

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17 APRIL 2025 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE

PRESENT:

Dr Kate Lavery (Committee Vice Chair)
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA*
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
(1) Mr Cathal Boylan MLA*
Mrs Marian Cree
Mr Patrick Nelson*
(2) Mr Tommy O'Reilly

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

(3) ACC Ryan Henderson
(4) ACC Anthony McNally
(4) Chief Superintendent Gary McDonald
(5) Dympna Thornton, Strategic Partnerships &
Prevention Team
(5) Inspector Stephen Burke
(6) One PSNI official

**NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD
OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
Four Board Officials

Attended meeting by video conference facility *

- (1) **Until 11.30am**
- (2) **From 9.40am**
- (3) **Items 6.1 & 6.2 only**
- (4) **Item 6.1 only**
- (5) **Item 6.2 only**
- (6) **Items 6.1 and 6.2 only**

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Peter McReynolds MLA.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 FEBRUARY 2025

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 February 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 20 February 2025 be approved.

4. COMMITTEE 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 relation to Action Point 2 from the meeting on 20 February 2025 regarding budget breakdowns for the Belfast District PCSPs, the Director of Partnership noted the PCSP Manager has advised that this information is not currently captured, however going forward Board officials have requested that the information is collated and provided in future financial returns.

Members **AGREED** that this action point could now be closed and the PCSP Annual Effectiveness report for 2023/24 (which Committee Members approved at the February 2025 Committee meeting subject to clarification on

this issue) will be presented to the May Board meeting seeking approval for publication. **(AP1)**

Members **AGREED** that Action Point 1 from the meeting on 20 February 2025 and Action Point 1 from the meeting on 21 November 2024 relating to the meeting with DOJ legal advisors re Access to Custody Records and the meeting with Community Restorative Justice (CRJ) re the South Armagh Policing Review respectively, could be closed as both these meetings have now taken place.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and related verbal overview provided in respect of the following agenda items.

5.1 PSNI Responses to queries raised at February Committee meeting

Members **NOTED** the written responses provided by PSNI to follow up questions raised by Members at the February 2025 Committee meeting.

Members confirmed they were content with the responses.

5.2 Correspondence from Law Enforcement Torch Run re Special Olympics

The Vice-Chair highlighted the letter from the Co-Director for NI Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics which sought an opportunity to present to Board Members with a view to potentially getting involved in the LETR 30th anniversary celebrations next year.

Following discussion, Members noted that whilst this isn't explicitly a Partnership Committee issue, it was **AGREED** to invite the Co-Director and his team to present at a future Committee meeting. **(AP2)**

5.3 **Agenda for Joint Committee Meeting April 2025**

The Vice-Chair highlighted the draft agenda for the Joint Committee meeting scheduled to take place on 30 April 2025.

During discussion Members raised the following queries:

- If there are any remaining concerns regarding the Internal Audit of Causeway Coat & Glens PCSP, noting that this will continue to be closely monitored to ensure recommendations made as a result of the audit have been implemented;
- If the PCSP Strategic Assessments for the next three year period are reflective of the new Policing Plan; and
- Clarification on the wording of the CJINI recommendation on Communications and draft ToR referred to – the Partnership Manager outlined the origin of the recommendation, and that wording can be shared with the Member. The Director of Partnership added that Committee Members would receive an update on Joint Committee business at the June Committee meeting.

Members **NOTED** the agenda.

6. **ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

Before PSNI joined the meeting Board officials provided Members with an overview of agenda items 6.1 & 6.2 (PSNI Right Care Right Person and

Custody Healthcare Update and PSNI Update on Children and Young Peoples Strategy respectively).

6.1 PSNI Right Care Right Person and Custody Healthcare Update

The Vice-Chair welcomed Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Ryan Henderson, ACC Anthony McNally and Chief Superintendent McDonald to the meeting and congratulated ACC McNally on his recent promotion to Assistant Chief Constable.

The Vice-Chair invited ACC McNally to present the update on the Transformed Custody Healthcare Model.

ACC McNally outlined the background to the project, noting that PSNI, alongside partners in the Departments of Health and Justice have been working collaboratively to deliver a transformed custody healthcare service. ACC McNally noted the main objective of the project is to develop a nurse-led custody healthcare service, which will involve the service being delivered by Custody Nurse Practitioners (CNP) who are employed by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT). ACC McNally explained CNPs have been providing custody healthcare in Musgrave custody suite since October 2018 and in 2022 and 2023 this operational model has been rolled out to Antrim and Waterside custody suites respectively. ACC McNally noted that the nurses currently delivering this service all have significant relevant experience across both physical and mental health care and are able to meet the majority of healthcare requirements of people detained in PSNI custody.

ACC McNally highlighted however, that currently there are two exceptions to this, namely where legislation stipulates that a medical practitioner must treat the detained person. This applies to the Road Traffic Order 1995, where a medical practitioner is required to determine a drug/drive

impairment and also any detentions required under the Mental Health (NI) Order 1986.

ACC McNally outlined the benefits of the nurse-led model, noting that this model will significantly improve the healthcare provision for those individuals who find themselves in a custody environment. ACC McNally advised individuals will have access to medical attention immediately on site, rather than having to spend time being transported to and time spent waiting in busy hospital emergency departments. (This also reduces the already heavy burden on the health staff in these front-line services). As a result of this nurse led model, ACC McNally noted individuals in crisis will also have access to early intervention schemes and may be signposted or referred to alternative pathways which may lead to them getting the right help at the right time and keep them out of the criminal justice system going forward. ACC McNally added that in addition to those points noted above the new healthcare model also provides PSNI efficiency as there will be a considerable amount of officer's time saved by not having to transport detained people to and from hospital and wait while they seek treatment.

ACC McNally advised that in terms of next steps it is the intention to roll out this nurse-led model in custody suites in Omagh, Banbridge, Lurgan, and Dungannon, however there will still be a need for the provision of some Force Medical Officers (FMOs), (albeit on a reduced scale) for any complex cases that arise.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- Why there has not been a more significant reduction in the Force Medical Officer (FMO) costs over the period from 2018/19 – 2024/25, noting that whilst there are Custody Nurse Practitioners (CNP) operating out of Antrim, Musgrave and Waterside custody suites, the FMO model is still in operation in all other custody suites (as well as

being required for complex cases in Antrim, Musgrave and Waterside). It is hoped that once the nurse led model is fully rolled out to all custody suites, the number of FMO's could be reduced by less than half and then more significant savings could be realised;

- The benefits to the Health Service of having nurses in custody suites; in particular by reducing the pressure on already stretched A+E departments by not having the same volume of people attending at peak times and providing early intervention pathways/referrals to individuals in crisis;
- The difference in the procurement arrangements in the FMO model and the nurse-led model, noting the nurse-led model is ran by the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust (BHSCT) and under the FMO model, GP's are contracted by PSNI;
- If the PSNI are confident of being able to roll out the nurse-led model across all custody suites across NI, noting that PSNI are hopeful of being able to achieve this by the end of the calendar year
- If the nurses are content with the proposed changes to the legislation to allow healthcare practitioners to take blood in custody suites rather than a medical practitioner; noting that they are on board with the proposal and partners in the Health Service are currently designing how that operational model looks going forward;
- When the PSNI would envisage the Department of Health contribution of 20% of the costs increasing;
- Safety concerns for the health and wellbeing of the nurses; and
- How the Board could advocate for the legislative change; noting the Committee previously wrote to the Minister for Infrastructure in this regard in April 2024. It was agreed that a copy of the correspondence would be forwarded to PSNI and, if the matter has still not progressed, the Board would follow up with the Minister. **(AP3)**

The Vice-Chair then handed over to ACC Henderson to present the PSNI's update on progress towards implementation of the Right Care Right Person

(RCRP) initiative - an operational model that is designed to ensure the right agency deals with health-related calls, instead of PSNI being the default first responder where there is a concern about a person's physical or mental health.

ACC Henderson advised that following the previous presentation to the Committee in November 2024, multi-agency governance groups have been established with partners in both the health and justice sectors and work has been ongoing to develop a Partnership Agreement. Once developed it will be considered at the Silver Multi-agency Working Group before going to be agreed and signed off at the Gold level Multi-agency Working Group. ACC Henderson advised work is also ongoing drafting new Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) and other protocol and guidance documents to cover a range of diverse interfaces across services. ACC Henderson noted PSNI have got training ready to be delivered to their staff in the Contact Management Centres identifying critical pathways, however they need to wait until the health partners are also in a similar position but it is anticipated they will be able to start delivering the training in several months' time. ACC Henderson added the pathways guidance/training document has been co-designed by both PSNI and health partners and will be used by call handlers to determine where demand should be diverted based on the nature and needs of the person involved.

ACC Henderson noted that as a result of the collaborative working arrangements to date with health partners, PSNI are already seeing a reduction in the number of calls being received by NI Ambulance Service. ACC Henderson advised it is unlikely that there will be a single "launch/Go Live" date for RCRP, rather it will be done iteratively and rolled out in stages over a 12-18 month period.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- The importance of ensuring that clear, alternative pathways are in place when RCRP is implemented to ensure that no individual/scenario has been omitted and all individuals in crisis are catered for;
- If PSNI are aware of training delivered by NIAS's Mental Health practitioners; noting that they are, and a lot of joint training has been undertaken to date and more will be completed once the MOU is implemented; and
- Any learning that could be derived from visits to Greater Manchester and Humberside Police Forces.

The Vice-Chair thanked ACC McNally and Chief Superintendent McDonald for their briefing and they left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the updates provided.

6.2 PSNI Update on Children and Young Peoples Strategy

The Vice-Chair welcomed Inspector Burke and a representative from the PSNI'S Strategic Partnerships & Prevention team to the meeting and invited them to present PSNI's update on the Children and Young People Strategy, noting that as agreed at the June 2024 Committee meeting, the quarterly updates would be thematic in nature and as such the focus of today's briefing was Stop and Search.

The representative from the PSNI's Strategic Partnerships and Prevention team provided an update on work undertaken across NI to progress the commitments made by PSNI in the strategy. The representative from the Strategic Partnerships and Prevention team outlined various events, initiatives and early intervention programmes taking place with multiple partners across all council areas to engage with young people from a diverse range of communities and backgrounds. The representative from the

Strategic Partnerships and Prevention team noted PSNI have also focused funding received from the NI Executive's Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) into areas where Paramilitary and Organised Crime Gang coercive control is seen to manifest.

Inspector Burke then explained the role/remit of the Policing Powers Development Unit and the working group set up in 2020 which was tasked with the development and publication of a Stop and Search policy. Inspector Burke advised PSNI are committed to continuous development and as a result of feedback gained from a survey carried out in 2021 amongst 11-18 year olds, PSNI implemented a number of recommendations, one of which was the development of Stop and Search cards which have since been launched and have been available to the general public since January 2025. Inspector Burke issued samples of these cards to Members to view and noted the cards contained advice and information on what an individual should expect in the event of being stopped and searched and the responsibilities of the officers carrying out the search.

Inspector Burke outlined the guidance documents for Stop and Search Policy, including the first Service Instruction on Stop and Search which was published in September 2021, the governance structures around the Stop and Search working group and highlighted statistics gleaned from the Community Background Monitoring pilot which was launched on 30 April 2024 and was designed to gather data on community background to identify and address any discriminatory practices within PSNI use of stop and search powers and to improve public confidence in policing.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- Any other means of capturing the community background information on the 70% of people/children who refused to provide their community background when being stopped and searched

during the period 30 April 2024 to 31 December 2024, noting that the PSNI will revert to the Member in writing;

- An update on how effective the stop and search cards have been since their implementation in January 2025, noting that the PSNI will revert to the Member in writing;
- In relation to the information linked to the QR code on the Stop and Search Cards for Children & Young People, a Member noted that the information was a lengthy narrative and may not be the most effective way of getting the message across to young people and that for example a video/voice over would perhaps be more impactful. Inspector Burke confirmed young people were consulted with during the development of the card, however confirmed PSNI are open to exploring alternative suggestions;
- The parameters within which a child can be strip searched;
- How the Community Background Monitoring Pilot could be rolled out with better methods of capturing community background information on those individuals that have been stopped and searched;
- The need for some of the language used on the Stop and Search card to be unambiguous and not open to challenge or interpretation;
- The use of out of date language/terminology when discussing community background with young people;
- In relation to the Community Background Monitoring Pilot, consideration to be given to updating the wording of the question posed to children in order to illicit a positive response; and
- The ratio of children and young people stopped and searched compared to adults in 2024.

The Vice-Chair thanked ACC Henderson, Inspector Burke and Dympna Thornton for their briefing and they left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.3 Update on the Problem Solving in Partnership Awards 2025

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided members with the update on the Problem Solving in Partnership Awards 2025, which took place on 19 February 2025 at the Harbour Commissioners Office in Belfast.

The Engagement Manager advised the awards were first held in October 2022 and were designed to recognise and celebrate innovative crime fighting projects where the police, community and external partners successfully work together to make a difference in communities. The Engagement Manager noted the embedding of Problem Solving within the PSNI is one of the key elements within the Hallmarks of Neighbourhood Policing specifically “Hallmark 4 – Solving Problems”.

The Engagement Manager advised that the category for PCSPs was a new addition to the 2024 awards and was included to help raise the profile of the work they do, providing an opportunity to highlight innovative projects being co-delivered by local Neighbourhood Policing Teams through the PCSP action plans. The Engagement Manager added this category was retained for the 2025 awards and of the 28 applications that were received 7 (25%) were for this award category.

The Engagement Manager provided an overview of the winning applications in each of the 5 categories (Delivering for Communities, Partners, Serious Crimes & Investigations, Enhancing Service Delivery, Policing & Community Partnerships) and noted that the winner in the PCSP category, was Belfast PCSP with the “Assert Yourself” project. The Engagement Manager explained this was an informative Self Defence Workshop which was developed through the South Belfast DPCSP in order to help combat the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls. The Engagement Manager noted that this workshop aimed to equip participants from vulnerable groups

with knowledge surrounding the Law, the right to protect using self-defence, to recognise danger signs and teach basic self-defence skills.

The Engagement Manager advised Members that there would be no Problem Solving Conference this year and anticipated that the timeline for the 2026 Problem Solving in Partnership Awards will be similar to the timescales for the 2025 awards.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.4 Update on the PCSP Reserve Process for Independent Members

The Partnership Manager presented a paper which provided Members with the update on the outcome of the PCSP Reserve Process for Independent Members.

The Partnership Manager explained every council in Northern Ireland is legislatively required to establish a PCSP and each PCSP is made up of elected and independent members and representatives of designated organisations. Independent members of PCSPs are appointed by the Policing Board who have overall responsibility for the process. The Partnership Manager advised the local government elections, which took place in May 2023, triggered the need to reconstitute the eleven PCSPs in each District Council area and four DPCSPs in Belfast. The Partnership Manager noted that in addition to appointing Independent PCSP members, there was also a need to hold a reserve list of suitable candidates for each PCSP.

The Partnership Manager noted at the point of formal reconstitution on 1 June 2024, the appropriate number of suitable candidates were appointed to 10 of the 11 PCSPs and 1 fell short by one candidate and two PCSPs had an independent member resign shortly after reconstitution. In addition, there

were no reserve lists for four of the PCSPs. As a result, a process to appoint independent members as applicable and generate reserve lists was initiated in June 2024.

The Partnership Manager provided a summary of activities undertaken during each stage of the process, the timescales involved in each and the costs incurred.

The Partnership Manager advised the same Impartial Assessor that carried out a review of the original process was appointed for the reserve process also and noted a copy of their report was included at Annex A of the meeting papers. The Partnership Manager added the Impartial Assessor was satisfied with sessions attended and wished to convey to the Policing Board that the guidance for appointment was followed.

Following the discussion Members raised the following:

- Consideration to be given on potential improvements to the recruitment process and panels in line with the Code of Practice ahead of the next reconstitution process which begins in 2027;
- The costs involved in the recruitment process, if these were accurate and if there is a more cost effective way of Member selection going forward; noting that the costs are accurate and in advance of the next reconstitution, the process will be reviewed in order to scope more cost effective ways of working; and
- Consideration to be given to how and when the training for PCSP members is delivered, whilst noting that some Members have other full-time commitments and responsibilities.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.5 Clause 22 Delegation of Functions to Members and Officials

The Partnership Director presented a paper on Clause 22 of the Justice Bill which makes provision for the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) to delegate to Members and staff the ability to exercise functions of the Board.

The Director of Partnership provided Members with the background to this issue, including Justice Bill provisions and the origins of Clause 22 of the Bill due to a judgement in a case involving the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Director of Partnership outlined the Committee's scheme of delegations, and the extent of these should there be a functioning Board in place, in order that delegations are minimised, as well as the functions which may be delegated should a functioning Board not be in place.

Members discussed the functions in the Committee Terms of Reference (ToR) that are currently delegated whilst there is a functioning Board and agreed that this practice should continue given the administrative nature of the functions and the fact that any relevant matters requiring approval or any issues of concern would be brought to the Committee when necessary. It was noted these functions are:

- Monitor the work of the policing committees of the PCSP;
- Manage and promote the ICV and ICO scheme; and
- Develop and Administer the Police Property Fund and monitor progress of individual projects.

In the case of a non-functioning Board, it was suggested that the approval and administration of future calls of the Police Property Fund could be delegated to Board officials and Independent Members so that the lack of a functioning Board would not have a detrimental impact on charity and community groups, however some Members raised concerns with this

approach and noted they would prefer all Members to be able to input to the selection and approval process and any awarding of funding.

Following discussion:

- It was **AGREED** that functions contained within the TOR for Partnership Committee that should be delegated to officials when **there is** a functioning Board should remain as they are; and
- With regard to those functions to be delegated to officials when there **is not** a functioning Board, it was **AGREED** to ask Members by written procedure to confirm their position regarding the approval and administration of Police Property Fund Applications before making a recommendation to the Board. **(AP4)**

6.6 Draft Committee Programme of Work 25/26

The Director of Partnership presented the draft Committee Programme of Work for the period May 2025 – March 2026 and included the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR) which were previously agreed in October 2024. The Director of Partnership added the programme of work is a live document and may be updated throughout the year as and when necessary.

The Director of Partnership advised that following the recent independent review of the Board it has been that the number of Partnership Committee meetings will reduce in order to allow for more Outreach and Engagement opportunities **for all** Board Members. The Director of Partnership outlined the programme of the proposed visits and events and noted that all Board members would be invited to attend these.

The Director of Partnership noted that five indicators in the new 2025-2030 Policing Plan are due to be reported on by the Partnership Committee and as such the focus of the planned visit to the PSNI Roads Safety site next month is on Policing Plan Measure 2.6 Road Safety. In advance of this visit,

a Member requested that the PSNI presentation include work that is being done to address road safety on rural roads.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED** to approve the Committee Programme of Work for 2025/26.

6.7 Committee Annual Report

The Director of Partnership provided members with the draft Annual Committee Report for 2024/25 which provides information on the Partnership Committee business throughout the year. The Director of Partnership advised that the Committee met on seven occasions throughout the 2024/25 year and the report outlines the membership and Members' attendance at each meeting and also summarises the key areas of focus for the Committee throughout that time.

During discussion, a Member proposed some additional language to be added under the Right Care Right Person update which all Members present confirmed they were content with. The Member will forward the proposed wording to Board officials for inclusion.

The Director of Partnership informed Members that if approved, final approval will be sought by the Board and a link to it, and the other Committee annual reports, will be included in the Board's Annual Report and Accounts for 2024/25.

Members considered the Partnership Committee Annual Report for 2024/25 and **AGREED** to make a recommendation to the Board to approve the Report for publication. **(AP5)**

The Director of Partnership also noted that the annual Committee Effectiveness Questionnaire would be issued to Members in the near future

via email and responses will be collated and brought back to a future meeting of the Committee. **(AP6)**

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

None.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

None.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Director of Partnership noted that as outlined in item 6.6 above, instead of the monthly Committee meeting on 22 May 2025, it has been agreed to visit Roads Policing, Sprucefield. A programme and itinerary for the visit will follow in due course.

The Engagement Manager noted several upcoming engagement events over next few months and encouraged all Members to attend and show support.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for **Thursday 19 June 2025** at 9.30 am in James House

The meeting ended at 13.15.

CHAIR

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE
APRIL 2025