution.

14.2 £100,000 Underspend DPP Budget

The Committee considered a letter from the Resources and Improvement Committee regarding a £100k underspend by DPPs.

Members were informed that this sum was part of the contingency held by the Board to cover DPP staffing costs, As part of the Latest Best Estimate (LBE) exercise this money had been released.

Following discussion, officials advised Members that although some DPPs had an underspend, some requested and received additional money from the Board.

Members were also advised that while additional money was available to the DPPs, Councils may not be able to support this as the Councils have to contribute 25% of DPP spending which could not be adjusted after the Rates had been agreed.

It was:-

AGREED:

That this would be referred back to the Resources and Improvement Committee.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for Thursday, 24 January 2008 at 2.00pm

(Meeting closed at 8:00pm).

Secretariat

November 2007

Chair