

## **NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 25 MAY 2023 AT 2PM AT JAMES HOUSE AND VIA ZOOM**

#### **PRESENT:**

Mr John Blair MLA (Chair)  
Mr Mukesh Sharma (Vice Chair)  
(1) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA  
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA (Zoom)\*  
Dr Kate Lavery  
Mrs Joanne Bunting MLA  
Mr Les Allamby  
Mr Peter Osborne  
Dr Janet Gray

#### **EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Edgar Jardine (Board Vice Chair)

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

(2) Chief Superintendent David Beck  
(2) Superintendent Michael O'Loan  
(2) Two PSNI Officials

#### **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive  
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership  
(3) Seven Board Officials

- (1) Left at 16.35pm
- (2) Items 6.1 to 6.2 only
- (3) Two officials left after Item 6.1

\*Attended meeting by video conference facility

The Partnership Committee Chair welcomed all Members to the first Partnership Committee meeting in James House.

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Gerry Kelly 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 interests arising from the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2023**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2023 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 Director of Partnership.

In respect of Action Point 7 from the meeting November 2021, it is anticipated that the next Partnership Committee meeting will be held in Castlereagh PSNI and will be followed by a visit to the Contact Management Centre which will provide Members with an opportunity to observe the call handling function of the Service. One of the new measures in the current PSNI Annual Performance Plan is in relation to response times to 101 and 999 calls and this measure will be reported on through Partnership Committee. Going forward, it is proposed that a visit would be arranged to the new Waterside Custody Suite, possibly in early 2024.

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

- Action Point 6 from the meeting in September 2022.
- Action Point 4 from the meeting in December 2022.
- Action Point 1 from meeting in February 2023, and
- Action Points 1, 2 and 3 from the meeting in March 2023.

#### **4.1 Letter from DOJ re Amendments to the Code of Practice for Appointment of Independent Members to PCSPs and DPCSPs**

The Director of Partnership updated the Committee in relation to ongoing correspondence between the Board and DOJ on the PCSP Code of Practice. The main issue being the differing legal opinions on use of community background in order to secure a representative PCSP in line with the legislation. DOJ also shared four points of feedback received on the Code of Practice, that they consulted on, that was outside the scope of the consultation but did refer to Independent Members.

DOJ responded to the Board Chair's correspondence on 31 March 2023 to advise that three of the issues would be considered further at Joint Committee

- Media support from the department for the recruitment process,
- Consideration of an increase in the £60 remuneration for meeting attendance and
- The possible implementation of an independent interview panel for the recruitment of independent members

Whilst these points will be considered by Joint Committee going forward the general view, given the current financial climate, is that there would be little scope for increasing the £60 payment.

On the issue of a possible implementation of an independent interview panel for stage 2 of the recruitment process this would require a further change to the Code of Practice which would require full and further consultation with the Board and other key stakeholders. If any changes are made this will not apply to the current recruitment process.

The issue of the use of community background is still outstanding and the latest position is that both barristers would meet to ascertain if they could reach some common ground on this issue.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

#### **4.2 Letter of Congratulations to Liz Kimmins**

Letter sent on 12 April 2023.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

#### **4.3 Local Policing Review – Final infographic**

The Director of Partnership updated the Committee on the progress of the 45 recommendations that were agreed. In February, there were eight outstanding actions, five of these will be reported through the Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing at Partnership Committee and three will be longer

term which the Committee will continue to monitor.

The final infographic for the Local Policing Review was considered and a Member requested a slight amendment to the Infographic which was agreed.  
**(AP1)**

Members **NOTED** the update provided and agreed to make a recommendation to the Board that the infographic is published on the Board's website.

## **5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Letter from Causeway Coast and Glens re closure of Coleraine Custody Suite**

Members were updated on the further correspondence that the Chief Executive received from Causeway Coast and Glens PCSP on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023 advising of their lack of confidence in the decision to close Coleraine Custody Suite.

Members were advised that the letter was sent to the Chief Constable and the Chief Executive also replied to the PCSP advising of previous assurance that the PSNI provided in respect of maintaining confidence in policing in the area.

Members **noted** this exchange of correspondence and discussed:

- The location of Custody Suites on the police estate,
- The length of time taken to transport detainees to Antrim or Strand Road Custody Suites,
- Officer time while transporting detainees and completing hand overs,
- The advantage of closing Coleraine Custody Suite given that the new Waterside Custody Suite is similar in terms of the number of cells

- The arrangements in place for transporting young people and in particular the need for an appropriate adult to be always present,
- Whether discussions in relation to the closure of Coleraine Custody Suite are more appropriate for the Resources Committee given their remit to oversee the Board's responsibilities regarding the police estate
- The working group set up for the custody suite closure process.

It was Agreed:

- To write to PSNI requesting information on the outcome of the Working Group that was established to understand any potential service delivery impacts resulting from the closure. **(AP2)**

## **5.2 PSNI Response to Committee Questions**

Following questions at the March Committee meeting in respect of the PSNI Performance Plan measure on 'Confidence' Members were asked to note the correspondence provided by PSNI in relation to anti social behaviour incidents and high crime rates in specific areas.

Members also noted the PSNI guidance on 'Lone Workers Working alone in Safety' as previously requested by a Member.

Members **noted** the information provided.

## **6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Annual Performance Plan Measure – Satisfaction (2.2.1)**

A Board Official provided an analysis of the information provided by PSNI outlining the work undertaken in relation to Victim and Service User Satisfaction.

Members were advised that the report provided a comprehensive view of victim and service user satisfaction and reflected the work undertaken by PSNI to improve satisfaction for those who engage with the Service.

The Chair welcomed PSNI Officials to the meeting.

Members congratulated Chief Superintendent Beck on being made a member of the Royal Victorian Order for services following the death of Queen Elizabeth II.

Chief Superintendent Beck provided Members with a broad observation on his findings on 2.2.1 Satisfaction which included:

- The results were largely consistent with last year's figures,
- In June 2021 a free text box was added to develop the quality of the responses,
- 'Anonymous' wording being removed,
- Report on the statistics are provided to District Commanders,
- The survey was initially a text survey however there is now a web link for better engagement and inclusion with every demographic,
- Who the survey is issued to and the timelines for when reminders are issued for completion,
- Data regarding complaints which provides a breakdown of trends and type of complaints received,
- The need for victim updates within the 10-day timeframe,
- The quality of data to be provided to the victim,
- Student officer training in updating victims,
- Development of manager program,
- The high increase in Sextortion even after social media and television campaigns and the implementation of Sextortion Operation Corin,

- The important work being done by the Strategic Community Engagement Team within the local communities and assessing the impact this has on them.
- The usefulness of the PSNI 'Listening Events' that have been held and the others that are planned going forward,
- Examples being provided by Districts on what has worked locally with PCSPs.

Several issues were discussed with PSNI including:

- The option of anonymity on the survey,
- The fact that the text survey is difficult for visually impaired persons to complete and the need for the online survey to be checked for accessibility,
- What Service Retrieval actually is,
- The request for information be provided on complaints as some districts up one a week while others dropped,
- Any learning which has come from the complaints,
- In relation to the age ranges for sextortion, with the youngest being 12 years old and large percentage being under 16, whether it is adults extorting children or children extorting peers,
- Four districts have an increase in complaints with six districts having a decrease proportionally this must be a substantial increase for those four districts,
- In relation to the Satisfaction levels having been consistently high over the last couple of years and whether the type of crime be analysed to identify differences or whether age groups have different satisfaction levels,
- Whether there is a rationale in relation to the lower figures for "being kept informed" and whether any work is progressing to address this.



PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- Anonymity reference was withdrawn to allow issues to be addressed and keeps District Commanders up to date,
- The accessibility of the online survey will be explored and support from Janet Gray in ensuring that it is fully accessible would be welcomed,
- Service retrieval allows the prioritising of those not contacted within two weeks and enables a better service to be provided to them. Allows responses to be more victim focused and implement change quicker,
- In relation to the sextortion age groups, attempts on younger groups are from adults primarily for financial gain,
- The importance of young people knowing that they have not done anything wrong, and the need to report this to PSNI,
- That sextortion covers all demographics while in the safety of their own homes,
- The worrying change in mode of operating where perpetrators are superimposing faces onto images and the importance that these are being tracked and any trends being identified,
- In relation to the rises and reductions in complaints, learning can be shared between districts. Whilst the overall difference is not insignificant, comparisons need to be made in relation to districts, crimes and number of officers as busier districts tend to have higher complaints,
- Older communities are more likely to engage in the process, but it is important to reach out to all demographics,
- The significant ongoing work in relation to digital capacity through the Citizen Digital Board which has been set up. ACC Todd is overseeing this with a view to customising updates for victims of crime and getting officers invested in it.
- OPONI provides statistics on complaints so once further information is provided by them, it will be easier to see if there is a correlation between

age demographic and complaints,

- *Being kept informed* is an area that PSNI have struggled with. Clear expectations on what is meant on being kept up to date is required. The 10-day victim call back is in the high 90's but it needs to be more the quality of contact with the victim whether this is face to face or by telephone call. There is an internal Comms plan to address this, and they have met with the Victims Commissioner for their input.

## 6.2 Children and Young People Strategy

Supt Michael O'Loan presented this strategy to the Committee which is underpinned by five key themes of: Engagement, Safety + Protection, Suspected Offending, Victims + Witnesses and Stop + Search. In developing this strategy, PSNI worked in collaboration with partner agencies to develop a greater understanding of the needs of children and young people and to encourage more meaningful relationships by building greater trust and confidence. The strategy was originally intended to launch in 2020 but was subsequently delayed as a result of the pandemic.

The Children and Young People Strategy will be formally launched on 13 June 2023.

An invite was issued to Members and the Chair asked if anyone wished to attend this event to respond to the Engagement Manager.

Members **NOTED** the update and discussed several issues with PSNI including:

- Whether all educational establishments across Northern Ireland were consulted in relation to the development of the Strategy,
- The fact that not all young people are victims, some are perpetrators and there has been no engagement within this community in this area,

- No community youth groups are represented,
- Reference, Engagement and Listening (REaL) events need to go beyond the groups mentioned,
- The monitoring of how often the National Referral Mechanism is used,
- If suspected of offending how is the young person being protected in the custody suites, how are you ensuring an Appropriate Adult is present and how long are they being held without an Appropriate Adult,
- The need to better engage with meaningful conversations rather than issuing Stop and Search cards,
- Whether outputs and outcomes are being tracked,
- The importance of Neighbourhood Policing Teams,
- Whether any of the Youth Champions Forum members have criminal backgrounds as more and better insight may be gained,
- Whether there been any training put in place around cultural awareness to work with displaced children that are likely to be living in fear, as this is a growing issue.
- Government and Local Councils are missing from the Statutory and Non-Statutory lists, and Community Planning Model was given to Councils in 2015 but are still not regarded as a 'go to',
- Councils and PCSP's should be central to reaching young people.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- All educational establishments across Northern Ireland were consulted and given a realistic view on what PSNI can provide,
- PSNI are acutely aware that there are a lot more partners in the Children and Young People Sector although, the challenge is getting these unheard voices heard,
- Youth Championship Forum members have been asked to bring forward new members,
- National Referral Mechanism not used as PSNI use the Central Referral

Unit,

- Various schemes for custody have been put in place to ensure that Appropriate Adults are in place when required. PSNI would rather not arrest young people and take them to custody and 9 times out of 10 always try to locate a parent, guardian, or appropriate adult before taking them to custody,
- PSNI are very aware of the challenges in and around cultural awareness and work very closely with Districts, the Home Office and Housing Association to facilitate residents. PSNI have access to interpreters whether this be one on one or through telephone but are acutely aware of the challenges to develop this.
- Agree that Councils and PCSP's should be central and will be invited to the launch and that Council Community Planning and Community Services will be kept separate.

Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance.

### **6.3 PCSP Recruitment Process – Update on Funding**

The Partnership Manager provided Members with potential options in relation to covering the costs associated with the recruitment of PCSP Independent Members. Members considered the options for funding the PCSP Independent Member recruitment process following notification from DOJ that they were not in a position to provide the £178k required.

Following discussion, it was agreed to approach DoJ once again as well as the Councils to ascertain if any funding could be obtained. **(AP3)**

If these actions were unsuccessful, it was agreed that the cost of the process would be met by reducing the Joint Committee funding to PCSPs.

Linda Dillon asked that it was recorded that she did not support this option.

#### 6.4 Draft Engagement Strategy

The Engagement Manager provided Members with a copy of the Board's Draft Engagement Strategy (2023-2025) incorporating the comments and feedback received from the workshop held on 20th April 2023.

It was noted that all Board Members had the chance to consider the updated Strategy following the workshop. A Member suggested a minor change to the wording which the Committee agreed. **(AP4)**

Members **Approved** the Draft Engagement Strategy (2023-2025) and **Recommended** that the Board approve that it is issued for public consultation.

#### 6.5 Annual Committee Report

The Director of Partnership provided members with the Annual Committee Report for 2022/23 which provided information on Committee business throughout the year.

There was a total of seven meetings where the Committee Members considered a number of issues relating to the terms of reference.

Members **NOTED** the update and the Committee **approved** the Annual Committee Report for 2022/23

#### 7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

No questions were raised.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES**

The Communications Manager informed Members that the Chair will be attending the launch of the Children and Young People's Strategy event.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair asked that Members agreed that he should write to the former Vice Chair of the Committee to thank them for their t work on the Committee over the last number of years. **(AP5)**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2023** in Castlereagh Contact Management Centre. Members were asked to note that there will be no zoom facility available. To facilitate both the meeting and the visit it will commence at the earlier time of 9.30am.

Members were asked if they would be content to move to morning meetings on a permanent basis going forward and the majority agreed.

The meeting ended at 16.55pm

CHAIR



**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE  
MAY 2023**