NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2025 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE

PRESENT:		Peter McReynolds MLA (Chair) Dr Kate Laverty (Committee Vice Chair) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA * Mr Keith Buchanan MLA Mr Cathal Boylan MLA Mrs Marian Cree Mr Patrick Nelson Mr Colin McGrath MLA
EX-OFFICIO BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:	**(1)**	Mr Mukesh Sharma, (Board Chair)
POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHEN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:	**(2)** **(3)** **(3)** **(4)** **(4)**	ACC Ryan Henderson Superintendent Prendercast Inspector Lowry Chief Superintendent Murray Head of Strategic Planning & Transformation
NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:	**(5)**	Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive Six Board Officials

(1) **Left after Item 3.2**
(2) **Items 3.1 and 3.2 Only**

(3) **Item 3.1 only**

(4) **Item 3.2 only**

(5) **Left after Item 7.1**

* Attended the meeting by video conference facility

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Tommy O'Reilly and Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA.

The Chair welcomed new SDLP Board Member Mr Colin McGrath MLA to his first Partnership Committee meeting and noted Mr McGrath replaces Mr Mark Durkan MLA. The Chair thanked Mr Durkan for his contribution to the Partnership Committee during his tenure as a Board Member.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA declared a Conflict of Interest in relation to agenda item 7.1.

Before PSNI joined the meeting, the Police Performance Monitoring Manager and the Director of Partnership provided Members with an overview of agenda items 3.1 Policing Plan Indicator 2.1 Confidence and 3.2 HMICFRS Report on Preventing and Deterring Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Vulnerability.

3.1 PSNI POLICING PLAN INDICATOR 2.1 CONFIDENCE

The Chair welcomed Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Ryan Henderson, Superintendent Prendercast and Inspector Lowry to the meeting.

ACC Henderson presented the PSNI report card in relation to Policing Plan Indicator 2.1 Confidence and noted the statistics gathered via the NI Safe Communities Telephone Survey 2023/24 and the NI Policing Plan Survey (NIPPS) 2025 are encouraging, and highlighted that the findings from these surveys suggest overall public confidence in the police has remained stable and in line with the previous year's figure. ACC Henderson commented that in light of the current resourcing challenges faced by the PSNI this is a remarkable achievement and commended those officers and staff who have gone above and beyond to ensure the service delivered to the public hasn't been detrimentally impacted. ACC Henderson advised that a common issue in cases where victims lose confidence in the police is in relation to not receiving regular updates on their cases. In order to combat this, ACC Henderson advised PSNI have endeavoured to use technology to improve the victim experience and provide a more efficient service and invited his colleague Inspector Lowry to provide details of an initiative developed for that purpose.

Inspector Lowry then provided Members with an overview of the Virtual Officer Attendance Team (VOAT) project which consists of two small teams, each led by a Sergeant, who conduct investigations with the public virtually via video calls.

Inspector Lowry advised the project was established two years ago, with the primary objective of the team being to reduce demand for frontline policing and enhance victim and caller satisfaction by introducing video appointments as an additional option for members of the public to engage in face-to-face consultation with police. Inspector Lowry advised that following a successful pilot earlier this year this service has now been made permanent.

Inspector Lowry provided an overview of how the process operates once a crime or incident is reported, staffing levels, digital and technological capabilities of the system (such as AI interpreters where english is not the victims/callers first language), the type of crimes typically reported and the volume of incidents it has dealt with to date – noting that this number has reduced the demand on District Policing Command by 10%.

Inspector Lowry advised that following the permanent implementation of the VOAT team, PSNI are currently working towards the rollout of 3 VOAT hubs in locations across the province that are adequately resourced to remove further demand from front line policing, and it is hoped that this model will be fully operational in early 2026.

Superintendent Prendercast then provided Members with an update on the PSNI "My Portal" service that Members previously received a presentation on at the February 2025 Committee meeting. Superintendent Prendercast reported that the portal went live on 1 September 2025 and there has been in excess of 2,000 online accounts created to date, with a significant quantity of these being in relation to Firearms licencing. Superintendent Prendercast advised that as well as people who report incidents online being able to receive updates on their case, by the end of 2025 it is the intention to extend this "online update" functionality to those who have reported an incident via telephone too by issuing them a web link in a text message directing them to the portal.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- The anticipated level of reduced demand from frontline officers through the implementation and roll out of multiple VOAT hubs;
- Consideration to be given to re-positioning some officers currently on long term sick leave to work in this team where they can do operational duties in a non-operational environment, to enable them to return to work;
- Consideration to be given to including the work of this team in student officer training material;
- Other measures that can be put in place to help victims of crime;

- The extent of the opportunities for part-time and job sharing roles in the VOAT team;
- Responsibility for deciding if a 101 call is suitable for VOAT progression; noting that this is dictated by the vulnerability of the call user and by the THRIVE model for assessing risk and harm used by the call handler;
- Consideration to be given to rolling out this briefing to all PCSP Managers so that they can promote and raise awareness of it in their respective council areas;
- Why the venue for the ReAL event for Victims of Crime scheduled for October 2025 is not in a community facility so as to be more accessible for attendees;
- If the video calls carried out by the VOAT are recorded; noting that they are from start to finish; and
- If the PSNI see this virtual operating model being developed and rolled out to perpetrators of crime as well as victims; noting that to some extent that model has been in operation since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, in relation to incidents of low level crime.

The Chair thanked ACC Henderson, Superintendent Prendercast and Inspector Lowry for their briefing and both officers left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

3.2 HMICFRS INSPECTION REPORT ON PREVENTING AND DETERRING CRIME, ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND VULNERABILITY

The Chair welcomed Chief Superintendent Murray and the Head of Strategic Planning & Transformation to join ACC Henderson and invited them to present an update on the recent HMICFRS Inspection Report, with particular focus on the elements relating to Preventing and Deterring Crime, Anti-Social Behaviour and Vulnerability.

ACC Henderson explained that the inspection was carried out in November 2024 and involved interviews, focus groups and reality testing involving police personnel from PSNI stations at Lisburn Road, Belfast, Derry/Londonderry & Mid Ulster. ACC Henderson advised following the conclusion of the inspection, the identified area for improvement was "***the PSNI should ensure that neighbourhood officers aren't diverted from their main duties to manage demand in response teams".***

Other observations were made by HMICFRS which PSNI have taken steps to address:

- Develop a sustainable neighbourhood policing model to address significant reduction in officer numbers and merging of neighbourhood areas;
- Improve data sharing with partner agencies to create a more comprehensive intelligence picture for prevention and deterrence efforts;
- Ensure consistent evaluation of problem-solving activities, particularly the "assessment" phase of the SARA model to determine effectiveness and learn lessons;
- Enhance training and confidence among officers in using data systems like Pulse to their full potential for proactive policing.

ACC Henderson outlined the PSNI response to the recommendations, noting that this is not a position the PSNI wants to be in, however due to the current budgetary pressures and resourcing challenges the situation has been unavoidable. ACC Henderson advised PSNI remain committed to Neighbourhood Policing and subject to the approval of the Recovery Business

Case, the workforce planning priority of the PSNI is to assign the majority of any additional officers into frontline policing roles (and should the Recovery Business Case not be approved then PSNI will struggle to increase Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) numbers). ACC Henderson noted the Neighbourhood Policing workforce planning model seeks to maintain the number of NPT officers at 517. ACC Henderson also noted that the definition of abstraction throughout the service varies, and one person's understanding of its meaning may not be the same as another's. Therefore, this may have distorted the figures in relation to the number of abstractions reported to HMICFRS whilst being interviewed during the inspection period.

ACC Henderson highlighted the breakdown of current NPT numbers in NI across the various council areas over the past 10 years, noting the numbers are at their lowest since 2019 and also drew attention to how the PSNI NPT numbers compared against other UK Police Forces at the time of the inspection in November 2024.

During discussion Members raised the following with the PSNI;

- Concerns regarding the fluctuation in the numbers of NPT officers;
- Other measures that can be implemented in the interim, whilst approval of the Recovery Business Case is being sought;
- The need to ensure all officers have the same understanding of the meaning of an "abstraction";
- The importance of cost recovery for policing special events; and
- The difference between Local Policing Teams and Neighbourhood Policing Teams and the importance of making the public aware of the difference.

The Chair thanked ACC Henderson, Chief Superintendent Murray and the Head of Strategic Planning & Transformation for their briefing and they left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and it was **AGREED** that a draft response on behalf of the Board would be prepared and presented to all Board Members for approval at the October Board meeting. **(AP1)**

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2025

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 June 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 June 2025 be approved.

5. 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.

The Director of Partnership noted updates for Action Points 1 & 2 from the meeting 19 June 2025 would be recorded under agenda items 5.1 and 5.2 below.

In relation to Action Point 7 from meeting on 19 June 2025 regarding a suggestion to the Board that a deep dive be considered on how the Board can advocate and support policing with the community especially within communities where trust in policing has been historically low, the Director of Partnership advised that this suggestion was accepted/approved by the

Board at its meeting on 4 July 2025 and a paper outlining next steps is included at agenda item 7.7 of today's meeting papers for Member's consideration.

In relation to Action Point 2 from 17 April 2025 regarding representatives from Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics being invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss their 30th Anniversary celebrations, the Director of Partnership advised that due to the heavy Committee agendas over the next several months it will not be possible to have a presentation in a Committee setting. Instead, board Officials will make contact with LETR representatives to ascertain the details of their request from the Board. **(AP2)**

Members **AGREED** that Action Points 3, 4, 5 & 6 from the meeting on 19 June 2025 regarding the creation of a Board Instagram account, circulating the results of a Designated Organisation survey and the circulation of PCSP governance structures and PCSP meeting dates respectively could now be closed.

5.1 Letter from Minister of Infrastructure re the Implementation of the Graduated Driving License, Reduction of the Drink Driving Threshold & Fixed Penalties Fines for Speeding

The Committee Chair, Mr Cathal Boylan MLA and Mr Keith Buchanan MLA declared an interest with this agenda item as Members of the Infrastructure Committee.

Members noted the correspondence from the Minister of Infrastructure to the Committee Chair, advising of the current position regarding the implementation of the Graduated Driving License, Reduction of the Drink Driving Threshold & Fixed Penalties Fines for Speeding, (Action Point 1 from 19 June 2025 Meeting). The Director of Partnership noted that the Minister has advised that implementation of the Graduated Driver Licensing scheme requires legislative changes as well as significant amendment of current driver training, testing and post testing arrangements.

In relation to lowering the threshold for drink driving, the Director of Partnership noted the Minister has advised that this issue is one of the strategic interventions in the Road Safety Strategy Action Plan 2024/25 for the Department of Infrastructure (DfI). The Minister has advised DfI officials have carried out a review of this area and various options are currently being considered.

In relation to the review of Fixed Penalty Notices for speeding, the Director of Partnership noted the Minister has indicated she plans to carry out a public consultation exercise on this issue in the first instance.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED**:

- To write to the Infrastructure Minister and request indicative timescales for completion/resolution of each of the issues noted above. **(AP3)**

5.2 Letter from Minister of Infrastructure re Request for Legislative Change to Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995

Members noted the correspondence from the Minister of Infrastructure to the Committee Chair, in response to the Committee's letter to the Minister to request legislative change to Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 (Action Point 2 from 19 June 2025 meeting). The Director of Partnership noted the Minister advised that this will be explored in line with policy under development on drink and drug driving and Members will receive a further update at the next Custody Healthcare briefing to the Committee.

It was subsequently **AGREED** that this action point could now be closed.

6. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

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

6.1 Joint Committee Agenda

Members **NOTED** the agenda for the Joint Committee meeting on 28 October 2025.

7.0 ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 PCSP Independent Member Complaint

At this stage, and in light of the conflict declared at agenda item 2, Mr Keith Buchanan MLA left the room for this discussion. Mrs Linda Dillon MLA declared an interest in this item, but not a conflict.

The Director of Partnership presented a paper which provided Members with details of a complaint relating to the conduct of a Mid-Ulster PCSP Independent Member.

The Director of Partnership advised in May 2025 the Board's Chief Executive received a letter setting out concerns regarding the attendance of the Independent PCSP Member at an Easter Parade event earlier this year and requesting that the Board considers removing the Independent Member from the PCSP. The Director of Partnership noted that consequently, the Board began processing the complaint under the Board's Guidance on Managing a Breach of the PCSP Code of Conduct.

The Director of Partnership advised that in line with stage 1 of the guidance, the complaint was shared with the Chair of the PSCP with the request to consider if local resolution was likely in relation to the incident outlined. The

Director of Partnership noted the PCSP Chair responded on 30 May 2025 to advise they believed NIPB would be best placed to deal with the matter. The Director of Partnership advised Board officials subsequently moved to stage 2 of the guidance whereby the Board outlined the nature of the complaint received and invited the Respondent to provide a response to the complaint and the alleged breach of the Code of Conduct (attached at Annex D of the meeting papers).

The Director of Partnership advised that the Respondent replied on 1 July 2025, refuting the allegation and outlining the basis for the reasons why they believed they had not breached the PCSP code of conduct and they also requested that the complaint be dismissed.

The Director of Partnership advised that in light of the reply from the Respondent, the Committee is now asked to consider this case and to make one of the following decisions:

(i) There are insufficient grounds for the allegation and therefore no further action should be taken;
(ii) The breach is of a nature that does not warrant removal of the member and therefore no further action will be taken; or
(iii) There are sufficient grounds to consider removal of the member from office.

During discussion, Members agreed that if this complaint was to be upheld against the respondent in this case, then the Board would be setting a precedent to take action in cases where other Independent Members of different community backgrounds attended similar events and this would be unsustainable and inappropriate. On that basis, Dr Kate Laverty proposed that there were insufficient grounds for the allegation and no further action should be taken. Mr Colin McGrath MLA seconded the proposal and all other Members agreed.

It was **RESOLVED** to:

- Proceed with Option (i) There are insufficient grounds for the allegation and therefore no further action should be taken. Letters to be drafted to the complainants and the Independent PCSP Member to advise of the Committee decision. **(AP4)**

Mr Keith Buchanan MLA re-joined the meeting.

7.2 Board Representation at Belfast Pride

The Director of Partnership presented a paper which provided Members with details of correspondence received regarding Board representation at Belfast Pride.

The Director of Partnership noted that at the previous meeting of the Committee in June 2025 Members considered and agreed the annual Programme of Engagement 2025/26 and the Five-year Engagement Strategy 2025 – 2030. The Director of Partnership advised that one of the activities delivered under Strand 1 of the Engagement Strategy (Engagement with the Community through Partnership & Collaboration) is to attend Belfast Pride and the Board had a stand at this event in July 2025. The Director of Partnership explained Board Officials used this opportunity to highlight the work of the Board in respect of its oversight and accountability role of PSNI and also took the opportunity to promote the Board's two volunteer schemes, Independent Custody Visiting and Independent Community Observers, to encourage members of the public to apply for those volunteer roles.

The Director of Partnership advised that the Chief Executive received a letter in July 2025 in relation to a recent Court Judgement which found that a decision to allow uniformed police officers to take part in a Pride parade in Northumbria in 2024 was unlawful and raised concerns that the High Court judgement had wider ramifications for the Board given the 'escalating political nature of the event and the support for gender ideology'. The Director of Partnership added that the letter asked for the Board to review it's existing plans for representation at Belfast Pride in light of this High Court ruling.

The Director of Partnership advised the Chief Executive sought and received legal advice in August 2025 (attached at Annex C of the meeting papers) which ultimately concluded that "*The Board maintaining a neutral presence at Pride events in order to highlight its work and independence is, in my view a lawful and reasonable decision to take".*

During discussion Members were of the view that it is crucial that the Board continues to be represented at these events, in particular where it relates to minority communities.

Dr Kate Laverty proposed that attendance at Belfast Pride should remain in future Programmes of Engagement and this proposal was seconded by Mrs Linda Dillon MLA.

It was subsequently **AGREED :**

- To note the views of Members which would inform discussion when the 2026/27 Programme of Engagement is considered by the Committee in early 2026.

7.3 Plans for 'Conversations with Purpose'

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with an update on the work undertaken in relation to the launch of the Board's 'Conversations with Purpose' (CwP) initiative.

The Engagement Manager noted that following the publication of the Policing Plan in April 2025, the Board have been developing plans to launch a new engagement initiative namely, “Conversations with Purpose”. These events will involve direct, purposeful and strategic engagement sessions with key stakeholders and representative groups which will be thematic in nature and linked to specific indicators within the policing plan.

The Engagement Manager advised these events aim to provide Members with more qualitative information direct from representatives within the applicable sector with a view to further enhancing the Board’s accountability role and functions. The Engagement Manager noted that as agreed at the Board meeting in November 2024 the first event would focus on Policing Plan Indicator 1.1 - ‘The Effectiveness in Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls”.

The Engagement Manager reported that planning and preparations for the Board’s first CwP event have been ongoing throughout 2025 and advised himself and the Board’s Chief Executive met with the Commissioner for Victims of Crime in March in order to raise awareness of the CwP initiative, to consult and seek their views with regards to the delivery of the event, and to consult on proposed groups/representatives that the Board could engage with. The Engagement Manager noted the Board were provided with a list of stakeholders who could provide invaluable insight and experience with regard to the issues faced in relation to tackling violence against women and girls.

The Engagement Manager confirmed nine groups have been identified for initial outreach/engagement for the first CwP and noted a short summary detailing the role and remit of each of the organisations is included at Annex A of the meeting papers. The Engagement Manager advised outreach and engagement with these stakeholders and representative groups commenced in April 2025 and provided Members with an update on the engagement meetings that have been completed to date with each of these stakeholders and those meetings currently scheduled.

The Engagement Manager confirmed the event is scheduled to take place on Thursday 16 October 2025 at Foyle Women's Aid premises in Derry/Londonderry and provided Members with an overview of the agenda and programme for the day.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

7.4 Request for Funding for Scamwise Conference

The Communications Manager presented a paper which sought Members' approval for financial support for the Scamwise Conference.

The Communications Manager advised the ScamwiseNI Partnership was launched on 4 November 2016 and was developed by a number of organisations including the PSNI, the Commissioner for Older Persons, the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Department of Justice in response to the rising number of scams being reported to the police. The Communications Manager explained the aim/objective of the partnership was to make the public aware of scams and how they can protect themselves from becoming/falling a victim to a scam. The Communications Manager noted the Board is represented on the Partnership at official level and assists with communication of information regarding scam activity. PCSPs also support Scamwise through a range of community safety and awareness initiatives at local level.

The Communications Manager advised that the Chair of the Partnership, advised in July 2025 that a Scamwise Conference was being planned for 6 November 2025 and Scamwise Partnership Members were also asked if some financial support could be provided to assist in the offset of costs. The

Communications Manager noted the Conference cost is circa £9k and provided Members with an overview of the programme for the event and highlighted how tackling cyber crime is a priority with Outcome 2 of the new 2025-30 Policing Plan.

Following discussion Members **AGREED:**

- To approve £1500 of financial support for the Scamwise Conference.

7.5 Independent Custody Visitors Annual Report 2024-25

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with the Independent Custody Visiting Annual Report for the 2024/25 reporting year.

The Engagement Manager provided background information to the scheme, noting that Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are impartial volunteers from across the community who work independently of the police and criminal justice system and make unannounced visits to custody suites to check and report on the rights, health and wellbeing, and conditions of people being detained in custody. The Engagement Manager advised the Board is responsible for the ICV Scheme, which is managed by the Engagement Branch, with the Partnership Committee ultimately being responsible for overall scrutiny of the scheme.

The Engagement Manager noted that currently, there are 23 ICVs based in three Custody Visiting Teams across Northern Ireland (as of March 2024) and noted this is same number of ICVs from the previous reporting period.

The Engagement Manager explained the monitoring data within this year's report was compiled between Board Officials within Engagement Branch and the Board's statistician seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The Engagement Manager noted the NISRA Official Statistical Report on Independent Custody Visiting 2024/25 and the ICV Annual Report 2024/25 and advised that the annual report is essentially a summary of the key data within the Official Statistical Report. Both documents provide a comprehensive source of monitoring data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme. The Engagement Manager highlighted some key facts in the report such as:

- 68% of custody records were checked by ICVs which was a 20% decrease from the previous year (88%);
- 24% of detainees held under the Terrorism Act (2000), known as TACT detainees were seen compared to 48% in the previous year;
- The overall refusal rate of detainees was 2.8% which was an increase of 1.4% from the previous year; and
- a total of 1,003 detainees were selected for a visit, of which ICVs spoke to 464 detainees (46%), which is the same as the previous year.

The Engagement Manager also highlighted various means of ICV promotion and recruitment events which took place throughout the reporting period and noted that in the 2024/25 reporting year, five recruitment panels were convened, which resulted in a total of six candidates being deemed appointable to the scheme.

During discussion Members raised queries on the following:

- If ICVs are permitted to view the details in cases where an allegation of assault has been made; and

- Consideration to be given to how younger people can be encouraged to apply to become an ICV as young people in custody may be more receptive to someone of a similar age group.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

It was **AGREED:**

- To approve the 2024/25 ICV Annual report and to make a recommendation to the Board that the report can be published on the Board's website. **(AP5)**

7.6 Draft Terms of Reference – Communications and Engagement Audit

The Communications Manager presented a paper which provided Members with the Draft Terms of Reference for a Communications and Engagement Audit.

The Communications Manager explained the recent Independent Review of the NI Policing Board made a number of comments and recommendations on the work of the Board and in response the Board agreed to a series of actions to respond to these findings. The Communications Manager noted that at the Board meeting on 4 September 2025, the Chief Executive's Report provided an update on these pieces of work which included plans to assess the effectiveness of the Board's communication and engagement practices to identify any areas for improvement with how the Board conducts its business and activities in this area.

The Communications Manager advised effective communication and engagement with the public and wider stakeholders is critical to the delivery of the Board's statutory duties, building trust and confidence in the conduct of the Board's work, promoting transparency and ensuring that all those with an interest in the Board are informed and engaged. The Communications Manager noted the communication and engagement audit will assess how its work in this area aligns with the Board's legislative duties, the strategic objectives and actions set in the Board's Corporate and Business Plan and associated policies and procedures and added that the cost of this audit will be in the region of £10-20k.

During discussion Members raised concerns regarding potential duplication/crossover with the work to be carried out under the scope of the Advocacy deep dive, the timing of both pieces of work and the effectiveness of the Board's current social media platforms.

It was **AGREED:**

- That the following amendments should be made to the ToR – Internal Communications to be added to the scope of the audit; and
- That the review should proceed as outlined (subject to the above amendment) and after the Advocacy deep dive.

7.7 Research Proposal on Advocacy Deep Dive

The Director of Partnership presented a paper which provided Members with the views from University Representatives in respect of the deep dive into how recommendation 16 of the Sweeney Review could be implemented.

The Director of Partnership noted that at the June meeting of the Committee and in response to recommendation 16 of the Sweeney review, Members agreed to commission a deep dive into how the Board can advocate and support policing with the community, especially within communities where trust in policing has been historically low. The Director of Partnership added at the

Board meeting on 4 July 2025, Members agreed to support this piece of work through academic research, and they also considered that such work should not be limited to the role the Board can play but should look in its widest sense at the advocacy that is needed and consider who has a role to play in that. The Director of Partnership advised the Chief Executive and Board Officials met with representatives from Ulster University and Queens University Belfast to discuss the establishment of a Policing Research Partnership (PRP) which would be used to take forward this research as well as other pieces of work that the Board wish to progress. The Director of Partnership noted the establishment of the PRP is at an early stage and the partners, governance arrangements and funding need to be agreed and finalised before the commencement of any research projects.

The Director of Partnership advised that given the potential wide-ranging scope of the Deep Dive on advocacy in those communities where trust in policing has been historically low, Board Officials requested that the University representatives provide their initial thoughts on how this piece of work could be progressed and this was provided for Members' consideration at Annex A of the meeting papers. The Director of Partnership provided an overview of the proposal including the methodology, proposed consultees and timescales and asked Members for their feedback.

During discussion, Members indicated their support for this proposal and noted it would be beneficial if the academics could obtain case studies/best practice examples from other police forces that have managed to gain trust and confidence in communities where previously there was none.

It was subsequently **AGREED:**

- To proceed with the work as outlined.

8. **QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

None.

9. **COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES**

None.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Director of Partnership advised that applications for Call 1 of the Police Property Fund Large Grants Scheme close on 22 September 2025 and asked Members for three volunteers to sit on the assessment panel.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- That Mr Cathal Boylan MLA, Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA and Dr Kate Laverty will make up the assessment panel.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for **Thursday 20 November 2025** at 9.30 am in James House

The meeting ended at 1pm.

CHAIR

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

SEPTEMBER 2025