

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2025 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE

PRESENT: Dr Kate Laverty (Committee Vice Chair)
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA

(1) Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
Mrs Marian Cree
(2) Mr Patrick Nelson*
(3) Mr Colin McGrath MLA*
(4) Mrs Cheryl Brownlee MLA
Mr Tommy O'Reilly

**POLICE SERVICE OF
NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:** (5) ACC Ryan Henderson
(6) Chief Superintendent McDonald
(6) Chief Superintendent Kearney
(7) Superintendent Gibson
(7) Detective Chief Superintendent McKee
(7) Inspector Taylor

**NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD
OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:** Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
Mrs Paula Gow, T/Director of Partnership
Seven Board Officials

- (1) From 9.50am on
- (2) Until 11am
- (3) Until 10.40am
- (4) From 9.40am on
- (5) Items 3.1 and 3.2 only
- (6) Item 3.1 only
- (7) Item 3.2 only

* Attended the meeting by video conference facility

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Peter McReynolds MLA. On behalf of the Committee the Vice-Chair congratulated Peter on the recent birth of his son.

The Vice-Chair welcomed the new T/Director of Partnership to her first meeting of the Committee and thanked the outgoing Director of Partnership for her help and support during her time on the Partnership Committee and wished her well in her retirement.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Mr Patrick Nelson declared a conflict in relation to agenda item 7.1.

Before PSNI joined the meeting, the Police Performance Monitoring Manager and the Police Performance Monitoring Officer provided Members with an overview of agenda items 3.1 Policing Plan Indicators 2.3 Feel Safe & 999/101 Calls and 2.5 Repeat Offending.

3.1 PSNI POLICING PLAN INDICATOR 2.3 – FEEL SAFE & 999/101 CALLS

The Vice-Chair welcomed ACC Henderson, Chief Superintendent McDonald and Chief Superintendent Kearney to the meeting.

ACC Henderson presented the PSNI report card in relation to Policing Plan Indicator 2.3 Feel Safe & 999/101 Calls and noted the report card provided illustrates eight months of data from January 2025 – August 2025 and during this period, on average, the PSNI response times were as follows:

- 12.43 minutes for emergency (999) calls which is within the Service Level Agreement (SLA) agreed response time of 15 minutes; and

- 41.92 minutes for priority (101) calls which is within the SLA agreed response time of 60 minutes.

ACC Henderson commended PSNI officers and staff for maintaining performance levels, particularly against the backdrop of the record low officer numbers and the significant budgetary and resourcing challenges currently experienced by PSNI. ACC Henderson advised that a significant factor in PSNI being able to maintain these performance levels is the introduction of a new “routine” call category, which has an SLA agreed response time of four hours. ACC Henderson noted this has led to a clear reduction in the number of 101/Priority calls received and has allowed the PSNI to make better use of the resources available to them as it has freed up officers to be able to respond quicker to 999 and 101 incidents. ACC Henderson advised that the use of digital and technological advancements such as the online reporting tool, and the introduction of the Video Officer Attendance Team (VOAT) have also helped to reduce demand in relation to the number of calls received into the Contact Management Centre and has helped balance the management of resourcing against the priorities of emergency and non-emergency call answering. ACC Henderson added that the use of the online reporting tool has doubled since its introduction in 2024.

Chief Superintendent McDonald noted that a recruitment campaign for PSNI call handlers has recently closed and it is hoped by next summer the team will have a full complement of staff. Chief Superintendent McDonald advised that the optimum number of staff is 120 and currently the Call Handling Team are operating with approximately 85 staff.

Chief Superintendent Kearney then provided Members with an overview of various initiatives PSNI are undertaking in order to help people feel safe in their communities. Chief Superintendent Kearney noted that Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a key strategic priority for PSNI and they are

continuing to work with partners to help women and girls feel safe. Chief Superintendent Kearney advised that one of the pillars of the VAWG strategy is Safer Spaces and PSNI are reviewing how they can police the streets differently. Chief Superintendent Kearney advised following training by Thames Valley Police in August 2025, PSNI launched Project Vigilant in Derry City & Strabane at Halloween which involved deploying plain clothes police officers to patrol the streets at night where concerning behaviour is more prevalent, observing suspect/predatory behaviour and making interventions before anyone can come to harm. Chief Superintendent Kearney advised on this occasion a number of interventions and one arrest were made and the officers involved have provided positive feedback on the efficacy of the project. Chief Superintendent Kearney added that it proved to be an effective tactic, however resourcing challenges will restrict its wider implementation across the service.

Chief Superintendent Kearney also provided Members with details of "Walk and Talk" events for Women's Groups which PSNI have piloted in different areas, to try and identify areas in the locality where women believe there are safety issues (for example poor lighting at rural bus stops). Chief Superintendent Kearney advised PSNI have created the Safer Streets app on PSNI's Geoportal which allows them to map the concerns which are then passed to the relevant partner agency such as Department for Infrastructure (DfI) or local councils to remedy.

Chief Superintendent Kearney added that awareness is also increasing of the "Ask for Angela" initiative for people who feel unsafe, vulnerable or threatened and Translink staff have recently been trained on how to deal with someone who has asked for help and the NI Food To Go industry have also indicated their intention to train their staff on it too.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- How it was decided to introduce a “routine” grading for calls received (whereby the target was to respond to these incidents within four hours), who approved this change, and the type of call that would typically be classed as “routine”; noting that this was approved through the PSNI Service Management Board approximately one year ago;
- How PSNI are performing in relation to 999 calls in comparison to other UK police forces;
- If any consideration has been given to use of the SURGE facility for filtering calls received into the Contact Management Centres;
- Measures in place to evaluate the success of the various initiatives Chief Superintendent Kearney referenced with regard to people feeling safe;
- PSNI response times in rural areas and the methodology for deploying resources to any particular area;
- Plans for the roll out of Project Vigilant across all areas;
- The level of engagement officers deployed on Project Vigilant have with the businesses/owners of night-time economy establishments; noting that officers deployed on Project Vigilant work in two pairs of uniform and plain clothes and it will typically only be the uniform officers who liaise with the businesses;
- If the figures of people who feel safe in town centres are reflective of the level of crime recorded; noting that in certain areas there is the perception that people don’t feel safe, however the crime levels don’t correlate; and
- The communication process between PSNI and victims once someone reports a crime, noting consistency of approach is vital.

The Vice-Chair thanked Chief Superintendents McDonald and Kearney for their briefing and they left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

3.2 PSNI POLICING PLAN INDICATOR 2.5 - REPEAT OFFENDING

The Vice-Chair welcomed Superintendent Gibson, Inspector Taylor and Detective Chief Superintendent McKee to the meeting and invited PSNI to present an update on Policing Plan Indicator 2.5 Repeat Offending.

ACC Henderson presented the PSNI report card which details a cross-governmental strategy to reduce offending and reoffending and which includes a commitment from the Programme for Government (PfG). ACC Henderson noted this includes the development and implementation of initiatives to tackle some of the wider societal issues that contribute to offending behaviour and advised PSNI are pleased to see reducing offending/repeat offending is a current PfG priority.

Inspector Taylor provided the background to the Reducing Offending Unit (ROU), noting how the operating model has changed since its introduction in 2010, largely due to a significant reduction in staffing numbers. Inspector Taylor advised that a new model began to be rolled out across the service in May 2024; this is still underway and PSNI are currently working through the challenges to finalise full implementation of the model by January 2026. Inspector Taylor noted new guidance is being rolled out in January 2026 also and is informed by the three key strands – Control, Change and Disrupt.

Inspector Taylor advised that repeat offending is still a prevalent issue within the Children & Young People (CYP) cohort, however it is not appropriate to manage CYP in the same way as adult offenders. In light of this, Inspector Taylor advised of a new Pilot Approach to CYP in Reducing Offending in

Partnership (ROP), introduced in October 2025 in Belfast and Fermanagh & Omagh which was developed for the PSNI and the Youth Justice Agency for the supervision of CYP who are involved in persistent offending, within the ROP arrangements. Inspector Taylor explained the new guidance provides a referral mechanism for both agencies to refer and consider CYP who are involved in persistent offending for inclusion on the ROP list, and is underpinned by a more distinct child-centred approach with a focus on Stability, Support and Intervention.

Superintendent Gibson then provided a synopsis of work the Strategic Partnerships and Prevention team are doing to help address repeat offending, noting the Department of Justice (DoJ) has commissioned a two-day Strategic Insight Lab taking place next week with partners that will assist in the co-design of the future strategic policy direction for Reducing Offending and Reoffending in NI. Superintendent Gibson also advised of various pilot exercises taking place in schools, prisons, through the Executive Programme for Paramilitarism & Organised Crime (EPPOC) and local sports teams to help reduce repeat offending.

Detective Chief Superintendent McKee then provided an overview of the work the Public Protection Unit carry out which overlaps with the Reducing Offending Units (ROU), with particular focus on sexual and violent offenders and those at risk of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). Detective Chief Superintendent McKee noted the number of sexual and violent offenders which are managed within local communities, the ratio of officers per offender, the reoffending rate, the model used to try and reduce offending and the governance structures in place with multi-agency partners to carry out this statutory work. ACC Henderson added that unfortunately, a lot of this work only begins post conviction when people have already become an offender.

Following the briefing, Members raised the following with the PSNI:

- Any changes seen since the introduction of a pilot scheme in Fermanagh & Omagh targeting reducing offending in Children and Young People;
- The methodology for deciding which organisations/groups are awarded EPPOC funding;
- The number of repeat offenders responsible for 9 or under domestically motivated offences in the rolling 365 day period; noting PSNI would revert with a written response;
- Any evidence that supports the operating model adopted by Hydebank Prison has been successful in reducing re-offending and if so could this model be applied to other NI prisons; and
- Measures in place to prevent a further upward trend in the rise in repeat offenders linked to over 10 (10-19) and 20 (20+) crimes.

The Vice-Chair thanked all PSNI representatives for their briefing and they left the meeting.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18 September 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 18 September 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 advised that in relation to Action Point 2 from meeting on 18 September 2025 regarding the request from Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) representatives, a paper was included at agenda item 7.2 to address this action.

The Director of Partnership advised that in relation to Action Point 3 from meeting on 18 September 2025 regarding writing to the Infrastructure Minister to request indicative timescales for completion/resolution of proposed amendments to Road Safety Legislation, a reply had been received from the Infrastructure Minister on 14 October 2025 and is included at agenda item 5.1 for Members' consideration.

Members **AGREED** that Action Points 1, 4 and 5 from the meeting on 18 September 2025 regarding the issuing of the Board's response to the HMICFRS Inspection report on preventing and deterring Crime, Anti-social behaviour and Vulnerability, letters advising of the outcome of the complaint regarding an Independent PCSP Member and the publication of the Independent Custody Visitor (ICV) Annual report respectively could now be closed.

5.1 **Letter from Minister of Infrastructure re request indicative timescales for completion/resolution of each of the following; Graduated Driving License, Reduction of the Drink Driving Threshold & Fixed Penalties Fines for Speeding**

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 3 from 18 September 2025 Meeting).

The Director of Partnership noted that the Minister has advised that the anticipated date for the implementation of the Graduated Driver Licensing scheme will be announced shortly, and a public consultation on speed related matters will be launched in the autumn.

In relation to lowering the threshold for drink driving, the Director of Partnership noted the Minister has advised Department for Infrastructure (DfI) officials have carried out an initial review of the drink drive legislative framework to explore options to introduce a lower legal alcohol limit applicable to all drivers. Work will continue on this complex area and all options will be considered before deciding on the best way forward.

In relation to progress made on the legislative change to Article 18 of the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 (to provide for healthcare practitioners to take blood/urine samples from detainees), the Director of Partnership noted that the Minister of Infrastructure has indicated that any changes to the Road Traffic (NI) Order 1995 would require primary legislation and unfortunately there is no suitable vehicle in this mandate to take any legislative change forward.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to close this Action Point for now and if necessary, further updates can be sought following the next updates to the Committee on the Custody Healthcare Model and Roads Safety.

6. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

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

6.1 Conversations with Purpose - verbal update

The Engagement Manager provided a verbal update on the first Conversation with Purpose event which took place on 16 October 2025 on Violence Against Women & Girls (VAWG), at Foyle Women's Aid.

The Engagement Manager reported that the event was well attended and supported and the Board has received positive feedback from the stakeholders involved as well as positive social media traction.

The Vice-Chair and another Member who attended the event echoed the sentiments of the Engagement Manager and noted that hearing first-hand, real-life stories from women who have experienced domestic or sexual violence was very evocative.

During discussion, Members noted the importance of how the feedback gained from the event is carried forward and used in a positive manner to effect change and the Engagement Manager advised it is the intention to hold a follow up event in circa six month's time to see how the learning gained from the event has been used. The Vice-Chair re-iterated the efficacy of the event and encouraged all Members present to attend future events of this nature.

6.2 Correspondence to the Justice Committee re Community Resolution Notices

Members NOTED the correspondence received from the Justice Committee in respect of Community Resolution Notices and the Board's response to it dated 13 November 2025.

7.0 ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 Police Property Fund Large Grants Scheme update

The Partnership Manager presented a paper which provided Members with an update on the implementation of the first call of the Police Property Fund (PPF) Large Grants Scheme (LGS) including the outcome of the assessment panel which met to review the applications on 30 October 2025.

The Partnership Manager thanked the Members that sat on the assessment panel and provided an overview of the selection process to date. The Partnership Manager advised that on closure of the call, 85 applications had been received, however following basic eligibility checks by the Programme Team, 38 applications were deemed to be ineligible and did not progress for assessment. The Partnership Manager noted 47 applications requesting just under £1.2m were eligible to progress for assessment by the panel, however advised that of these 47, 11 applications failed to meet the Criteria Eligibility checks and did not proceed for panel scoring. The Partnership Manager advised that following the panel scoring of the remaining 36 applications, six projects had been recommended for approval at a combined value of £150,957 with one project in reserve.

Following discussion, Members:

- **NOTED** the update provided;
- **AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the 6 projects selected for funding by the assessment panel are approved for a Letter of Offer at the December 2025 Board meeting; and **(AP1)**
- **AGREED** that Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, Mr Tommy O'Reilly and Mrs Marian Cree would form an Appeals Panel in the event of any projects that have been unsuccessful in securing funding appealing the decision in accordance with the agreed guidance.

7.2 Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR)

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which sought approval for financial support for promotional materials and awards in respect of the Law Enforcement Torch Run's (LETR) 30th Anniversary event.

The Engagement Manager provided Members with the background information to the request and advised that correspondence was received by the Board Chair in February 2025 from the Co-Director for NI Law Enforcement Torch Run (LETR) for Special Olympics which sought an opportunity to present to Members, an update on the work of the LETR and to explore the potential plans for their upcoming 30th Anniversary event in 2026. The Engagement Manager noted this request was considered by the Committee and it was agreed to invite LETR to join a Committee meeting, however due to the change in the Committee's Programme of Work to include more engagement and outreach events and less formal Committee meetings, it was not possible to facilitate a presentation to the Committee. The Engagement Manager noted he subsequently wrote to LETR to ascertain the details of their request in relation to the upcoming Anniversary event and the cost breakdown of their request for £12,462.50 is included at Annex C of the meeting papers. The Engagement Manager added that the Board did provide financial support to the sum of £6,360 for LETR's 25th Anniversary event in 2021.

Following discussion it was subsequently **AGREED**:

- To provide £7,462.50 of financial assistance towards the LETR for Special Olympics 30th Anniversary celebrations. Letter to be issued to LETR advising of the Committee decision. **(AP2)**

7.3 **Problem Solving Awards**

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with an overview of the Problem-Solving Awards 2026, including the indicative

timeline. The Engagement Manager noted the PSNI Problem Solving Awards were first held in October 2022 to recognise and celebrate innovative crime fighting projects where the police, community and external partners successfully work together to make a difference in communities. They are also an opportunity to highlight and recognise excellence and best practice in relation to PSNI Business Support (staff).

The Engagement Manager advised that applications for the Problem Solving in Partnership Awards 2026 launched on 22 August 2025 and can be submitted across five categories namely:

- Delivering for communities
- Partners
- Serious Crimes & Investigations
- Enhancing Service Delivery
- Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs)

The Engagement Manager noted that the PCSP category, which was introduced in 2024, has been retained for the 2026 awards. The Engagement Manager advised that the Vice-Chair of the Partnership Committee has agreed to be the Board representative on the judging panel for this year's awards, and similar to the 2025 awards, the awards ceremony for 2026 will be delivered by PSNI in partnership with the Board and will be held at the Harbour Commissioners Office, Belfast on 19 February 2026.

The Engagement Manager noted the indicative timeline for the event, noting that the deadline for submission of applications was 21 November 2025. The Engagement Manager noted that as the awards will be jointly delivered with PSNI, Board officials are seeking Members approval to provide a financial contribution of up to £2,700 towards the delivery of this event.

Following discussion, Members **AGREED**:

- To provide a financial contribution of up to £2,700 towards the delivery of this event and **NOTED** the update provided. PSNI to be advised of the Committee decision. **(AP3)**

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

None.

9. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

None.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Vice-Chair noted that Mr Cathal Boylan MLA has indicated his intention to stand down from his position as a Board Member and thanked him for his input during his time on the Committee. All Members wished him well in his future endeavours.

The Vice-Chair listed several events Members have been invited to over the Christmas period and encouraged all Members to attend and show their support where possible.

In line with AP7 of the October 2025 Board meeting, the Partnership Manager circulated a hard copy document to all Members present which outlined PCSP activity on hate crime across all council areas and noted she will be issuing it via email to all Committee Members also. **(AP4)**

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for **Thursday 22 January 2026** at 9.30 am in James House.



The meeting ended at 12.30pm.

CHAIR

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

NOVEMBER 2025