

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE 20th MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8 JUNE 2005 AT 10:00AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS

- Mr Denis Bradley (Chairman)
- Viscount Alan Brookeborough (Vice-Chairman)
- (1) Mr Alex Attwood
- Mr Brian Dougherty
- Mr Joe Byrne
- Mr William Hay
- Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
- Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman of Board)

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Affairs)
- Mr Peter Holt (Director of Communications)
- Three Board Officials

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (2) Three PSNI Officers, Drugs Squad

- (1) Part Item number 5.1 to close
- (2) Item number 3 only

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Mr Sam Foster and Mr Suneil Sharma.

2. BRIEFING BY PSNI ON PROTOCOLS FOR FLYING OF FLAGS AND POLICING OF CONTENTIOUS PARADES

The briefing was deferred.

3. PRESENTATION BY PSNI REGARDING THE NORTHERN IRELAND DRUGS AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed PSNI Drugs Squad representatives to the meeting. The officers gave a presentation on police participation in the Northern Ireland Drugs and Alcohol Strategy. A copy of the slides used in the presentation is attached at Annex 'A'.

During the presentation and in the discussion that followed, the following issues were considered:-

- The Strategy is currently under review and a new format is likely to be agreed in September 2005
- A review and further research is ongoing into cocaine use in Northern Ireland
- Enforcement - continues to target organised crime and major suppliers
- Education - the target catchment groups for police and other organisations
- Changing patterns in drug abuse in Northern Ireland
- Police input to groups / organisations working in local communities
- Paramilitary links to drugs supply
- Incorporating best practice from other areas in Northern Ireland
- The current structure of the Drugs Squad

Following the discussion, the Chairman thanked the PSNI representatives for their contribution and they left the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE 19th COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 MAY 2005

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting.

It was:

AGREED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Community Involvement Committee held on 19 May 2005 be agreed.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING

5.1 Update On DPP Recruitment Process (Item 4.3 Of Minutes refers)

Officials briefed the Committee on the current position regarding the DPP recruitment process. The latest available statistics indicated that 322 applications had been received. NOTED.

The Committee discussed the impact of a recent postal strike on the receipt of postal applications by the closing date of 8 June 2005.

It was:

RESOLVED

That the closing date for postal applications only, for the independent DPP recruitment process, be extended by 72 hours in view of the postal strike.

The Committee discussed selection procedures for existing DPP members.

It was:

AGREED

- That officials should prepare a paper for the Committee's consideration outlining options for the selection process for existing independent DPP members.
- That assessment should be paper based.

5.2 Neighbourhood Watch (Item 4.4 Of Minutes Refers)

Officials advised that representatives of the NIO Community Safety Unit had been asked to attend this meeting, however, due to other commitments this had not proved possible.

It was:

AGREED

That officials would further consider this matter and bring a paper to the next Committee meeting as to how the Board should support this area of work

5.3 Restorative Justice

Officials reminded the Committee that it had agreed that a meeting should be arranged with Mr Hugh Campbell and Mr Sam McCready of the University of Ulster, followed by a meeting with representatives from NIO to discuss Community Restorative Justice issues.

It was:

AGREED

That officials should arrange meetings with the representatives of the University of Ulster and NIO / PSNI as soon as possible.

6. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

The Chairman outlined the main points arising from a conference on Night Time Economy, held on 7 June 2005. NOTED.

The Chairman had attended a Parades Commission / PSNI briefing to DPP members on 26 May 2005. NOTED.

7. CUSTODY VISITORS STATISTICS FOR APRIL 2005

The Committee considered the content of a paper which provided information on visits which had been carried out by Custody Visitors during April 2005. NOTED.

Officials provided Members with further information regarding CS Incapacitant Spray contamination at Antrim Road Custody Suite. The spray had not been used in the Custody Suite as was initially understood, however, clothing worn by a person who had been incapacitated by the spray, had contaminated the suite. NOTED.

8. CUSTODY VISITORS OBSERVING INTERVIEWS ON CAMERA

The Committee considered a paper concerning proposals for legislation to confer the power of observing interviews on camera upon Custody Visitors, if deemed necessary to fulfil their remit of their report. The Committee was also asked to

consider whether Custody Visitors should be take on the role of the Commissioner for Detained Terrorist Suspects in attending interviews, as well as having the power of observing interviews on camera.

The Committee considered a number of intrinsic differences between the role of the Commissioner and the role of Custody Visitors.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Board advise NIO that the role of Custody Visitors should be extended only to observe interviews on camera and not to sit in on interviews.

It was:

AGREED

That arrangements should be made to provide training for Custody Visitors, to enable them to take up their new role with effect from 1 October 2005.

9. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSIONER FOR DETAINED TERRORIST SUSPECTS

The Committee considered the 12th Annual Report (2004) of the Independent Commissioner for Detained Terrorist Suspects. NOTED.

It was:

AGREED

That the Committee should meet with the Independent Commissioner to discuss the impact of proposals to close the role of the Commissioner.

10. DRAFT PSNI POLICY DIRECTIVE: POLICE RESPONSE TO HATE INCIDENTS

The Committee considered a draft PSNI Policy Directive on Police Response to Hate Incidents. NOTED.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Board welcome the Policy Directive and advise PSNI that it is broadly content with the draft, while it has no substantive comment to make at this stage, the Board should continue to monitor the police response to hate incidents.

11. MATTERS TO BE RAISED WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

It was:

AGREED

That the Committee had no issues to raise with the Chief Constable at the next Board meeting.

12. PRESS ISSUES

The Director of Communications highlighted a number of areas of work that the Press and PR Department is currently taking forward in connection with Community Involvement issues. NOTED.

During discussion, a Member requested that officials give further consideration to obtaining the views of DCU Commanders on the role and work of District Policing Partnerships.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was:

AGREED

That the officials should notify Members of a new date for the presentations on Protocols on Flying of Flags and Policing Contentious Parades and depending on the date should liaise with the Chairman in deciding whether to call a full meeting of the Committee.

(Meeting closed at 12:30pm).

SECRETARIAT

June 2005

CHAIRMAN