

A NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY
18 NOVEMBER 2021 AT 14:00 IN WATERSIDE TOWER AND ZOOM.**

PRESENT: Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair)
Mr Michael Atkinson
Ms Liz Kimmins (Zoom)
Mrs Janet Gray (Zoom)
Ms Linda Dillon
Mr John Blair (Zoom)
Mr Maurice Bradley
Mr Colm McKenna (Zoom)
Mr Jonathan Buckley

Ex Officio: Mr Tom Frawley

PSNI: (1) A/ACC Mel Jones
T/Supt Arnie O'Neill
DCI Lindsay Fisher

DOJ: (2) Ms Julie Harrison, Director of Safer Communities
Mr Michael McAvoy, Head of Interfaces and PDB Branch

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Sinead Simpson, CEO
Mrs Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership
7 Board Officials

- (1) Present only for Item 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3
- (2) Present only for item 6.4

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Joanne Bunting.

The Chair wished to send a letter of thanks to Mr Tom Buchanan.

The Chair also welcomed Jonathan Buckley and Colm McKenna as new Members of the Committee.

It was:-

AGREED

- A letter of thanks to be sent by the Chair to Mr Tom Buchanan on behalf of the Committee; **(AP1)**.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked Members to declare any conflicts of interests arising from the agenda.

The Director of Partnership declared interest in respect of item 6.7. **NOTED**

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 21st October 2021.

It was:-

RESOLVED:-

- That the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meetings held on 21st October 2021 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG:

The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the Committee's rolling action log:

AP 17.5 from last October and AP 26.7 from September this year remained open, however it was highlighted that discussion at Paper 6.4 may enable those actions to be closed if the proposed revised wording of the PCSP Strategic Priorities is agreed today.

AP 26.8 – This item to be discussed in Paper 6.3 in today's agenda.

AP 27.3 – Information was provided to Members regarding PSNI's Communications Plan for the current Officer Recruitment campaign. Members agreed closure of this action.

AP 27.7 and 27.5 – a letter was issued to Department of Justice (DoJ) seeking a copy of the Community Safety Board (CSB) Terms of Reference and further information on Community Safety Forum arrangements. The response was received and shared with members as part of Chair's Correspondence. Members agreed closure of this action.

AP 27.6 The requested revision of wording was made to the Committee Draft Programme for November 2021 – February 2022. Members agreed closure of this action.

It was:-

AGREED:

- A letter be sent to PSNI from the Committee to note Board Members' positive experience of the PSNI virtual recruitment information events. **(AP 2)**
- To ask PSNI what specific schemes or initiatives have PSNI undertaken to encourage recruitment within the working class community. **(AP 3)**

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed all Members to the meeting and advised that 3 items of correspondence would be included under this agenda item and invited the Partnership Director to provide further details.

5.1 Letter from the Chair to PSNI re: Next Door App Presentation – Actioned with presentation planned for December 2021 Committee meeting.

5.2 Letter from the Chair to PSNI re: PSNI Communications Plan for Officer Recruitment Campaign and information on Domestic Rape cases – Actioned with responses provided by PSNI on both matters and available for Members to view on Decision Time.

5.3 Letter from Chair to DoJ requesting CSB Terms of Reference and update on Community Safety Forums – Actioned with response provided by DoJ and available on Decision Time.

It was:-

AGREED:

- PSNI will be requested to provide a more detailed breakdown of historic rapes, and to demonstrate how PSNI figures compare with other jurisdictions. (**AP 4**)

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Report on Policing Plan Measures 1.3.1 & 1.3.2 – Feeling Safe in local area, high street, town or home; and rate of places repeatedly victimised.

An Official from the Board's Police Performance Directorate introduced the item and provided an overview of the paper provided to Members which included the PSNI's report on Policing Plan Measures 1.3.1. and 1.3.2. with Board Official's analysis of these. In providing this, she highlighted a

number of areas which Members may wish to consider when discussing the progress report with PSNI representatives.

The Chair welcomed A/ACC Mel Jones and T/Supt Arnie O'Neill to the meeting. A/ACC Jones provided the following overview:

- Acknowledgement of helpful indicators provided in the report card graphics.
- Feeling safe is not necessarily reflective of crime outcomes.
- Work is ongoing in PSNI to move towards prevention/early intervention and proactive approaches.
- References to those areas with city or town centres and the crime types prevalent in those areas such as retail crime and crime associated with the Night-Time Economy (NTE).
- The need for a graduated approach to PSNI's role in response to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) with reference to partnership working with the Education Authority to support youth workers and ensure appropriate intervention and diversion for young people.
- Consideration of patterns and seasonal increases in ASB.
- Positive outcomes on recorded crime with PSNI performing significantly better than other UK forces (over 20% outcome rate in Northern Ireland compared to a much lower national average).

Members discussed:

- Do PSNI feel confident in the baseline information they gather and does impact analysis feed into the outcome metrics?
- That a list of wards rather than maps would be helpful.
- The importance of touching base with the same group of victims on several occasions to establish good baseline data.
- Should domestic settings feature in safer places commentary?
- The percentage of ASB that is dealt with by other agencies such as Council and Housing Executive.

- The timescales on delivery of legislation in respect of ASB.
- Crime trends in rural locations and PSNI's exploration of this.
- The use of the geoportal tool by PSNI.
- Sharing of statistics with PCSPs to inform local policing plans and focus local activity.
- Women as victims or offenders in the justice system.

In addressing Member's comments, PSNI provided the following:

- Acknowledgment that survey baselines may present difficulties and outcomes analysis can be problematic, particularly in general surveys, with the recent example of drink spiking cited as it had the potential to create a quick reactive response.
- PSNI consistently return to the same groups in order to determine if service delivery has led to an increase in sense of personal safety.
- The development of the Violence against Women and Girls Strategy has led PSNI to extend the scope of "safer places" to include virtual and domestic settings.
- Reference to ASB figures emanating from PSNI systems with other ASB data collated by partner agencies having the potential to overlap but also can provide assistance to PSNI.
- PSNI data considers those in rural communities with the example provided of people feeling unsafe walking in their area after dark with some of those areas being rural and acknowledgment that this requires further attention from PSNI.
- The geoportal allows PSNI to dynamically task officers in particular locations and assists in evidence based policing practices.
- PSNI share crime trend information with PCSPs. This garners community support and assists in the appropriate funding of initiatives.
- Custodial sentences for women may not lead to best outcomes societally, therefore there is need for PSNI to progress work in early

intervention with acknowledgement of the work of support hubs in respect of early intervention and repeat victimisation.

It was:-

AGREED

- PSNI to provide list of wards rather than maps **(AP5)**; and
- Correspondence will be issued from the Chair to DoJ to seek an update on the timescales for delivery of legislation in respect of ASB **(AP6)**.

6.2 PSNI presentation on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Abuse

A/ACC Jones was joined by DCI Fisher and Members received a presentation on work being taken forward by PSNI regarding domestic abuse and sexual abuse. The presentation included:

- PSNI's desire to drive down repeat victimisation and the importance of partnership working within the four pillar model of delivery.
- The need to ensure that the relevant branches within PSNI undertake their particular role in engaging with victims of these crimes.
- The forthcoming legislative changes and work that PSNI are taking forward in respect of that legislation
- Almost 1000 officers have received relevant training and the Suzy Lamplugh Trust has been a critical friend to ensure PSNI policy is appropriate.
- The need to ensure holistic management of risk with 250 champions across PSNI and all Sergeants in PSNI's Public Protection Teams identified as Domestic Abuse Single Points of Contact (SPOCs).

Members discussed:

- Compliance with body worn video.
- State of readiness of PSNI for the new legislation.
- Statistics and outcome rates for these crime types.

- The impact of the pandemic on reporting.
- Opportunities for schools and educational establishments to work closely with PSNI.
- Feedback from victims who indicate dissatisfaction with PSNI service delivery in cases of these crimes.

In addressing Member's comments, PSNI commented:

- PSNI will be ready for the implementation of the new legislation.
- An acknowledgement of changing crime trends and the recognition of the online element in many of those reports. This leads to the need to ensure evidence retrieval is timely and appropriate to assist with investigations.
- Recognition of reporting of domestic abuse is always a concern with PSNI having seen a rise in severity in incidences during Covid-19.
- Child abuse referrals have increased to at least pre-pandemic levels.
- Operation Encompass provides much needed support to young people in schools.
- Contact is being made with schools to explore the possibility of permanent schools officers being attached to schools, with those officers having a focus on safeguarding.
- The need for timely justice resolution in these cases as a swifter response can mean victims are less likely to withdraw from the process.

NOTED

6.3 Reporting Template for use by PSNI in reporting to PCSP Policing Committees

The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the final version of this Reporting Template, which has been modified in line with comments and suggestions provided by Members.

Committee Members thanked Board Officials for the work taken forward to bring this matter to completion.

It was:-

AGREED

- That the reporting template be accepted and training be delivered to District Commanders and PCSP representatives.

6.4 PCSP Strategic Priorities

The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the final amendments to the PCSP Strategic Priorities in advance of consideration and approval by Partnership Committee ahead of the meeting of Joint Committee. Following this update, DOJ representatives Julie Harrison, Director of Safer Communities and Michael McAvoy, Head of Interfaces, joined the meeting for the discussion on this updated version of the Strategic Priorities, which if approved will enable them to be included in PCSP Planning Guidance.

Members discussed:

- Assurance that any changes which may be made at Joint Committee would be brought back to Partnership Committee.
- The PCSP Annual Effectiveness Report.
- The need for flexibility so that PCSPs can take account of local issues.
- The need to ensure that information is received by Partnership Committee in a timely manner.

DoJ noted:

- No further changes are anticipated to be brought forward at Joint Committee as there is clear agreement on the way forward.

- The format of the revised Strategic Priorities will allow for more meaningful reporting in the PCSP Annual Effectiveness Report.
- That local issues are always identified in both Local Policing Plans and PCSP Action Plans.
- Agility is reflected in the strategic priorities so that PCSPs can respond to emerging issues during the life of a three year strategic assessment.

It was:-

AGREED:-

- That Partnership Committee approve the updated wording of the Strategic Priorities as noted in Annex B of the paper to enable them to be included in the PCSP Planning Guidance.

6.5 Youth Policing Panel – Update

The Engagement Manager provided members with an update on plans for a Youth Policing Panel event which included:

- The opportunity for a group of young people to engage with Board Members and senior members of PSNI.
- The need to ensure the panel has a broad representation of young people from different backgrounds and communities.
- Areas for discussion are anticipated to include policing matters, future challenges and PSNI's engagement with young people.

It was:-

AGREED

- That Members provide nominations and contact details of young people to the Board's Engagement Manager by the end of November 2021; **(AP 7)**.

6.6 Update on arrangements for Members' visit to Crossmaglen

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update on proposed arrangements to for a visit to Crossmaglen Police Station and Crossmaglen Rangers Gaelic Football Club.

Members discussed:

- Visits to PSNI Departments such as those located within Operational Support Department.
- The possibility of visits by the Board to other sporting organisations.

Board officials noted:

- The visit to Crossmaglen will take place in January 2022, with this visit being in lieu of a Committee meeting that month.
- It is hoped it will be possible to arrange a number of visits to a range of PSNI Departments and Branches in the early part of the New Year.

It was:-

AGREED

- Correspondence will issue from the Chair to explore the possibility of visits to PSNI Operational Support Department **(AP 8)**.
- The Board's Engagement Manager will update the Board's engagement strategy to facilitate visits as suggested by Members **(AP 9)**.

6.7 Complaint against Fermanagh and Omagh PCSP Vice Chair

The Partnership Manager provided Members with an overview of this matter and outlined the possible considerations available to Members through the Board's relevant PCSP policy.

Members discussed:

- Whether this matter might bring the PCSP into disrepute.
- The need for PCSP / DPCSP Members to consider whether they need to disclose relevant interests which might be perceived to affect their consideration of any matter.

It was:-

AGREED

- A letter would issue from the Chair of the Committee to the Member to advise that:
The breach is of a nature that does not warrant removal of the member therefore no further action is to be taken (option 2 of the Guidance). Members also agreed that the letter should remind the Member of their obligation to adhere to the Code of Conduct and in particular, in relation to the declaration of interests. **(AP 10)**

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

To ask the Chief Constable:

- Can the Chief Constable provide an assurance that PSNI officers are not carrying out checks on the immigration status of victims and witnesses of crimes?

- Can the Chief Constable confirm that the NPCC guidance 'Information Sharing with the Home Office where a victim or witness of crime is a suspected immigration offender' 2020 has not been adopted as PSNI policy, and that any such adoption of such a policy would first require to be subject to formal policy appraisal processes including in particular equality screening?

8. Communications Issues/Opportunities

NONE

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 16th December 2021 at 2pm.

(Meeting closed at 4:30pm)

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

November 2021


Chairperson

