

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY  
15 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 10AM IN GROSVENOR ROAD STATION.**

**PRESENT:**

Mr Mukesh Sharma (Vice Chair)  
Mr Les Allamby  
Dr Kate Laverty  
Dr Janet Gray  
Mr Peter Osborne  
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Edgar Jardine (Board Vice Chair)

**POLICE SERVICE  
OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

- (1) Assistant Chief Constable Singleton Local Policing
- (2) Superintendent Steen
- (2) Superintendent Gibson
- (3) Inspector Morrison
- (4) Official from Strategic Partnerships and Prevention
- (5) Team  
Head of Justice Healthcare
- (6) Two PSNI Officials

**OFFICIALS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership  
Five Board Officials

- (1)(2)(3)(4)(5) Items 6.1 only
- (1)(6) Item 6.2 only

The Partnership Committee Chair welcomed all Members to the Committee. The Chair also welcomed the Vice Chair of the Board, Edgar Jardine.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Mrs Linda Dillon MLA and Mr Mark H Durkan MLA.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

**2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

The Chairperson asked Members to declare any conflicts of interest arising from the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 25 January 2024**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

It was **Agreed**:

- That correspondence would be issued to PSNI requesting quarterly updates on the Children and Young People Strategy.

**(AP1)**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 be approved.

#### 4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and correspondence detailed within the Action Log and the related verbal overview provided by the Partnership Director.

It was agreed that the following actions would close as they had been implemented:

- Action Points 1, 2 & 3 from the meeting in January 2024.

#### 5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

Members were advised that the nomination process for new political Board Members was ongoing and that once this was completed Members will be updated of the changes.

It was **Agreed**:

- A letter of thanks to be issued to John Blair for his previous role as Chair of Partnership Committee **(AP2)**

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

#### 6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

##### 6.1 Policing Plan Measures – 3.1.1 Hallmarks, 3.1.2 Neighbourhood Policing and 3.1.3 Impact

A Board Official provided an analysis of the PSNI reporting in relation to Performance Plan Measures of 3.1.1 Hallmarks, 3.1.2 Neighbourhood Policing and 3.1.3 Impact.

The paper included **Annex A – PSNI Report Card Measure Outcome 3 - We have Engaged and Supportive Communities.**

Members were advised that the Policing Plan Review Working Group 23/24 discussed Outcome 3 in detail as part of the process of reviewing each Measure prior to drafting the new Annual Performance Plan for 24/25. Through these discussions for Measure 3.1.1, Members agreed that it is difficult to provide a baseline metric, or quantitative data for the impacts noted. However, the group agreed the PSNI would work on developing baselines with descriptions and values for this measure.

PSNI have provided a narrative update on the “Here for You” Public Engagement Strategy and the associated Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing. Board Members may wish to welcome the ongoing REaL events throughout the community, and the launch of two separate development opportunities at the Neighbourhood Faculty established at the Police Training College.

Through analysis of the PSNI report card, Board Officials noted that the crime rate remains above the baseline in 6 of the 8 neighbourhood areas. The Foyleside/The Moor area continues to have the highest crime rate. While the Oldpark area continues to have the second highest crime rate, and now also has the highest ASB rate.

The Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) Self-Assessment Survey has now been conducted three times. The third Survey for 23/24 was conducted between September – October 23 and its findings are included in the PSNI report card. Section three of the NPT Survey focuses on the area of Targeted Activity Against Local Issues and Community Concerns. These questions contain data in relation to 13 sub-categories. The data highlights a reduction in the level of effectiveness in all areas when Year 3 is compared to Year 2.

The results of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan Survey 2023, and the Community Policing Survey 2023, are available regarding Outcome 3 and were

discussed in detail by the Partnership Committee at the September 2023 meeting.

Throughout all three measures there is a lack of specific information with regards to the impacts noted in the Policing Plan. If available, further information should be explored in order to provide appropriate, measurable updates. Some of these impacts have been re-visited by the Policing Plan Review Working Group and will require further consideration in the development of the new 5-year Policing Plan.

The Chair welcomed PSNI to the meeting.

ACC Singleton and colleagues provided Members with an analysis of item 6.1 which included:

- That the findings from the NPT Self-Assessment Survey were disappointing but not surprising,
- That the supply of this tangible data will show any trends and problems in certain areas,
- The impact that abstractions have on NPT teams,
- With 363 fewer officers in local policing the challenges this presents to keeping the response model working,
- The requirement to review the overtime situation with the hope that this will have an impact on abstraction figures next year,
- The use of Modified Rest Days (MRD's) and the impact this has on officers,
- These surveys provide a mechanism to have candid views expressed,
- The survey shows officers feel less valued,
- The question relating to abstractions on the survey show responses being either negative or very negative,
- The need to continue to share findings with the Neighbourhood Faculty Team,

- The possibility of making Neighbourhood Policing Teams a specialist area,
- The areas of potential loss when abstractions are having to be implemented e.g. ASB, Drugs and Road safety.

Following the presentation by PSNI, Members discussed:

- That overtime is a short-term solution and the detrimental impact this can have on officers' health,
- That officers on the lowest salaries depend on overtime due to the current cost-of-living crisis,
- Resourcing issues and the impact this has on overtime and MRD's,
- That some officers do not go for promotions as they can't afford to,
- If and when recruitment begins, this will be a long process and will take time to fill vacancies therefore overtime will be inevitable,
- The terrific work being carried out by officers with the low numbers on the ground,
- If there is frustration from local communities regarding the decreased visibility of officers due to abstractions,
- If abstractions and MRD's are budget related or systemic to management,
- The use of G4S security and the cover required by officers when they can't fulfil their roll,
- The percentage decrease in engagement with the Multi Agency Support Hubs (MASHs),
- If the reason for the percentage decrease in effectiveness of problem-solving is due to a resourcing issue only,
- The percentage drop in both repeat victims and repeat locations and the issues around this,
- The Right Care, Right Person initiative and issues being faced,

- The attendance of Board Members at the recent Attestation, how informative this was in speaking to officers and their families and why there were only six new officers.
- The increase in ASB rates in Old Park Road and other areas, the reasons for this including child criminal exploitation and the continued good work of the community groups,
- How REaL events show the positive impact of NPT's,
- If the reported sickness figures demonstrate a higher proportion being attributed to officers within NPT's,

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- Overtime is a short-term solution with additional resources being the medium to long term solution,
- MRD's feel like an injustice to officers as they do not get the equivalent days back,
- There will always be a level of overtime required and how this is managed to demonstrate the efficacy of its use,
- PSNI are getting closer to understanding how many officers and staff are required,
- The soon to be published CJNI report focusing on community safety and Neighbour Policing and that while this will address some issues it will not address abstraction and headcount strongly enough,
- Some officers do not want to work overtime due to the stress and pressures they are under,
- The duty of care and mechanisms in place to ensure officer welfare and the circumstances of overtime,
- The need to break even and eventually expand on the number of officers,
- The challenges with accommodation in Garnerville, which could challenge every element and may have some short-term impact on neighbourhood Policing,

- Local communities are frustrated at the lack of attendance at events and meetings due to abstractions and this impacts on the good work that has already been done in these areas,
- The impact abstractions have on the targeted controls that are in place in areas,
- Work is ongoing to define abstraction and how it could be categorised,
- The use of officers is required to back fill roles for G4S and while there is a monetary recouperation this is still an abstraction,
- NPT's do not tactically engage with MASHs,
- The good and collaborative work with PCSPs and community groups and the frustration of officers that they could be doing more,
- PSNI are trying to create spaces for officers to better engage in problem solving e.g. Causeway Coast and Glens workshop where officers brought a community problem to work through to understand the process,
- The recent attestation was a mop-up ceremony for students that were ill during the training or had failed certain modules,
- The Neighbourhood Faculty Team will have to use NPT officers for the Student Training Programme,
- The impact that abstractions have in Old Park Road and other areas,
- The figures provided do not include part time officers,
- NPT officers gain valuable experience and therefore do well when it comes to promotions,
- The worst sickness level is in local policing as the operating model is short by 363, it is harder for officers to get back to work if they can not do a full range of duties and there is an increase in stress levels as officers can not do what they are required to do,

The Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.



## 6.2 PSNI Update on Local Policing Review

The Chair invited ACC Singleton and the PSNI's Head of Justice and Healthcare to provide an update on the three remaining open actions from the PSNI's Local Policing Review.

Members were advised that:

- The increase in mental health demand calls and the way forward,
- PSNI are frequently the first call service for mental health calls with 5,500 hours spent by officers in the first quarter of the year attending hospital with vulnerable individuals,
- PSNI are undertaking a 6-week data analysis which will be brought to the next Committee briefing,
- The fact that Health Service does not have access to a full data picture for mental health,
- That 70% of the detained population now have access to a Nurse Led Service (NLS) in custody,
- The advantages that the NLS gives the detained population not just while in custody but also through pathways, interventions and follow ups post custody, all while supporting the Criminal Justice System,
- The use of social media in reporting crime through the online portal and what issues can be reported,
- That only 8% of visitors to stations are there to report a crime,
- The requirement for internal governance processes and strategical and tactical learning,
- That PSNI will still attend concern for safety calls,
- Learning from such cases as the Cawdrey case and understanding and respecting roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved,
- Ambiguity surrounding protocols of what an officer's role is when person attends hospital,

Following the update Members discussed:

- The funding required for the nurse led health care in custody and whether it is recurrent,
- The requirement for health departments to embrace the Right Care, Right Person approach which would free up officers,
- What the implications would be if funding can't be found for the social media portal,
- The fact that young people engage more through social media than physically making calls,
- The need for greater conversation around the protocols for dealing with mental health,
- The timeline in relation to implementing nurse lead healthcare in the remaining 30% of custody suites,
- What arrangements are in place in the South of Ireland in relation to custody.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- At present, funding for the nurse led service is year on year,
- The ease and accessibility of online reporting and meeting the needs of the customer,
- PSNI are taking some learning from the national Tactical Service Delivery Board in relation to the Right Care, Right person approach – some forces saw significant savings but were also able to put significant resources to it,
- There have been initial positive conversations by PSNI with senior health officials where there has been a recognition of the issues and the need for protocols,

- PSNI are working towards 2025 to achieve 100% of Nurse Led Services in custody suites,
- The South of Ireland have a very different custody estate where the healthcare aspect is not embedded,
- There are still a number of functions being provided by Forensic Medical Officers (FMO's) in custody due to the legislation not being brought in line with GB, for example, blood tests and alcohol tests and the need for this amendment to be requested from the Department for Infrastructure (DoI),
- That Encompass has been rolled out in the South Eastern Trust and will be rolled out in the Belfast Trust next,
- The excellent work of the NPT's in the Greater Belfast area in responding and how their presence acted as a physical deterrent in relation to drugs activity.

**It was Agreed:**

- That a letter be issued from the Committee to the DoI supporting legislation change for FMO's doing blood tests, alcohol tests. **(AP3)**

The Chief Constable has extended an invitation to all Board Members to take part in 'Ride Alongs' which would provide Members with an opportunity to experience 'a day in the life' of a PSNI Officer by accompanying them while on duty.

**It was Agreed:**

- An invitation will be issued to Board Members to accompany PSNI personnel on duty to obtain a flavour of the challenges presented on a daily basis. **(AP4)**

The Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.

### **6.3 Update on ICV and Custody Scrutiny Panel**

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update in relation to the Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Rolling Recruitment Campaign 2023/24 and the Strip Searching of Juveniles in Custody Scrutiny Panel. Members were advised that there were seven applications received, four candidates were deemed as appointable, but one withdrew from the process reducing the appointable number to three. Members were also advised that there was an amendment to the figures originally quoted in the paper which brings the total number of Custody Visitors in the scheme to 24.

Members were advised that a discussion took place around the Strip Searching of Juveniles in Custody Scrutiny Panel TORs at Performance Committee on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2024 and the decision was taken to remove the attendance of Board Officials at these meetings. Members were advised that an introductory briefing session was held with all panel members on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 with the first official panel expected to convene in late February/early March 2024.

Following the presentation Members discussed:

- The requirement to have a driving licence to be an ICV,
- The wording in the TORs as the Strip Searching of Juveniles in Custody Scrutiny Panel's role is to scrutinise and have oversight rather than holding PSNI to account,
- The ideal number of custody visitors for scheme to operate at its optimal level,
- The downward trend of volunteering and reasons for this,
- Any geographical trends in the reduction of volunteers on the scheme.

In addressing Members comments Board Officials noted:

- That the use of public transport would not be feasible due to the unsociable hours of the custody visiting scheme,
- That ideally 30 custody visitors with a reserve of five to ten would be a optimal number to operate the scheme,
- That the ICV Scheme is not a remunerative role and the current cost of living crisis has resulted in a downward trend in volunteering,
- The previous events attended and the upcoming events to promote the Custody Visiting Scheme.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

**7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

No questions were raised.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES**

The Communications Manager advised Members that a statement will be issued on the Paramilitary Crime Task Force Briefing taking place after this meeting.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2024 in James House.**

The meeting ended at 12.13pm



**CHAIR**

**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE  
FEBRUARY 2024**