

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY
16 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 9.30AM IN CONFERENCE ROOM JAMES HOUSE.**

PRESENT:

- Mr John Blair MLA (Chair)
- Mr Mukesh Sharma (Vice Chair)
- Mr Les Allamby
- Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
- (1) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- (8) Dr Kate Laverty
- (7) Mrs Joanne Bunting MLA
- (2) Mr Mark H Durkan MLA

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Edgar Jardine (Board Vice Chair)

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

- (3) Mr Bobby Singleton, Assistant Chief Constable
Local Policing
- (5) Mr Ryan Henderson, T/Assistant Chief Constable
- (4) Superintendent Gibson
- (4) Superintendent Kearney
- (4) Inspector Moutray
- (6) Ms Duffield Assistant Chief Officer
- (5) Chief Superintendent McDonald
- (5) Head of Justice Healthcare

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mrs Sarah Reid, T/Director of Partnership
Five Board Officials

- (1)(2) Joined at 9.45
- (3) Item 6.1 & 6.2
- (4) Item 6.1 only
- (5) Item 6.2 only
- (6) Item 6.3 only
- (7) Left meeting between 10 to 11.10
- (8) Left at 12pm

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

The Committee agreed to alter the agenda to allow Item 6.3 to be taken on the agenda before Item 6.2.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Dr Janet Gray, Mr Peter Osborne and Mr Maurice Bradley 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 19 OCTOBER 2023

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19th October 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19th October 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 T/Partnership Director.

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

- Action Points 1,2, and 3 from the meeting in October 2023.

4.1 Response from PSNI regarding request for 101 call abandonment age breakdown

Members **NOTED** the correspondence received from PSNI.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Correspondence with DOJ re Potential Legislative Changes (Justice Act)

Members were asked to note the correspondence between the Board and the DOJ with regards to potential recommended legislative amendments.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5.2 Final PCSP Code of Practice correspondence

Members were asked to note the letter issued from the Board's Chair to DOJ which highlighted the Board's concerns regarding the potential impact on community confidence if PCSPs are not representative of their district.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5.3 Letter of condolence – J. Passmore

The Committee noted the letter of condolence on the passing of Jenny's mother.

5.4 Letter from PSNI re: Road deaths

Members were asked to note the correspondence received from PSNI in relation to road deaths. The correspondence included figures and advised that their colleagues in An Garda Síochána are experiencing similar challenges in their jurisdiction. Members were asked if they would like a presentation on the steps being taken to try and reduce the number of road deaths and PSNI are seeking permission to take their educational road show around PCSPs in the coming months.

Members discussed:

- The breakdown of figures and what they included,
- That campaigns always seem to be aimed at drivers being at fault, but that pedestrians and cyclists have a responsibility for their own safety as well as the driver,
- How money from fines is being spent,
- That speed cameras/deterrents should be placed in areas with a proven high risk of speed or death,
- Current PCSP initiatives such as Kids Court which is very effective.

It was **Agreed**:

Correspondence would be issued to PSNI inviting them to a future Committee meeting and welcoming engagement with PCSPs on this issue. **(AP1)**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Measures – 1.3.1 Feel Safe & 1.3.2 Repeat Places of Victimization

A Board Official provided an analysis of the PSNI reporting in relation to Performance Plan Measures of 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 specific to Feeling Safe and Repeat Places of Victimization.

The paper included **Annex A** – PSNI Report Card Measure Outcome 1 - We Have Safe Community.

Members were advised that this is the first opportunity this year the Partnership Committee has had to consider Measure 1.3.1: Number of people in Northern Ireland who feel safe in their; local area, local high street or town centre, and own home, including in the online space; and Measure 1.3.2: Rate of places repeatedly victimised.

One of the Key Issues identified through the Board's analysis is regarding the 'Online Space'. Measure 1.3.1 was previously amended by the Policing Plan Review Working Group to include reporting on the number of people in Northern Ireland who feel safe in the "online space". However, the PSNI report card does not include any statistics in this area. The Chief Constable's report in November 2023 notes the ongoing improvements to Digital Citizen Services and online reporting.

In the last 12 months, the overall figures in terms of local safety have not changed significantly. However, in terms of feeling safe in the community where respondents live, and in their local town centre, the analysis shows that those with a disability, victims of crime and/or those living in rented accommodation are more likely to feel unsafe.

The PSNI report card provides figures of crime and anti-social behaviour rates throughout the 457 wards in Northern Ireland. The figures show a concentration

of crime and ASB in a small number of wards. 34.4% of crime is occurring in 45 wards (9.8%) and 15.5% of ASB occurring in 13 wards (2.8%).

The Chair welcomed PSNI to the meeting.

ACC Singleton provided Members with his analysis of item 6.1 which included:

- Results in relation to Outcome 1 is generally very positive, particularly in relation to changes from 2022/23,
- Officers are being more visible, accessible, and responsive and the positive impact this is having on communities,
- The requirement for a high level of analysis,
- The difference in gender data being relatively small,
- The significant rise in intersectionality, disability, victims of crime and private rented houses,
- The slight drop in figures between 2022 and 2023 in relation to town centres and the reinforcement of a visual presence in helping to solve issues in these areas,
- The 4.1% increase in responses in relation to visibility of officers and how PSNI would like to do more,
- The variation of data depending on community background and the differences in responses from young people,
- The concerns moving forward into next year and whether PSNI can sustain the figures to maintain a good level of visibility,
- The Executive team are reviewing the current operating model to try to achieve a balance between 101/999 demand, community policing and the policing of serious crime,
- The requirement for problem solving awareness,
- The difference that Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) make and the need for upskilling and equipping officers in this area,

- The safer spaces initiatives such as Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWAG),
- How ASB and Hate Crimes are being represented in the media,
- The increasing incidents of hate crime related to housing areas and the role of PSNI in this,
- The requirement for operational guidance to be issued across PSNI to ensure officers understand their legal limitation,
- Good work already delivered in certain areas such as St Peters Youth Club and in relation to vehicle ASB.

Following the presentation by PSNI, Members discussed:

- The need for problem solving across all areas,
- The need for all Housing Executives and Associations to be effectively working with and supportive of PSNI,
- The approach taken by NPTs in Colin and the possibility of this being rolled out to other Districts,
- Whether there is a satisfactory level of support from other agencies and partners,
- What support is being provided to officers in relation to Disability awareness,
- The restrictive budget and the impact this is having on NPTs,
- The issue of officers being called out by Health Care workers in young peoples' homes and elderly care homes when not required,
- With regards to ASB what initiatives PSNI are using,
- The requirement for PCSPs to be more proactive and thematic in their approach to concerns in their communities, in particular, hate crime,
- The need for continued and increased engagement in schools,
- Acknowledged the good work with younger people in relation to drugs which is impacting supply lines and encouraged this to continue as much younger children are now being used to carry drugs,

- What information is held with regards to online safety as this is not measured in the survey provided,
- How the size of Wards may impact local policing in those communities,
- The usefulness of Problem Solving being built into the report card to show the effectiveness across Districts.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- Provided an example of Hate Crime in West Belfast and the interaction they had with the victims, migration centre and Housing bodies,
- A problem-solving folder will be created to enable the consistency of officers in each District,
- The fact that NPTs can be overwhelmed with the level of support that is required in areas and the need to ensure they have the sufficient space and time to deal with issues,
- The need for a consistently high standard response by NPTs to maintain confidence,
- The concern around resources and not leaving space for groups to exploit communities,
- PSNI are working on a dashboard to provide more concise data which enables them to drill down into specific areas,
- The fantastic support from the Autism Support Group in helping officers and staff better interact with individuals with autism or parents of autistic children.
- ASB is a concern in most areas and the significant amount of time and resources this issue utilises,
- That bespoke initiatives are being introduced and developed and the need to ensure that these are shared within all Districts. Community examples were provided from West Belfast District,

- PCSP interaction varies in each area but that there is a need to target resources and get maximum value from PCSPs,
- The 'Right Care, Right Person' approach is being progressed to try and limit PSNI time in emergency departments or on calls that are relating to other agencies,
- The fact that PSNI intervention is not the best solution in certain cases, however, PSNI will not step back if life is under threat,
- PSNI recognise that schools are a tremendous opportunity to deliver safety messages and interact with young people. They have now updated their presentations and resources to include the Irish language which allows the message to get across whether this is through PSNI, teachers or parents,
- The intricacies and challenges of online policing and how you do this effectively,
- The pilot use of the computer game Rayuela to help young people stay safe online,
- The challenges of the balance between free speech and when it becomes a hate crime or harassment- and the need for this to be looked at on a case-by-case basis,
- The VAWAG strategy includes Hate Crime and promotes keys message and there is new guidance which will help and work towards measuring impact and success,
- The need to be realistic with what can be achieved in certain areas due to budget restrictions and having fewer officers,
- The requirement to look again at the Operating Model, recalibrate and deal with the reality as it stands now,
- The fact that towns and cities are repeatedly identified as an increase due to incidents frequently because of the nighttime economy,
- The legitimate concern and lack of resources for demand on policing when dealing with housing placement issues means this can be expected to show up in repeat victimisation figures,

- The fact that increased policing is required for drug misuse as PSNI are frequently used as a first response treatment service,
- The need to encourage officers to input examples of problem solving on the central Problem-Solving database to ensure a sharing of good practice.

In closing the discussion, the Chair advised Members that PCSPs had been asked to provide information on what initiatives they had undertaken to support the PSNI's Hate Crime Awareness week. Responses were provided by all but two PCSPs and this will be shared with Members following the meeting.

It was **Agreed**:

- To share PCSP Hate Crime Initiatives with Committee Members **(AP2)**

Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.

As agreed by Members, agenda item 6.3 was taken before agenda item 6.2.

6.3 Briefing on 2023 Pride decision

Chair invited ACC Singleton and ACO Duffield to provide a briefing on the 2023 Pride decision and informed Members that a previous briefing provided to the Board had been shared to aid discussion.

Members were advised that:

- The presentation was provided after the Pride decision to allow the senior team to demonstrate the background of the decision taken and the decision-making methodology,

- The Code of Ethics, guidance and statute legislation was used in determining this decision,
- The timing of the decision related to requests from officers to attend other events/parades in uniform,
- Meetings with the sector, following the decision, were very difficult and it was important that the reason for the decision was fully explained to them,
- While the groups did not agree with the decision, they appreciated the work involved in making it.
- The presentation provided sets out the framework to help guide how decisions are made on PSNI participation at all events and this ensures consistency when determining requests to attend any event in any community sector.
- PSNI want to be consistent in their approach with all officers regardless of community background, sexual orientation, or minority group etc,
- Officers should first and foremost act as officers and act with impartiality and neutrality and the Service policy is strict with regards to officers attending events in uniform or otherwise. PSNI feel the decision taken was the right one particularly the part of PSNI not attending in uniform,
- That as an employer, PSNI have a duty of care to ensure that staff are demonstrating equality, transparency, and impartiality in all they do,
- The requirement for open conversations on how to address issues now and in the future when dealing with a wide range of requests and as an employer the need for transparency, consistency, robustness, and accountability in these decisions,
- The fact that all decisions to attend events are now made using this framework.

Following the update Members discussed:

- If the decision-making process took into consideration any distinction between events such as Pride and recent demonstrations in relation to the conflict in the middle east,
- The fact that Pride is an inclusiveness event,
- The timing of the announcement,
- If consideration was given over summer months with PSNI attending day and evening events,
- That while the decision does not detract from the hurt caused to officers and police staff, the decision was made on attending in uniform not in a personal capacity,
- How PSNI move forward and improve confidence with the LGBTQIA+ community, both internally and externally,
- PSNI attended Mela in an official capacity only and the reasons and rational behind this decision was understood by the organisers.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- That on the Pride website it states that the parade is a protest,
- That other agencies must consider the same issues for their employees,
- That while the decision is based on impartiality there are still opportunities for engagement such as a stand in Pride village and a PSNI Pride vehicle,
- That while personal feelings are involved, the fact that you are PSNI and Police Staff must be a priority,
- PSNI acknowledged that while the timing of the decision did not help with the optics, it was a coincidence,
- Internal discussions were held with staff associations regarding the Framework and concerns were really heard and taken on board,
- The Code of Ethics is clear in PSNI therefore, on occasions, interventions may be required to ensure that it is maintained as a service for all,

- Legal advice was sought and PSNI were advised they were at risk if they were legally challenged, and this Framework will ensure that consistency is applied in all decisions made,
- The importance of ongoing dialogue, clinical governance and further engagement. The meetings over the last couple of months have been instrumental in maintaining relationships which is vital as this work is too important to lose.

Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.

6.2 Update on the work of the Multi Agency Triage Team (MATT)

Chair invited T/ACC Henderson to discuss.

ACC Henderson provided Members with his analysis of item 6.2 which included:

- The critical issue with the demand on PSNI in assisting healthcare,
- That PSNI are the first resource for dealing with mental health patients especially outside office hours,
- The resources utilised in having to accompany and wait in emergency departments for individual assessments,
- The traumatic impact on officers having to deal with serious health issue calls and the mental health support for them,
- The fact that there are differing levels of accountability in dealing with such issues which is creating a culture of fear,
- That the accountability framework for policing and health care is very different,
- The fear that officers have in handling an incident as they can't walk away and will see it through,

- The mental health demand in hospitals between January 2023 and March 2023 was almost 4,000 hours in officers' resources - this was either person being arrested under Article 30 or attending of their own accord,
- Between November 2022 and October 2023 there were 22,000 incidents relating to mental health and only 11% had a confirmed crime and the rest were concerns for safety,
- That PSNI attend almost 6,000 calls up to September 2023. A 10% dip sample was carried out and figures showed that in these cases, the demand was for an ambulance due to concern for safety and in 74% of cases the ambulance did not respond due a resolution being reached by PSNI and 45% of the dip sample resulted in conveying persons to hospital.
- That officers are provided with some mental health training, but this is not the same as what the health care system provides their staff,
- The wider challenges of balancing public safety with the need of the individual,
- The difference between the Mental Health Order and the Mental Health Act provides challenges,
- Looking at initiatives to transform custody healthcare by having a specific strand which focuses on access to services and a roll out through nurse lead services in all custody suites, District support hubs and holding multiagency meetings in every district,
- Interface protocol connections with healthcare and childrens' homes and how partner governance meetings have seen a reduction in calls,
- The workings around and benefits of the MATT and the fact that the NIAS removed themselves from this during covid,
- PHA have committed funding for the MATT for the next financial year, however, there will be a forthcoming meeting with PHA to discuss an options paper provided by PSNI on the rollout of the pilot,
- That all funding for the MATT is provided from PHA and PSNI provide in-kind contributions,

- Basic mental health is included in officers initial training, but work is ongoing with the police college to try and add more context and examples around the training being provided. A video has also been devised to show probationers and officers completing their degrees,
- MATT officers are trained annually, and this is co-hosted with Community Psychiatric Nurses (CPNs) and Trust representatives and funded by PHA,
- The Right Care, Right Person initiative, the need for more legal clarity and developing good policing policy to assist officers,
- The requirement to produce Frameworks for partnership development and give officers more clarity and protection in their decision making on where their legal duties start and finish,
- That it is hard to get sign off from healthcare professionals on any healthcare protocol.

Following the presentation by PSNI, Members discussed:

- The amount of demand on PSNI in relation to mental health calls,
- That systems are not capturing statistics in an effective way and the need to develop this,
- The reasons why figures escalate between January and March 2023,
- That these are conservative estimates as only mental health calls are included in figures,
- Whilst appreciating that the statistics provided are not official, whether the report of all statistics could be shared with members for their information,
- The need for a protocol on police's role in dealing with mental health of vulnerable individuals,
- That whilst the Committee have no role over health protocols, they can influence PSNI involvement in such incidents,
- If the options paper for the MATT can be shared with the Members as it can no longer be regarded as a multi-agency operating model if partners have withdrawn,

- The need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as PSNI seem to be left to take the lead on some incidents that they shouldn't be e.g., childrens' homes,
- The needs of other victims of crime and trying to balance their fear and isolation while waiting on PSNI to attend their calls, which they can't while waiting in the emergency departments,
- The pressure on PSNI staff, budgets, and performance in providing this support,
- The lack of CPN cover provided by healthcare and the impact this has on PSNI waiting times in emergency departments.

It was Agreed:

- Letter to issue to PSNI to request PSNI statistics on 'policing' mental health calls, the options paper on the future of the MATT and invitation to provide future briefing on the 'Right Care, Right Person' approach **(AP3)**

Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance.

6.4 Update on applications for PCSP Appointment process

The T/Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the applications for PSCP appointment process. Members were advised that applications were extended up to 3 November 2023. The applications process has been reopened until 15 December 2023 for six Councils that achieved 15 applications or less. Five council areas will move forward to stage 2 of the process, and it is expected that the other six Councils will progress to stage 2 in January 2024. It is not anticipated that this staging will impact the formal reconstitution date of 1 June 2024.

It is anticipated that Board appointment panel meetings will be held in March 2024 with training for panel members being provided during February 2024.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.5 Annual Report of the Independent Reviewer of Justice and Security – recommendations for PCSPs

The T/Director of Partnership provided Members with details of the recommendations related to PCSPs included in the 15th report of the Independent Reviewer of Justice and Security and sought feedback on whether PCSPs are appropriately placed to take them forward.

Members expressed their concerns that PCSPs would be involved in the operational issues of PSNI with regards to Stop and Search and Justice and Security Act powers. Members felt that this could put PCSPs at risk and damage their existing relationships within their communities. Members also noted that Stop and Search may not be an issue in every PCSP area but if it was it would be highlighted with the District Commander.

It was **Agreed**:

- A letter is to be issued to the Performance Committee Chair outlining the Committee's position on the recommendations. **(AP4)**

6.6 Verbal Update on Problem Solving in Partnership applications.

The T/Director of Partnership provided Members with an update in relation to the Problem Solving in Partnership awards applications. The application process closed on the 10 November 2023 at which point 37 applications were received and 11 of these applications fell into the PCSP category. A video will be produced in January 2024 with the two finalists for each category and an awards

ceremony will be held on the 22 February 2024 in the Harbour Commissioners offices.

The Committee had agreed to part fund this event, but recent correspondence has indicated that the cost has increased slightly and asked if Members would consider increasing their funding by £500.

Members **noted** the update and **agreed** to the increase in funding.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

No questions were raised.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

There were no communication issues or opportunities for update.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 ICV reporting

The Engagement Manager followed up on an action that was raised at the November Board meeting specifically for Partnership Committee to consider if an annual report on ICVs was sufficient.

Members were provided with an overview of how the ICV statistical information is collated to produce the annual report, that this is now in conjunction with the Board's statistician, and that any change in the reporting mechanisms would require substantial resources not only from the Engagement team but also the Board statistician. Members were also advised that any serious issues or concerns will still be brought to the Committee for consideration.

Members **noted** the update and agreed that the day-to-day minor issues are managed by the team and the Custody Sergeant and that any significant or

systemic issues identified are brought to Committee. It was therefore **agreed** that an annual ICV report for the public was sufficient.

9.2 REal Events Update

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update in relation to two upcoming REal events the first, with Faith Based Groups and the second with the LGBTQIA+ Community. It was noted that these events were originally scheduled for the 27 and 28 November 2023. Members were advised that both events would now be held on 28 November 2023 at Newforge.

Members **noted** the update.

- 9.3** Members were informed that the Scottish Institute of Policing were hosting a conference in Edinburgh on the 29 November 2023 and Members were asked if they wished to attend.

Members **noted** the update, and details of the conference will be emailed to Members to gauge interest. **(AP5)**

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for **9.30am on Thursday 18th January 2024 in James House.**

The meeting ended at 14.15pm

CHAIR



PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

NOVEMBER 2023

